

QATAR UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

NOVICE TEACHERS' CHALLENGES AND COPING STRATEGIES IN QATARI  
GOVERNMENTAL SCHOOLS

BY

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## ABSTRACT

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Title: Novice Teachers' Challenges and Coping Strategies in Qatari Governmental Schools

Supervisors of Thesis: Xiangyun, Du., and Prof. Michael Henry Romanowski.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges and coping strategies of novice teachers in Qatari governmental schools. Fifteen teachers of both genders participated in the study. A qualitative research method, including interviews, was used for data generation, while a thematic method was used for the data analysis. The findings of the study show that the majority of the participants face a number of interrelated challenges, including individual issues and hurdles both within and beyond the school environment. Further, the findings indicate that the participant teachers confront the struggles in their first years of teaching by either using coping strategies to keep themselves in the profession or by choosing to leave it entirely. Finally, the study provides a list of implications and recommendations to support novice teachers' long-term success when working in Qatari governmental schools or in similar contexts.

## DEDICATION

*This body of work is dedicated to my country of QATAR, which has given me everything, including support, ambition and a better life. I am so proud of my country.*

*And my mom, for her endless encouragement throughout this process.*

*I also give thanks to my husband, who supported my dreams and always stood beside me.*

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2015) have argued that the teaching job is perceived as a rewarding job, while at the same time presenting a multitude of challenging situations. They have also revealed that teacher attrition has emerged as a global issue; the high stress levels and resulting attrition rates are influenced by teachers' life situations and personal stressors, in addition to being strongly related to their working conditions. Furthermore, studies have exposed that the highest attrition rates are observed for first-year teachers early during their teaching careers. The first five years can cause instability in a teacher's career, and it is estimated that 40-50% of beginning teachers across many countries leave the profession during that period of time (Chaaban & Du, 2017; Mansfield, Beltman, Broadley & Weatherby-Fell, 2016).

Novice teachers are an important group to examine; many studies have focused on novice teachers, their training and their initial work experiences, while other research has discussed the expectations that novice teachers have of their role and of teaching in general (Friedman, 2004). In short, novice teachers have become equally important as experienced teachers (Marable & Raimondi, 2007). However, Leinhardt (1983) found that novice and experienced teachers differed in their explanations, concerns and needs. When faced with difficult situations, beginning teachers often view themselves as failures. Without adequate support, only the strongest and most determined novices usually succeed in this career (Colbert & Wolfe, 1992). Beginning teachers are often left to 'sink or swim', or a new teacher in his or her first year can also be characterized as having a 'survive and thrive' encounter (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009). Indeed, novice teachers are essentially strangers

who are often not familiar with the accepted symbols and norms within the school or with the hidden internal codes that can emerge among teachers and students. In this respect, novice teachers can be understood as having similar experiences to immigrants, who in turn leave a familiar culture and move into a strange land; the decision to emigrate, or to go into teaching, leads them on a long voyage during which they experience new and unknown situations (Sabar, 2004).

In addition, many studies have also investigated the sources of the stressors that erode the engagement and enthusiasm of beginning teachers toward teaching (Pietarinen, Pyhältö, Soini, & Salmela-Aro, 2013). The main cause of these stressors is the variety of challenges that novice teachers face during the early years of their teaching careers (Onafowora, 2005). Novice teachers often feel inadequately prepared for the challenges that they face in their first years, as the majority of them experience an intricate transition process from institutions of teacher education into real life in a school environment. Senom, Zakaria and Ahmad Shah (2013) reported on some of the common problems that novice teachers frequently face in their study, including classroom management, handling differences among students, various student motivations, dealing with the parents of students and grading student work.

Most countries have focused on the concerns, problems and challenges of novice teachers. For instance, in kindergartens and elementary schools in New Mexico, a study revealed different challenges faced by three novice teachers coming from diverse backgrounds and preparation programs. The qualitative data demonstrated that the pre-service preparation tasks of novices are irrelevant and different from first-year teaching assignments, which is associated with the concept of reality shock. More specially,

inadequate materials and resources, non-teaching responsibilities, lack of personal and mentoring support, overwork, financial difficulties, collegial planning, and the lack of specific curriculum guidelines are some struggles frequently listed by participants in the first year of teaching (Carpenter, 2002). On a larger scale, a study by Pfister (2006) investigated the types of problems faced by novice teachers who were recent graduates of a teacher preparation program in the north-eastern United States. Using survey methodology, the results indicate that teacher-related problems can be grouped into six main categories, including teaching, colleagues, bureaucracy, outside testing, resources and personal matters. However, the largest number of challenges faced by teachers come under the categories of teaching and personal matters.

In the Arabian Gulf, the EFL novice teachers in Saudi Arabia face challenges with teaching English in schools because most of the students have a low English proficiency. In addition, a large number of students are not motivated to learn English, which causes high attrition rates among Saudi teachers who major in the English language and literature as they turn to other professional options beyond teaching (Alhamad, 2018). Additionally, due to educational reform over the past six to seven years in government schools across the United Arab Emirates, new Emirati teachers and even their more experienced colleagues have struggled to cope within this environment of fast-tracked reform, leading to many expressing their dissatisfaction with the teaching profession (Dickson, Riddlebarger, Stringer, Tennant, & Kennetz, 2014). Dickson et al. (2014) interviewed new Emirati teachers in order to collect data that helped them to document six major categories of challenges that they faced. The findings from this study listed these major challenges as follows: implementing the curriculum to mixed-ability classes through the medium of

English, and a perceived lack of resources to do this; classroom management and administrative demands, alongside a perceived lack of support to manage these issues; relationships with colleagues; dealing with parents of students; and balancing home and family life (Dickson et al., 2014). The interview responses of novice teachers in Kuwait highlighted these issues and the difficulties faced by science teachers in government schools. The results concluded that the main challenges present are work overload, a lack of teaching tools, issues with the science curriculum, large class sizes, and the short length of class time (Alshammari, 2013).

Once novices begin to understand their complex reality, they start to map the terrain and cease to be strangers on the margins. Towards the second half of the year, the novices have time to reflect on their various successes and failures within the school environment. They begin to make changes in their actions and search for ways to further develop and support themselves in order to survive and remain at their schools (Feiman-Nemser, Schwille, Carver, & Yusko, 1999; Sabar, 2004). Across 31 studies in the area of teachers' stress and coping, researchers have explored a variety of coping strategies by teachers who experienced teaching challenges in their first years (Beers, 2012). The research has thus demonstrated many effective strategies to cope with stress and school workloads, including avoiding confrontations, controlling feelings, discussing problems, expressing feelings to others, having a healthy home life and trying to relax after work (Kyriacou, 2001). It is clear that coping strategies have been the current trend and are an important focus to be discussed in scholarly works, mentoring and induction programs, and pre-service programs for teacher preparations (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017).

In terms of ways of coping, the most common approach addressed by the literature surrounding teacher stress and its management is problem-focused coping. Novices are more likely to address the associated problems, causing greater potential for solving the problem and eliminating or reducing the stress associated with it (Le Maistre & Paré, 2010). Likewise, Austin, Shah and Muncer (2005) aimed to explore the stresses of novice teachers in high schools and to evaluate the effectiveness of their coping strategies. The results of this study indicated that work-related pressures scored highest as the main stressor for novices. To face these stressors, most participants in the study used negative coping strategies more frequently, such as escape avoidance. Furthermore, in a study by Richards (2012) on California novice teachers in the U.S., novices participated in a nationwide survey to investigate the common coping strategies used by beginning teachers. The top strategies mentioned by these teachers included strong relationships with supportive family and friends; choosing positive attitudes and humour to sustain themselves; beneficial activities like exercise or hobbies; and managing to carve out time for solitude. The least common coping strategies for teachers included using prescription drugs, drinking alcohol, procrastinating or taking a day off. The study also recommended that novices who had negative self-talk and struggled with multiple challenges follow a healthy lifestyle (in terms of exercise and eating), to notice and evaluate their thinking during the day, to seek humour in everyday events and to surround themselves with positive people (Richards, 2012). Further, a study investigating a sample of 412 new Chinese teachers in Hong Kong discussed the relationships among teacher stressors, active and passive coping strategies, and psychological distress among novices. The findings presented the direct effects of coping on psychological distress, namely that active or

problem-focused coping can mitigate psychological distress, as indicated by the negative and significant path from active coping to psychological distress, which suggests the efficacy of active coping. Nevertheless, first-year teachers who are under stress might engage in passive or avoidant coping mechanisms, which can, in turn, lead to the experience of further psychological symptoms (Chan, 1998). Other studies also claim that new teachers feel comfortable asking questions, sharing information and searching for information from more experienced teachers; they feel that communicating with other expert peers is a very non-threatening coping strategy (Jelinek, 2000).

Iqbal and Kokash (2011) noted that there is a gap and lack of studies across the Arab world in addressing the stress indicators among novice teachers and the use of coping strategies in facing challenges. In this respect, a study uncovered several coping strategies by teachers who worked in Saudi schools. Exercise is the first suggested strategy among teachers; they can overcome their stress through exercise and physical activity. Spirituality was also important for teachers to cope with their stress. In addition, effective time management and organizing their priorities in order to cope with school workloads is important, and finally, spending time with family or with positive people can reduce psychological stress (Iqbal & Kokash, 2011).

Although there are differences among Arab countries in terms of their educational systems, just as there are differences in their social customs, economic circumstances and political systems, most Arab countries are experiencing rapid growth and multiple challenges in their various education systems. From this standpoint, many schools and districts face difficulties in hiring and recruiting teachers, and this highly impacts teacher retention rates in schools across the Arab and Gulf countries. This has made it necessary



to investigate the problems and challenges that teachers face in their schools and look for a supportive atmosphere for new teachers in their careers. Taking Qatar's education system as an example, the country now favours education as the national priority, and the Qatar National Vision 2030 depends on the fundamental goal of a knowledge-based economy, where education is the key for developing and unlocking human potential and building a sustainable society. The Ministry of Education and Qatar's leadership have recognized the value of educating the country's citizens and residents in order to ensure future social, political and economic success. Based on several concerns, the leadership engaged the RAND Corporation to examine the K-12 school system and make a series of recommendations to enhance the quality of student academic success in 2001. RAND highlighted the key findings of weaknesses and strengths in the system through observation, interviews and document analysis. As a result of RAND's innovation, a systematic process of reform was applied to convert Qatar's schools and the Ministry of Education into a world-class competitive educational system, identified as *Education for a New Era* (Brewer, Augustine, Zellman, Ryan, Goldman, Stasz, & Constant, 2007).

One key aspect of this reform was the development of Qatar's National Professional Standards for teachers (Ellili-Cherif, Romanowski, & Nasser, 2012). Therefore, there was a greater need to improve the educational quality by addressing the needs for the professional growth of teachers. Before this educational reform movement, teachers used to teach all subjects in Arabic, received low salaries and incentives, experienced poor allocation policies, and were in need of training and professional development (Brewer et al., 2007). Early on in the reform process, the instructional language was changed from Arabic to English for mathematics and science, a multi-national teaching workforce was

created, and teachers were prepared to use new student-centred teaching methods, all of which contributed to the provision of quality professional development and fulfilment of teacher's work demands (Nasser, 2017). The statistical data from the Ministry of Development, Planning and Statistics demonstrate that there are 3,721 female Qatari teachers working in government schools, compared to 230 male teachers; in contrast, there are around 10,937 non-Qatari female teachers and 3,660 non-Qatari male teachers. The data reveals that there are fewer Qatari teachers than non-Qatari teachers. In addition, the statistical data reveals the numbers of novice teachers who enrolled in governmental teaching programs for 2016-2017: Qatari teachers from different grade levels and majors numbered around 183, while the non-Qataris were 155, with both genders included (The Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, 2017).

In response to the reform and the shortage of Qatari teachers, the College of Education at Qatar University initiated a bachelor's degree that encompasses more than the traditional areas of specialization (namely, early childhood, primary and secondary levels) in order to fulfil the educational reform movement. Pre-service teachers in the college take content courses in a specific area of specialty, such as the sciences, mathematics or English, and simultaneously participate in pedagogical practice outside the college. In the current situation in Qatar, the college is the main feeder program for governmental schoolteachers, as it is the only college of education and/or department that trains future teachers. After graduation, teachers at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE), and this ministry takes responsibility for hiring novices for schools that need teachers (Nasser, 2017). However, this new education era makes the teaching profession more complex in Qatari governmental schools, as they are surrounded by multiple demands from the

MOEHE and face several challenging situations in schools, which has resulted in a significant number of Qatari teachers leaving the profession (Nasser, 2017). According to Chaaban and Du (2017), schools in Qatar remain a complex place to recruit new teachers. Novice teachers in the country are facing an unstable educational policy landscape, with many reform issues existing within the education system. This results in novice teachers being expected to shoulder the same full teaching loads as their more experienced peers. Under such circumstances, more research is called for in order to better understand the experiences and challenges of novice teachers so more effective support strategies can be developed (Chaaban & Du, 2017).

## 1.2 Research Intentions and Questions

This study attempts to explore the current challenges and struggles faced by novice teachers in government schools in the context of Qatar, as well as how they are able to cope in this environment of fast-tracked educational changes. This study addresses the following questions:

- 1 How do novice teachers report the challenges they faced in their first years of teaching in Qatari governmental schools?
- 2 What coping strategies are used by the interviewed novice teachers to help address their needs in Qatari governmental schools?

## 1.3 Definition of the Terms

Novice teacher: for the purpose of this study, the term ‘novice teacher’ refers to a teacher who has undergone fewer than three years of total teaching experience since

receiving a teaching certificate. Synonyms used in the study include new teacher, beginning and first-year teachers (all are applicable).

Coping: according to Beers (2012), coping can be viewed as ‘one of the most important aspects of interventions designed to buffer the negative effects associated with stress caused by the many demands, harms, threats, or challenges teachers face daily’

(p. 4).

#### 1.4 Significance of the Study

This study provides qualitative empirical data on the first years’ challenges in the teaching by novice teachers and examines multiple methods of coping used by the interviewed novice teachers in the Qatari context. The results of the study are useful for educational practitioners (teachers), administrators (school leaders), and decision-makers (MOEHE) to help them understand the current challenges faced by novice teachers in government schools in Qatar. The results will also provide implementations and recommendations which will support novice teachers and help reduce the level of challenges or attrition rates among teachers in Qatari governmental schools. In addition, the outcome of this study contributes to the literature on realizing the day-to-day struggles that novice teachers may encounter together with the educational change in the context of Qatar. This may be meaningful for further change initiatives and research on other social and cultural contexts in the Middle East and beyond. In short, this study is designed to help novice teachers improve academic competence, develop employability skills and implement a career plan in their teaching pathway.

## 1.5 Thesis Organization

This thesis begins by discussing the research background, the two primary research questions and the aim of the study. The second chapter highlights the existing literature reviews that have reported on the theoretical background of novice teachers' various challenges during their teaching careers and the associated coping strategies. The third chapter presents the research context and design, participant information, data generation methods, procedures, data analysis and ethical considerations of this study. Next, Chapter Four reports the findings of the two research questions. Finally, Chapter Five discusses the results of the study and its relationship with the previous literature concerning novice teachers, and also presents a summary of the broader recommendations that could potentially support teachers, school principals and stakeholders.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this literature review is to explore the existing empirical work that supports this study. The chapter starts with a thorough description of novice teachers and then highlights several studies that have addressed the challenges faced by novice teachers at the beginning of their teaching careers. The chapter then reviews the various coping strategies that have been discussed in previous scholarly work.

### 2.1 Novice Teachers – ‘Immigrants in a new country’

Michel (2013) stated that “beginning teachers are the insiders in a strange land,” (p. 21) reflecting the idea that novice teachers can feel like strangers during the first few years of their careers. Lortie (1966) and Halford (1998) stated that novice teachers are fundamentally learners who are thrown into the deep end to sink or swim in the field of teaching. Indeed, they spend considerable amounts of time and effort keeping their heads above water, which generally means that the first few years are among the most difficult in a teacher’s career. In describing novices’ initial experiences, Sabar (2004) recognized similarities between how novice teachers and immigrants tend to construct and interpret their new realities. In this sense, novice teachers appear to resemble immigrants who leave a familiar culture and move into a strange one, and it is a journey through uncharted, unpredictable waters as they enter the classroom for the very first time in the capacity of a teacher (Moreau, 2015; Sabar, 2004). In a word, there is continuous debate among scholars in the field of teacher education related to the daily practices, challenges and coping styles that novices use in schools. In particular, there are few studies that address these topics in the Gulf region (Chaaban & Du, 2017; Henriksen, 2004).

Moreover, novices experience an initial shock in their first year, and this shock, often referred to as a “practice shock,” is a universal phenomenon that has been widely researched (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009). In a teacher’s career, the three-year period practice shock is most likely to occur in two phases: namely, the immediate reaction and the subsequent process of coping with the teaching situation. During the first phase, from the first few weeks and months through the first year, everything can seem strange and unfamiliar. The second phase, from one to three years, is directed towards coping with teaching and perceiving the opportunity to influence the everyday work of the pupils and the school (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014). Research has further described this time of the novice teachers’ entering into the teaching profession as a “transition shock” or as a “not knowing” period, when many new teachers find that the vision that they held of teaching prior to entering the profession is quite different from the realities that they encounter. Novice teachers realize that they expected to accomplish and perform as much as experienced teachers, but they have yet to master the various skills to do so effectively (Corcoran, 1981; Fantilli, 2009; Michel, 2013).

While the study on novice teachers is growing internationally, there is little research investigating the experiences of novice teachers in the Gulf region (Dickson et al., 2014; Ibrahim, 2012) and in the Qatari context (Chaaban & Du, 2017). Recently, Chaaban and Du (2017) have investigated the challenges and coping strategies of five novice and five experienced interviewed teachers, and the research partially highlighted the issue of first years’ challenges and the coping ways used by novice teachers in Qatari governmental schools. They also examined how the experienced peers differed from the beginning ones in terms of the challenges they faced in government schools. In addition, the study showed

the similarities and differences in the coping strategies of both novice and experienced teachers (Chaaban & Du, 2017). This shows that the concept of novice teachers is a new one in the context of Qatar and its education system.

### *2.1.1 Preparation, Recruitment and Retention of Novice Teachers*

Previous studies have investigated high-quality teacher preparation, and these scholars believe that high-quality teachers will better serve the nations' children in the future. Even though most university-based teacher education programs include multiple field experiences, the disconnect between what student teachers are taught in university courses and their opportunities for enacting these practices in their school placements is often different. Field experience is a fundamental part of teacher preparation programs, and experienced and newly certified teachers alike see practical experience as a powerful component of teacher preparation (Boyd et al., 2009; Parsad, Lewis, & Farris, 2001; Zeichner, 2010).

Around the world, considerable recruitment difficulties exist with novice teachers because they are hard to attract into the teaching field and even harder to mentor when they are hired (Guarino, Santibañez & Daley, 2006; Huling, Resta & Yeargain, 2012; Sharplin, O'Neill & Chapman, 2011). A beginning teacher's success in the classroom with students may depend not only on their general qualifications but also on the fit between their particular skills, knowledge, and dispositions and the position that they have been hired to fill. Thus, it is important to consider whether district hiring practices effectively match the qualifications and skills of novices to schools and particular roles (Liu & Johnson, 2006). However, Michel (2013) noted that since novice teachers are in a stage of learning how to teach, they may experience conflict with their pre-existing beliefs, understandings and



preconceptions. These conceptualizations play a central role in how their new teaching philosophy is shaped and how they deal with school tasks in their new environment. Therefore, the first years may play a significant role in determining the health of the professionals for these beginning teachers (DeLorenzo, 1992; Wang & Schwille, 2008; Watt & Richardson, 2008).

Moreover, a number of studies on teacher shortages have shown that the first years of teaching are crucial and are problematic periods for novice teachers (Hong, 2012). The literature discusses some contributing factors, which closely correlate teacher attrition with their working circumstances, including large class size, lack of administrative or other forms of institutional support, inadequate resources, and heavy teaching loads. Additionally, new teachers are often provided with difficult class assignments, schedules that allow little time for reflection, and ineffective mentors. This means that overall, novices receive little support in their schools, and as a result, they leave the profession in their early years (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Hebert and Worthy, 2001; Yost, 2006).

Particular in Qatar, Nasser (2017) documented that the hiring practices of beginning teachers changed after the implementation of Independent Schools (ISs). Since their emergence, these schools have made decisions regarding hiring novice teachers, professional development plans, teaching methods and teacher incentives. This means that school principals and administrative staff used to be responsible for all hiring practices and each school had its own hiring criteria for choosing new teachers. However, after years of enforcing ISs, multiple challenges emerged for the MOEHE. The main challenge was hiring qualified teachers that followed late with weaknesses in the preparation of those novice teachers. Therefore, in 2017 the MOEHE changed the ISs to government schools

and then redirected their aims at government schools under their control (Strategic Plan of Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2017). The current national vision for the Qatari community aims to provide stable and innovative quality learning opportunities by providing qualified teachers who can cope in this environment of fast-tracked reforms (Qatar Supreme Education Council, 2012; Said, 2016, Strategic Plan of Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2017).

## 2.2 Challenges for Beginning Teachers

A wide range of studies has examined the issues that contribute to attrition for countless teachers in a variety of teaching contexts. Many of these studies support the notion that the problems faced by teachers in their first years are intrinsic to the teaching profession and to the conditions of the school environment as a workplace more broadly (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 1995; Gordon, 1991; Lieberman & Miller, 1984). Studying these problems is complex because this essentially involves the study of the human mind, where no two experiential perceptions are alike. Therefore, generalizations, commonalities, and solutions regarding the problems faced by new teachers are always debatable, somewhat ambiguous, and constantly evolving (Lundeen, 2004).

Over the past fifty years, there have been several studies documenting the challenges faced by novice teachers. This review explores the challenges that beginning teachers face as they embark on their teaching careers. Cody (2009) states that novice teachers struggle with challenges as soon as they graduate from preparatory programs, which have been designed to prepare them for teaching. After they start their jobs, these novice teachers all share similar concerns: They are all faced with challenges that were not addressed in their programs.

Book (2000) and Lee (2017) divided the challenges that novices encounter into two main levels: the personal level and the organizational level. The first year of teaching has been recognized as a significant and unique time in the personal lives of teachers as unrealistic expectations mix with professional or organizational challenges, which in turn overlap with sociocultural factors, such as school policy and structure.

In an effort to bring some clarity to the literature, this chapter divides the challenges of novices into two parts. The first part considers individual challenges as a means of shedding light on the personal struggles that novice teachers go through to make their work match their vision of school culture. The second part looks at the organizational challenges and surrounding problems that novices experience both within and beyond the school environment.

### *2.2.1 Personal Challenges*

In the day-to-day struggles that novice teachers may encounter, they can begin to lose some of their earlier confidence (Dickson, Riddlebarger, Stringer, Tennant, & Kennetz, 2014). Conflicts arise between the reality of teaching and their personal beliefs and expectations. Therefore, addressing personal challenges is essential to understanding the flow of this study of novice teachers' challenges.

#### *2.2.1.1 Competence Level and Self-Confidence Concerns*

Boyatzis (1982) defines competency as “an underlying characteristic of an individual that is causally related to effective or superior performance” (p. 97). These characteristics include knowledge, skills, enduring motives, traits, self-concepts, and values that can be assessed and differentiated. The use of the term ‘competencies’ in

teacher education has become widespread in recent years, instead of ‘standards’ or ‘skills’. This way of thinking about what makes a teacher effective in a blended learning environment, which is broader than traditional teaching standards and less tangible than teacher characteristics such as patterns of thinking and professional habits, could be essential for making blended learning work with their students (Powell, Rabbitt, & Kennedy, 2014). A competency involves more than simply skills and knowledge; it also requires the ability to meet complex demands by drawing on and mobilizing psychosocial resources in a particular context (Ivanitsky, 1998). Ivanitsky (1998) argues that teachers should have a wide range of competencies in order to face the complex challenges of teaching as a profession. Scholars agree that teachers should have an axiological component, a technological component, and a heuristic component in order to meet the demands of the profession (Boyatzis, 2008; Ivanitsky, 1998; Powell et al., 2014).

Education research and multicultural research show the necessity for teachers to acquire and integrate the knowledge of cultural contexts, academic abilities, individual differences, student development, language and pedagogy to effectively teach the growing range of diverse learners within classrooms. Therefore, most researchers ask teachers to develop various types of competencies in order to work effectively with diverse groups of students (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Building competencies in teacher education programs involves moving through levels of conceptual and understanding change, looking into using diverse methods for courses through examination and exposure to multicultural theories and practices. Moreover, the use of pedagogical approaches involves situated learning in local community contexts and school as well as possibilities

for reflection and the examination of assumptions and beliefs about the self and others (Dantas, 2007).

Of all beliefs, studies reveal a direct interrelationship between self-confidence and one's level of competence. Thus, focusing on skill development and competence can be the basis for effecting a change in self-confidence. The development of self-confidence and its influence on behaviour and performance is best understood from Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy. According to Bandura, self-efficacy is "a common cognitive mechanism mediating behavioral changes." In addition, Bandura's study concluded that increased competence, in turn, leads to increased levels of confidence. Heightened self-confidence in situations affects the individual's choice of activities and thus the amount of effort expended on the task. Most importantly, it fosters persistence under challenging circumstances (Bressan & Weiss, 1982).

Ashton and Webb (1986) found that teachers with low self-confidence and a lack of competency sometimes avoided planning activities, were less likely to persist with students who were having difficulties, spent less effort finding materials, and re-taught less content in ways that might be better understood by students. On the other hand, teachers whose self-confidence was higher were associated with higher competency levels and were found to be more likely to develop more challenging materials and consider students' individual differences in order to better help students succeed. These motivational effects can ultimately enhance student learning and substantiate teachers' efficacy, as they see that they are helping students to learn.

### *2.2.1.2 Personal Ambitions and Lifelong Learning*

Although teachers find teaching to be a personally rewarding profession, nowadays there is an unexpected shortage of teachers that results from challenges in recruiting them. Most pre-service teachers have other job offers that provide well-equipped work settings, job security, high pay and status, ongoing training, and other opportunities for rapid career advancement (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Since the 1970s, 'lifelong learning' has become a challenging term for educational researchers. Lifelong learning refers to the improvement of an individual's knowledge and skills for personal growth. Lifelong learning is a process that is important for all individuals; however, it emerges as a concept that is especially significant for both teachers and students (Fairclough, 2008). Akyol (2016) argued that students who are taught by teachers who apply lifelong learning in their lives will contribute to the development of society more than anyone else because those teachers determine a path of continuous development and demonstrate an openness to innovation wherein learning never ends. In addition, Coolahan (2002) mentioned that teachers should voluntarily attend various certification programs in order to develop professionally as this helps them to acquire different skills required for a global environment and aids them in better educating students with diverse learning styles. The findings of a recent study also indicated that teachers are aware of what they should do in order to improve themselves as lifelong learners; however, universities or organizations in their particular countries are not necessarily providing them enough with opportunities to succeed in this regard (Köksal & Çögmen, 2013).

### *2.2.2 Challenges at the Organizational Level*

Entering new environments is challenging for novices because both the profession and the school environment are strongly impacted by individuals' personal and professional characteristics. Also, the experiences of novices are the outcomes of interactions among social, psychological, personal, and contextual factors within the workplace, including those practices in the non-work domain. These interactions directly relate to the retention of new teachers and their overall sense of job satisfaction. In the first years of teaching, novices are always concerned about a lack of personal and professional support. The social working environment surrounding these new teachers is key to understanding how to assist novices in their induction period. Although the majority of a teacher's work takes place in the classroom with students, they often interact with other professionals in a process that can directly or indirectly influence their behaviours, feelings, and thoughts (Devos, Dupriez & Paquay, 2012; Sharplin et al., 2011).

Challenges at the organizational level faced by beginning teachers can be summarized in terms of content and curriculum knowledge, time management, workload and fatigue; relationships with students, parents, colleagues and supervisors; evaluation and grading; and autonomy and control (Carpenter, 2002). In addition, there can be some problems with classrooms; findings demonstrate that novice teachers encounter problems such as understanding and implementing current rules and regulations, teaching mixed-level classes, and teaching literacy skills to elementary school students. Getting students to participate in the activities of a lesson and developing supportive teaching materials have also been identified as challenges (Emmer & Stough, 2001). Moreover, some challenges that the new teachers encounter include the fact that curricula and materials that were

designed for them in their professional programs differ from those used in the school context when they start their professional duties. Previous studies on beginning teachers have outlined the challenges related to many tasks associated with the school setting; for instance, increased demands beyond pedagogical tasks, curriculum changes being implemented at an increasing rate, more administrative work, an increasing need for technological competence, and increasing diversity among students (Cody, 2009; Le Maistre, & Pare, 2010; Öztürk & Yildirim, 2013). These studies have also demonstrated that novice Korean teachers of English struggled in the Korean context with a lack of collaboration with colleagues and heavy administrative work (Lee, 2017).

In light of the results from these early studies on beginning teachers, researchers have used several experienced teachers' duties and responsibilities to measure the performances of novice teachers regarding their classroom management, time management, academic preparation, and parental involvement. Other studies use the comparison of novice teachers to their more experienced peers to list the different challenges that both these groups face in their teaching careers (Chaaban & Du, 2017; Melnick & Meister, 2008; Öztürk & Yildirim, 2013).

Due to educational reforms over the past six or seven years in government schools in the United Arab Emirates, beginning Emirati teachers and even their experienced Emirati peers have struggled to cope in this environment of fast-track reforms, and both groups have expressed their dissatisfaction in teaching as a profession. In a 2014 study, Dickson and colleagues interviewed beginning Emirati teachers to collect data which helped them to document six major areas of novice Emirati teachers' challenges. The findings from this study listed the major challenges as implementing the curriculum to



mixed-ability classes through the medium of English, with a perceived lack of resources to do this, as well as classroom management and administrative demands and a lack of apparent support to deal with these. Moreover, relationships with colleagues, dealing with the parents of students and balancing home and family life were also identified as challenges (Dickson et al., 2014).

Nasser (2017) stated that Qatar's leadership is always concerned with improving the quality of novice teachers and their constant training in each reform or change happening in schools. However, as multiple policy decisions were made to make these substantive changes in the schooling system, this created several challenges regarding novice teachers' work, their ability to work with the curriculum and standards, and their engagement in professional development activities (Zellman, 2009). For example, Zellman (2009) declared that novice teachers in Qatari ISs couldn't implement and easily promote a student-centred pedagogy, small group instruction or student assessment using Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. This is because these were new concepts in the Qatari education system that emerged during the process in schools and which most of the teachers were not trained in by the College of Education (Nasser, 2017; Zellman, 2009).

#### *2.2.2.1 Teacher's Core Work: Planning and Classroom Management*

Many studies have agreed that novices face multiple challenges that are intrinsic to the teaching profession and to the conditions of the school environment as a workplace. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the school context for the newcomers as an important setting that affects the development of the novice teacher and their teaching beliefs. School contexts have a variety of variables, such as a novice teacher's mentor teacher, collegial support, school resources, community demographics, and parental involvement. These

variables in the school setting create multiple challenges for the novices in their daily working lives. Therefore, a new environment can cause a novice teacher's sense of turmoil and depression in their first year of teaching because there is a difference between their expectations and the realities of the school context (Lundeen, 2002; Michel, 2013; Sabar, 2004). According to data taken from the study by Roehrig and Pressley (2005), dealing with individual differences among students and the challenges posed by students were most often cited as challenges, not just by first-year teachers but also by their experienced counterparts.

Borko and Livingston (1989) stated that "teaching is a complex cognitive skill" (p. 481). This cognitive process is usually associated with the necessary planning tasks of a teacher. Leinhardt and Greeno (1986) reported in their study that experienced teachers' planning can be described as a process of integrating propositional structures for specific instructional content and strategies, scripts for teaching activities such as explanations or discussion, and scenes for instructional formats such as whole-class or small-group instruction. Unlike experienced teachers, novices were not as organized as their experienced counterparts. Indeed, their propositional structures for pedagogical content knowledge appeared to be particularly limited. They were unable to predict where in the curriculum students could have difficulty, and in turn, they struggled to make effective decisions around prioritizing content coverage (Leinhardt & Greeno, 1986). Novices take more time in the planning process for each lesson than experienced teachers due to a wide variety of lesson characteristics, including timing, content, scope, pacing, instructional and behavioural management concerns, and the sequencing of activities. Therefore, novice

teachers see planning as time-consuming in comparison to other core tasks they must fulfil for their students (Borko & Livingston, 1989).

Existing studies have found that there are differences in the cognitively complex domains for planning lessons between experienced teachers and novices. For example, the cognitive schemata of experienced teachers are typically more complex, more interconnected, more elaborate, and more easily accessible than those of novice teachers (Borko & Shavelson, in press; Leinhardt, 1986).

The literature also points to the fact that in recent years, there have been numerous reforms to lesson plan templates, making them less simple than in the past. Recently, teachers have been required to demonstrate several elements in the lesson plan templates, including learning objectives, vocabulary, resources, starting materials, main activities, and lesson closure. Some studies have shown that many novice teachers have difficulty matching goals, objectives, and forms of evaluation (Elliot, 2001). Many also fail to understand the conceptual distinctions between aims, objectives, and goals. Studies have found that it is challenging for novices to formulate learning objectives, use these learning objectives to plan lessons and sequences of lessons, show how they will assess students' learning, and take into consideration the interests and linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the students (John, 2006).

It is also worth noting that classroom management forms a core task for teachers. Most studies agree that classroom management can be defined as the use of instructional methods that facilitate various learning types and take into consideration individual academic needs, together with the ability to use a variety of behavioural and counselling methods in order to assist students who demonstrate serious behaviour issues in classroom

(Emmer & Stough, 2001). Researchers have also produced a diverse collection of studies highlighting differences between experienced teachers and their less proficient counterparts (Wolff, van den Bogert, Jarodzka & Boshuizen, 2015). Results from a study that outlined the differences between the approaches of experienced and novice teachers to classroom management indicate that novices are often unable to recognize typical situations or events occurring in the classroom. Indeed, they are always preoccupied with behaviour, as framed in terms of rules and discipline. Novices are also less able to focus on whether or not their students are learning in safe classroom environments. This is in contrast to experienced teachers, who understand the expectations of appropriate classroom behaviours and whether or not students were attentive to their lessons (Wolff et al., 2015). Hogan, Rabinowitz, and Craven (2003) guided novice teachers in his study toward reconceptualizing the sources of classroom management events by de-emphasizing the students' behavioural issues and re-emphasizing the role of the teacher in responding to and preventing such events in the classroom.

#### *2.2.2.2 Administrative Demands*

Teachers have also complained about administrative duties at schools being an expansion of their daily workloads, and most teachers are required to participate in extra-curricular activities as well (Bartlett, 2004; Lieberman & Miller, 1999). Particularly for novice teachers, extra administrative duties affect their levels of stress, self-efficacy and effectiveness (Pogodzinski, 2014). In their first years in the profession, novice teachers tend to feel overwhelmed by increased administrative tasks that require evidence-gathering: the collection of documents and assorted paperwork as well as preparing the

digital portfolios of students. This was found to be in addition to several other teaching responsibilities (Dickson et al., 2014).

Many studies have shown novice teachers reporting that administrative tasks were a cause of stress. The many demands placed on the teachers can have a deleterious effect on their mental and physical health. Novice teachers were exposed to higher rates of emotional exhaustion, burnout, depression and poor interpersonal relations with their colleagues at the school (Beers, 2012; Mearns & Cain, 2003; Rubino, Luksyte, Perry, & Volpone, 2009).

Both experienced and novice teachers were confronted with an overall lack of administrative support. Teachers voiced some challenges regarding administrative support; for instance, in terms of classroom management, some school administrators were not doing their part in dealing with discipline issues, and some administrators gave destructive feedback when they observed the lessons of novice teachers, primarily focusing on the negative aspects. Other school administrators were likely to be inconsiderate of a heavy workload, overlooking situations where the teacher was already assigned additional teaching periods (Chaaban & Du, 2017).

In the history of Qatar's education system, the new system was introduced in 2002 in the form of a drastic change rather than an incremental process. The ISs model was born, promoting autonomy, ensuring accountability, stimulating variety, and nurturing parental involvement in advocating choice (Brewer et al., 2007). Teachers received professional development opportunities and collaborated on curriculum materials with other schools (Gail, Constant, & Goldman, 2011). Nasser (2017) mentioned that every stakeholder was involved in this new model, and the greatest challenge schools faced was the administrative

load of training and preparing teachers. All teachers faced considerable administrative duties, which subsequently led to a sharp decline in the number of teachers in Qatari schools. Now the schools are framed by a governmental system, which means that they are operated under the control of the MOEHE (Strategic Plan of Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2017). However, teachers are still suffering from various types of administrative demands, and these demands are increasing each year (Nasser, 2017).

### *2.2.2.3 Professional Development for Teachers*

In the broader professional community, many professionalization reforms have occurred within the teaching profession. Nationwide, an important measure of the reform has been ensuring teacher certification and licensure. Professionalization has tended to take the form of extending assistance to novice teachers and expanding career opportunities for experienced teachers (Little, 1993).

According to Fullan and Steigelbauer (1991), professional development can be defined as the “sum of formal and informal learning experiences throughout one’s career from pre-service teacher education to retirement” (p. 326). Nevertheless, many professional development programs available to novice teachers do not meet their needs, nor do they address the challenges of professionalization reforms (Birman, Desimone, Porter & Garet, 2000). Guskey (2002) suggested two crucial factors that contribute to the ineffectiveness of professional development sessions, namely (1) what motivates teachers to involve themselves in professional development activities and (2) the process by which change typically occurs in teachers. Current professional development opportunities are often low-intensity activities that are fragmented and unfocused, which have little impact on teaching practices. Thus, teachers are the only ones who can best address their

professional development needs. Importantly, professional development opportunities for pre-service and in-service teachers also require partnerships among higher education institutions and schools (Ruhland & Bremer, 2002).

However, other reviewed studies provide significant detail on the changes made to teachers' practices as a result of effective professional development sessions (Curry, 2015; Strahan, 2003; Vescio, Ross and Adams, 2008). Vescio et al. (2008) believed that professional development fosters teachers' engagement in their work and leads to the success of their schools. An example is Strahan's (2003) case study of an elementary school where all of the teachers participated in extensive professional development sessions to improve students' achievement in reading. The results of the study concluded that teachers' positive attitudes moved toward guided reading, writing, and self-selected reading after the professional development sessions given by their school. Teachers worked collaboratively to develop a shared mission of their schools. That led to the development of stronger instructional norms and made the teachers change their teaching practices to increase students' achievement (Strahan, 2003; Vescio et al., 2008). In addition, Curry (2015) mentioned in his study comparing novice and experienced charter schoolteacher beliefs regarding professional development that for improvements to occur in professional development sessions, there should be a clear vision connected to student achievement and closely tied to a plan for ongoing professional development and training for novice teachers.

In Qatar, there is a long historical path in relation to professional development for teachers. The teachers used to receive low salaries and incentives, experienced poor allocation policies, and were in need of training and professional development in relation

to newly hired teachers (Brewer et al., 2007). However, this ceased to be an issue in 2001 with the RAND Corporation's visits and their recommendations on developing a new education system in Qatari governmental schools. The RAND Corporation stressed improving novice teachers' competencies and skills through licensing and increased professional development sessions (Abu-Tineh & Sadiq, 2018; Nasser, 2017; Nasser & Romanowski, 2011).

A recent study by Abu-Tineh and Sadiq (2018) investigated the characteristics of effective professional development and the effective models of professional development as perceived by Qatari governmental school teachers. The teachers in the study stated that the most effective professional development model is experienced teachers providing professional support for newly hired teachers, followed by workshops at schools, study groups and finally the peer observation. In addition, the study indicated that government schoolteachers perceived the proposed characteristics of effective professional development to be highly convenient and effective in the Qatari context (Abu-Tineh & Sadiq, 2018).

#### *2.2.2.4 The Interpersonal Relationships of Novice Teachers*

Beyond these common challenges, there are also specific problems encountered by novice teachers, as highlighted in the study of Wang, Strong, and Odell (2004). They found that the most pressing challenges for new teachers appear to arise from the conversations and interactions between novices and their mentors or with experienced teachers. Common conversations included topics such as teaching, subject matter, and students or a combination of all three. Novice teachers in their early stages base their career decisions on both professional and personal factors; in other words, novice teachers engage in



personal and professional relationships with colleagues in a school in part to help them address the concerns and problems that arise in the profession (Feiman-Nemser 2010; Pogodzinski, Youngs & Frank, 2013). At a school level, these relationships are indirectly influenced by district policies on novices' perceptions of their working conditions and formal induction issues, as well as on their future career decisions or daily practices in the school (Coburn and Russell, 2008; Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002; Flores and Day, 2006; Penuel, Riel, Joshi, Pearlman, Kim, & Frank, 2010; Wechsler, Caspary, Humphrey, & Matsko, 2010).

In terms of co-worker support, novice teachers often interact with their formally assigned department coordinators in more structured ways. However, informal relationships involve interacting informally with other colleagues on a daily basis on both personal and professional terms (Bryk and Schneider, 2002; Coburn and Russell, 2008; Desimone et al., 2002; Penuel et al., 2010). In this regard, novice teachers selected particular relationships that affect the degree to which they are open to the socialization efforts of their schools (Bryk and Schneider, 2002; Lounsbury and Ventresca, 2003; Colyvas and Powell, 2007). Therefore, novice teachers were found to choose relationships that shaped the way in which they evaluated and understood the collegial climate within their schools. Novices' understanding of the collegial climate within their schools may eventually influence their intentions to continue with their teaching careers (Borko & Livingston, 1989; Coburn and Russell, 2008; Coleman, 1988; Penuel et al., 2010). As Coburn and Russell (2008) concluded in their study on the role of policy in teachers' social networks, the policy can play a role in influencing some dimensions of teachers' social

networks. This can include the access to experienced teachers the network offers, its structure, and the active communication that occurs among individuals within it.

Findings from other research also expose the necessity of co-worker support, especially in the contemporary reality of cultural differences among teachers in many countries (Chaaban & Du, 2017; Gu & Day, 2013). This is the situation in Qatar, where there are large numbers of expatriate teachers who are recruited from neighbouring Arab countries. In this context, supportive relationships can be hindered in Qatari governmental schools. Novice teachers graduating from local teacher preparation programs are facing disconnected beliefs, values and practices in multicultural schools, causing an increased likelihood of attrition in a few years (Chaaban & Du, 2017; Gu & Day, 2013).

#### *2.2.2.5 Governmental Policies*

Political changes in education are based on the assumption that the government must intervene in the quality of learning and teaching (Wood, 2004). Regarding the changes that have occurred in teaching and learning agendas since President George Bush in K–12 schools, Spillane, Reiser, and Reimer (2002) explained that “reform initiatives call for more intellectually demanding content and pedagogy for everyone, challenging deeply rooted beliefs about who can do intellectually demanding work and questioning popular conceptions of teaching, learning, and subject matter” (p. 387). Researchers added that reformers and policymakers should understand how local actors interpret the demands that are made of them and that teachers are the main actors in the education system (Spillane et al., 2002). Therefore, in the process of any educational reform, the role of the teacher is fundamental.

Moreover, regarding teachers' involvement in educational reform or changes, many studies have debated whether educational change or reform can be implemented successfully without the involvement of teachers. Several studies demonstrate that teachers are in fact the source of actual change within the classrooms. Their involvement is not only limited to being the primary implementers, but is also part of the planning and decision-making process (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris, 2004; Swanepoel, 2008). For instance, mathematics teachers were found to only be concerned with students learning facts and performing skills as outlined in the syllabus rather than considering broader educational goals. Therefore, curriculum developers in mathematics frequently note a mismatch between the implemented curriculum and the one that is attained, causing complex challenges in the daily realities of classroom teaching for teachers (Haynes, 1996).

Thus, the beliefs of teachers can play an important role in either facilitating or inhibiting any educational changes in classroom practice (Jackson, 1968; Koehler & Grouws, 1992; Sosniak, Ethington, & Varelas, 1991). If teachers hold beliefs compatible with the new innovation, then they are more likely to accept it. Prawat (1990) has quoted that "teachers can be either conveyances of, or obstacles to, change." In this regard, Buzeika (1996) interviewed three elementary school teachers about mathematics in the New Zealand curriculum. The researcher found that the participating teachers had personal concerns about the curriculum being implemented, they lacked knowledge about some of the topics and terminology used in the curriculum, they felt that the curriculum was vague and unstructured, and they experienced difficulties in identifying the mathematical content learned by students within a particular strand.

It is worth noting that there is a gap in the literature related to challenges that novice teachers may experience in the face of government policy changes or school policy changes. However, Fullan (2012) shared his vision that every educator must strive to be an effective agent of change and that changes are not only for leaders to determine. Educators should look for the beginning teachers who are still at the risk stage. Novices receive many demands from their schools and implementing any new changes can lead to their recalcitration and resistance (Fullan, 2012; Richardson, 1990).

Particularly for this study, it is essential to understand Qatar's education system. Before the 1950s, the education system in Qatar was characterized as intrinsic-nationalistic and culture-based (Nasser, 2017), whereby traditional schooling focused on the ideas, perspectives and cultural elements of the nation. Initially, education was the form of an appointed community *kuttab*, which translates to English as a 'travelling educator' (U.S. Library of Congress, 1994). By the 1950s, the first school was established for boys and taught Islamic studies, mathematics, geography, Islamic history, Arabic and English (Brewer et al., 2007a). With government support, three further public boy's schools were established in 1954, and a girl's school was set up just two years later (Brewer et al., 2007).

The need for educational regulations and a curriculum gave rise to the Ministry of Education in the 1950s (Brewer et al., 2007a), which modelled its implemented curricula on those of other Arabic countries. Qatar eventually began producing material that was adopted from pre-existing Arabic texts but did not incorporate a design that was based on the needs of Qatari students (Al-Kobaisi, 1979). Eventually, public schools, known as government schools, embraced the British system.

Qatar's leadership recognized the value of educating its citizens and residents to ensure future economic, political and social success. Stemming from several concerns, in 2001 the leadership engaged the RAND Corporation to examine the K-12 school system and make a series of recommendations to enhance the quality of student academic success. RAND highlighted key findings of weaknesses and strengths in the system through observation, interviews and document analysis. As the Ministry expanded, it failed to produce checks and balances in its structure (Brewer et al., 2007, p.38) and there was a lack of responsibility, communication and accountability. Curriculum textbooks and material were provided directly to teachers, and inspectors ensured adherence by requiring teachers to record the details of their lessons. The curriculum was outdated and inflexible, discouraged creativity, and was unchallenging for students. Schools expressed little autonomy and could not influence policies and procedures (Brewer et al., 2007). Old buildings, overcrowded classrooms, and a lack of instructional technology and supply further inhibited quality education (Brewer et al., 2007). Teachers received low salaries and incentives, experienced poor allocation policies, and were in need of training and professional development (Brewer et al., 2007). The new education system was introduced in 2002 as a drastic change rather than an incremental process. The basic elements consisted of clear schooling standards and outcomes, including assessments matching the content. Thus, the ISs model was born, promoting autonomy, ensuring accountability, stimulating variety, and nurturing parental involvement in advocating choice (Brewer et al., 2007). The organization of educational institutions was remodelled to include three new and permanent agencies: the Supreme Education Council (SEC), responsible for the national education policy, the Education Institute, responsible for overseeing the new

curriculum standards, and the Evaluation Institute, responsible for teacher training and qualification. Finally, the temporary Implementation Team was responsible for overseeing and coordinating the transition.

Overall, the community was willing to invest in a new form of education. The numerous proposals failed to produce satisfying results and pushed educators, parents and students out of their comfort zones. Studies have provided data to complement these claims and, ultimately, push for another reform. While the government school system was initially replaced by the ISs, the Qatari community feels a sense of comfort with the government school system and hopes for a return to its established origins (Nasser, 2017).

#### *2.2.2.6 Social Image and Gender*

In different countries and in every society, certain teaching criteria and the amount of respect reserved for teachers are revealed (Biddle, 1995). Teachers' social status is an essential area of inquiry that provides insight into the significance attached to education in every country. Offering a comparison of the social status of teaching in an international context, Taiwan is a truly democratic society. With the effect of economic success, education has produced the highly trained workforce that is needed for economic development. In order to produce a strong cohort of quality teachers, teacher training has been placed as the cornerstone of education. The perception that Taiwanese teachers have toward their work is reflected in the fact that teaching as a profession is more prestigious and respected in the country than in many of their international counterparts. Teachers in Japan and Germany are hired as civil servants with life-long job security, and they express higher satisfaction with their jobs and enjoy a relatively higher social status than teachers in the US and UK, who are hired as local school employees (Fwu, & Wang, 2002). In

addition, the status of teachers evolves over time through the political and cultural changes of a particular society (Hoyle, 1995; Poppleton et al., 1994).

In considering issues of gender difference, teaching has traditionally been viewed as 'women's work' (Apple, 1986; Kaestle, 1983). A study by Freidus (1992) indicated that the concerns of male and female teachers differed in elementary schools. The findings showed that both men and women experienced times when they had severe doubts about whether they would succeed in their new careers as teachers, and both genders had trouble in adapting to the fragmentation of classroom life and the stress of their workloads. Many countries call for more male teachers and a core demand around the issue of boys' schooling is the need for male teachers for boys in elementary schools (Roulston & Mills, 2000).

Reasons for recruiting more men into elementary school teaching have been advanced in the existing literature in order to offer students a more balanced education. Recognizing that women and men have different roles within their capacity of teacher, male teachers can also act as surrogate fathers to increasing numbers of students from homes where the father is absent (Hansen & Mulholland, 2005). Similarly, a study by Mills, Martino, and Lingard (2004) focused on an Australian education policy in the state of Queensland that was concerned with the attraction, recruitment, and retention of male teachers in the government education system in order to take into account complex matters of gender raised by feminism and the sociology of masculinities. The paper critiqued the primary argument given for the need for more male teachers, such as male teachers providing boys with much-needed role models. The document showed that the Queensland State schools had 28% male teachers, and this number was decreasing. However, the policy

document highlighted strategies and plans for increasing the numbers of males in teaching positions, including encouraging males to become teachers at university career fairs and developing scholarship programs for tertiary teaching courses in universities. The study found that while the policy document used such strategies to reinforce privilege as part of a future plan, it still did not recognize the complex nature of gender relations in schools or the ways in which the negative perception of men entering teaching disadvantaged men as a group. Therefore, there is still a shortage of male teachers in schools. There is an essential need for men to have a role in taking responsibility for educating children, which has the added benefit of boys having men in their lives. This also requires resisting the limitations imposed upon students by dominant constructions of gender difference (Mills, 2000; Mills et al., 2004). Many countries find it hard to attract men into elementary school teaching, and much research has been done to undermine the current patterns and reinforce change in the structure of gender itself (Hansen & Mulholland, 2005).

Recently, Qatar has also started considering male teachers as participants in research studies. A paper by Al-Mohannadi and Capel (2007) highlighted the causes of stress for physical education teachers in Qatar. The paper showed that problems with pupils caused more stress for male than female physical education teachers. In Qatari culture, there is different treatment and different expectations for boys and girls, which makes it harder for physical education teachers to deal with boys in lessons. Boys in Qatar have a certain amount of freedom and are allowed to leave home and return at any time, in most cases without permission, which offers more opportunities to misbehave. There is also limited support from families and schools for teachers in the disciplining of boys. In the future, this problem could put male physical teachers at risk of leaving their jobs, which



would increase the shortage of men working in Qatari schools (Al-Mohannadi & Capel, 2007).

#### *2.2.2.7 Evaluation Systems in Schools*

Many studies have been conducted in relation to the evaluation of novice teachers. First of all, the premise of the arguments by the National Education Association (2010) and the study of Tognolini and Stanley (2007) assume that the latest trend in teacher evaluation follows the main theory of standards-based assessment. This theory is directly linked to the learning objectives of the content and performance achievement of the teachers. Overall, it describes a teacher's level in what they know and can do and where they are in relation to their peers. However, this assessment procedure begins with the assumption that the formative evaluation of teachers and progress monitoring are more valid and reliable tools for evaluating the competence of novice teachers than following the broad standards-based assessments theory of teacher evaluation, which often rests on a one-time evaluation (Larsen & Calfee, 2005). Most studies divide teacher evaluations into three methods: diagnostic, formative, and summative evaluations. However, it should be noted that evaluation methods have different applications depending on the purpose (Wang & Cheng, 2012). The National Education Association (2010) and Wang and Cheng (2012) demonstrate that there is a variety of indicators that can be applied to evaluating the performance of new teachers. Indicators include self-assessment, the evaluation of teachers' files, parent evaluation, teaching evaluation, classroom observation and interviews, informal observations, peer review or peer assessment, capacity test, indirect measurement of student academic achievement, and the collection of written materials. In addition, there are multiple measures that depend on state standards and school learning

goals. The collection of student learning data should not be the only significant source of information for measuring teacher performance (National Education Association, 2010; Wang & Cheng, 2012).

However, not all rubrics for teacher evaluation are equally valid and reliable. States and school districts use a variety of rubrics to assess the performance of teachers on an ongoing basis, and none of these evaluation methods is free from criticism. The criteria included in these rubrics are classroom observations by principals and other administrators, rating scales, evaluation by students, and the use of student achievements. As mentioned above, all of these rubrics have been criticized when used as the sole method of evaluation, but they could be beneficial if administrators use multiple evaluation methods. Moreover, research has revealed that teacher evaluations have become a tool used against teachers to control them, to hold them accountable for their services, or to get rid of them when their performance is poor rather than to motivate them toward improvement (Papanastasiou, 1999). As a result, a number of new teachers leave the profession because of the harsh evaluation system, and most administrators use the same evaluation methods for experienced and novice teachers alike, which shows the lack of understanding among principals and other administrators towards evaluating new teachers. An effective teacher evaluation system for new teachers should follow the following two points: (1) improve the quality of teaching by ensuring accountability for classroom performance and (2) provide formative feedback continuously (Xu, Grant, & Ward, 2016).

In the state of Qatar, Qatari teachers receive several bonuses and allowance based on their years of experience, qualifications and points gained in the evaluation at the end of the year. However, the burnout level is still high and schools in Qatar suffer from a high

rate of shortages of both female and male Qatari teachers (Alkhateeb, 2013; Alloh, 2017; Ridge, Shami, Kippels, & Farah, 2014).

### 2.3 Symptoms of the challenges

Many researchers agree that well-being is an important factor in teachers' performance and many studies have examined teachers' well-being in terms of job dissatisfaction, burnout and stress (Klusmann, Kunter, Trautwein, Ludtke & Baumert, 2008; Maslah, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001; Yerdelen, Sungur & Klassen, 2016). Consequently, investigating teachers' stress levels and burnout levels is essential to understanding the flow of this study on novice teachers' challenges.

#### 2.3.1 *Psychological Stressors*

Starting with the pioneering work on psychological stress by Selye in the 1950s (Selye, 1956), the term 'stress' has become widely used in the social sciences. In the 1960s, studies began appearing that paid attention to teachers' concerns, anxieties, sources of job dissatisfaction, and work stress issues. However, in the mid-1970s some publications that directly referred to "stress in teaching" began to appear in considerable numbers. During the 1980s, the number of researchers reporting on teacher stress grew rapidly and by the end of the 1990s, the reviews of 'teacher stress' literature had become voluminous (Griffith, Steptoe, & Copley, 1999). According to Selye (1978), stress is a state that occurs after certain changes in an individual. More specifically, this means that a person's personality affects the emergence of stress, and therefore, stress is not dependent on what happens to a person as much as on how he or she faces the situation. For a novice teacher who has the basic levels of security, acceptance, and confidence in what they are doing as

well as the need to feel a connection with other staff, this person might find it difficult to continue in the profession and might succumb to daily pressures. This situation can cause increased psychological stressors in novices (Joiner & Edwards, 2008).

The abovementioned study by Beers (2012) states that teaching is a stressful profession, and those stressors may reduce teachers' enthusiasm and engagement in teaching, lead to burnout in the early years, and undermine their capacity to meet students' needs. The feeling of stress in novice teachers is usually associated with a heavy workload and job insecurity, leaving them with feelings of self-doubt and doubts about their career choice (Michel, 2013). Additionally, one of the most stressful areas for novice teachers to balance is between school and personal commitments, specifically in the Arab world, where the culture tends to be family-oriented and those who are married have many responsibilities at home (Dickson et al., 2014).

Novice teachers seem to be more vulnerable to the stress and stress interventions of the profession compared to experienced teachers (Gavish & Friedman, 2010; Goddard, O'Brien, & Goddard, 2006; Gold & Roth, 1993). The stress causes of novice teachers are usually associated with the high psychological task demands, negative pupil aspects, negative social aspects, discontent, and negative emotions (Harmsen, Helms-Lorenz, Maulana & van Veen, 2019). Moreover, Harmsen and et al. (2019) suggest that beginning teachers who stay in the profession develop active coping skills and this helps them to cope effectively with most of the stress causes from teaching loads.

### 2.3.2 *Burnout*

Friedman (2000) said that the burnout is conceptualized as “a work-related syndrome stemming from the individual’s perception of a significant gap between expectations of successful professional performance” (p. 595). The investigation on the levels of burnout among teachers at the start of their teaching career may offer insight into its causes. Therefore, the evidence of novice teachers’ burnout in their school organization suggests that novice teacher burnout does not begin once the novice begins to teach but actually starts at the teacher training stage (Levski, 2003; Maslach and Leiter, 1997).

Alloh (2017) examined the burnout levels of a broad cross-sectional sample of primary government schoolteachers from Qatar within the three domains of the burnout syndrome: emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (DP), and personal accomplishment (PA). The study found that novice and experienced teachers reported high levels of EE burnout, indicating that emotional support for novice teachers is important. Alloh (2017) recommended some ways to provide emotional support, which are increasing novice teachers' awareness of the process of burnout, paying attention to the psychological aspects alongside the professional development of teachers, and providing them personal reflection resources, such as coping strategies that have been demonstrated to be effective in challenging burnout effects.

### 2.4 Coping Strategies at Work

The ability to deal with stress is vital to ensure teacher retention. Therefore, many studies investigate ways to alleviate the challenges faced by novice teachers (Rieg, Paquette & Chen, 2007). Reviewing the related literature on the coping strategies of novice teachers

reveals that significant research has been conducted, whereby each study has unique interpretations of these coping strategies. For instance, Sharplin et al. (2011) found that the coping strategies demonstrated by the participants of their study could be categorised in a variety of ways. Direct-action strategies include seeking assistance, getting information, accessing professional development opportunities, connecting with others and reflecting, reframing, and establishing boundaries. Secondly, palliative strategies, such as using a goal focus, establishing psychological boundaries, using humour and maintaining health and well-being, and maintaining relationships were also mentioned. Third, there were also avoidant coping strategies such as taking leave and disengaging. Chaaban and Du (2017) had the same findings in their study on coping strategies; the novice teachers who participated in the study used the abovementioned direct-action strategies, while experienced teachers used both direct-action and palliative strategies. In addition, new teachers employed strategies in seeking help, mainly to deal with classroom management problems and to manage a heavy workload.

Problem-solving is a strategy that has been well documented in the literature. This can be explained as what teachers use to identify the existence of a problem by determining that there is a gap between the initial state and the goal state. Then, through problem-solving, they build a path through the problem space by applying operators that move them from one knowledge state to another. However, beginners have not experienced enough similar situations to give them access to many knowledge states, so their approach to the problem space tends to be inefficient and taxing. For instance, classroom management problems are familiar to an experienced teacher, who has a repertoire of knowledge states such as proximity to misbehavers, eye contact, calming demeanour, lowering one's voice,

and dealing with individuals rather than a group. These behaviours allow the teacher to develop an efficient path through the problem space to the goal state. Experienced teachers can recall these behaviours from their long-term memory, so reaching the goal state is far less demanding than for a novice teacher (Le Maistre and Paré, 2010).

To ameliorate the concerns of teacher education programs and the work stress experienced by student teachers, Murry-Harvey (2001) studied the importance of coping strategies and worked to develop strategies in order to have the best performances of pre-service teachers in any challenges they may face in their future profession as teachers. The researcher identified four main categories of coping strategies: (1) personal, (2) professional, (3) social, and (4) institutional. In summary, the study suggested several coping strategies within each of these categories. Personal strategies included the setting of realistic expectations, positive thinking, blocking negative comments, pragmatism, sports, watching TV, listening to music, simply relaxing or talking, and/or reading. In addition, seeking information regarding the curriculum and teaching expectations and better understanding the structure, organization and culture of the school helped pre-service teachers feel more comfortable in a classroom environment; this can be categorized as strategies for professional development. In this context, social coping strategies can be suggested in conversation and reflected upon with family and friends. Involvement in social events away from schoolwork stress was another positive coping strategy. Lastly, in terms of institutional coping strategies, such as at the university level, university supervisors can contact student teachers in times of stress. At the school level, the support of the department coordinator or other experienced teachers can help the student teachers when they become full-time teachers (Murray-Harvey, 2001).

#### *2.4.1 Collaboration and Social Support as a Way of Coping*

Several studies have demonstrated that novice teachers benefit from being involved in collaborative teaching. Studies have pointed out that a lack of collaboration and social support from colleagues can have a negative impact on perceived self-efficacy and has been associated with burnout. Teacher collaboration is important in reducing the effects of burnout for all teachers. In particular, novices can benefit from collaboration with mentors and experienced teachers. Collaboration can be seen as a coping strategy that novice teachers use to adjust to the teaching profession, which is achieved through collaboration with other teachers, receiving positive feedback, active engagement by parents in their children's school, and the management of student behaviour (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014; Griffith et al., 1999; Tait, 2008).

In their investigation of stressors faced by novice teachers in the elementary classroom, Rieg et al. (2007) interviewed five new teachers and found that for four of them the process of talking with administrators or colleagues was very effective. These teachers reported that their colleagues experienced the same situations, problems, and concerns. Therefore, both female and male teachers mentioned that sharing humour with colleagues tended to alleviate some of the stress while listening to their colleagues' suggestions helped to relieve some tensions (Rieg et al., 2007).

#### *2.4.2 Resilience as a Coping Strategy*

A critical overview of empirical studies over time reveals several considerations in the ways in which resilience is conceptualized. Resilience is a means of dealing with contextual situations, which is nurtured and activated in times of stress. Scholars have



defined resilience as an individual's capacity to face challenges and adapt to and/or thrive despite experiencing adversity. Resilience is not solely a personal attribute but is a complex construct resulting from a dynamic relationship between risk and protective factors (Benard, 2004; Beltman, Mansfield, and Price, 2011; Garmezy, 1974; Grotberg, 1997; Masten, Best, and Garmezy, 1990). In addition, Patterson, Collins, and Abbott (2004) defined resilience in relation to teacher resilience as "using energy productively in order to achieve school goals in the face of adverse conditions" (p. 3).

Teacher resilience is a recent area of investigation in the field of teacher education, which provides insight into what enables teachers to persist in the face of challenges, offering a complementary overview of studies of attrition, stress, and burnout. A limited number of studies have directly examined resilience, but empirical works have shed light on the many risks and protective factors that relate to teacher resilience. The relationships between risk and protective factors have been found to play out in complex ways in different settings, over time, and for individual teachers. Such research may serve to reduce high attrition rates but may also ensure that those who stay in the profession thrive as confident and healthy professionals (Beltman et al., 2011).

Indeed, risk factors for novice teachers might include the typical stressors encountered in the first year of teaching, such as the expectations and overall scope of the job, disparity between teacher expectations and preparation, lack of support, and isolation as well as an emerging gap between a novice teacher's vision of teaching and the realities of the job (Tait, 2008). To insulate teachers from the effect of these risk factors, Benard (2003) suggests that they need opportunities for professional development, caring collegial relationships, resources, time, materials, high expectations on the part of school leaders,

and opportunities for shared decision-making and planning. New teachers enhance their capacity for resilience by fostering productive relationships with people who understand the trials and tribulations of teaching and who reinforce the value of what teachers do, thus offering insight into the various options available for dealing with a variety of teaching situations (Bobek, 2002).

Tait (2008) outlined several categories that demonstrate the characteristics of a resilient teacher based on findings drawn from interviews with novice teachers. These included taking advantage of opportunities to develop personal efficacy, using problem-solving strategies, learning from experience and setting goals for the future, the ability to rebound after dealing with a difficult experience, demonstrating social competence and taking care of oneself. Tait (2008) added that novice teachers should give them the right kinds of professional, social, and emotional support toward developing resilient behaviours and responses. Another study by Castro, Kelly and Shih (2010) investigated the strategies of resilience exhibited by fifteen novice teachers employed in both urban and rural contexts and in special education. The findings of this qualitative study indicated a variety of strategies, including managing difficult relationships, problem-solving, seeking help, and seeking rejuvenation/renewal. These strategies assisted beginning teachers in building additional resources and support.

## 2.5 Leaving

For a variety of reasons and in several countries, a great number of teachers leave the profession after a few years of teaching. This indicates that the profession is challenging for teachers who face multiple issues in school contexts (Gaikhorst Beishuizen, Korstjens, & Volman, 2014). Educators and policymakers have enacted many efforts to recruit more

teachers due to low teacher retention rates (Huling et al., 2012). Therefore, the rate of teachers who are leaving vs. those who are staying seems to affect the schools' effectiveness, learning process, and student achievements. For these reasons, the concern about teacher shortages has resulted in several research studies (Mutoria, 2007).

A recent study done by McConnell (2017) found that there are economic and sociological theories to consider in understanding why teachers choose to leave or to remain in the profession. The basic theory of 'supply and demand in the labour market', as related to economics, was cited. During a teacher shortage, any country can make changes to the policies pertaining to hiring standards in order to fill the number of open teaching positions. This can result in an increased number of teachers who are not fully qualified for the role. Although they are less qualified, the education system provides educational and professional development in order to retain teachers. For instance, McConnell (2017) stated that knowledge and expertise in mathematics and science are prioritized in hiring teachers for engineering and/or business even though these hired professionals do not have a background in education. This is done because of the need to fill teaching positions in those fields.

In addition, the sociological context plays an important role in understanding the issue of teacher retention. Organizational management theory states that the job satisfaction of teachers is affected by organizational and occupational contexts. Simply put, if a teacher's work expectations within the organization are met, they are more likely to stay. Some working conditions, like low workplace safety, a lack of administrative support, a high level of student misbehaviour, scarce classroom resources, or inadequate opportunities for professional development, highly impact a teacher's decision to stay or

leave (McConnell, 2017). In short, economic and sociological influences play major roles in a teacher's decision to remain in or leave the profession in many countries.

Moreover, several studies have highlighted the issue of how administrative support can directly affect a teacher's decision to leave or remain. The findings of these studies have shown that excessive time commitments, as determined by administrators, heavy workload, and less administrative support, can reduce the sense of job satisfaction among teachers. With this, the leadership styles of principals are essential aspects of job satisfaction and teacher retention. Moreover, teachers are more likely to stay in a particular school if they are satisfied with the school leadership (Aiken, 2010; McConnell, 2017). Additionally, research by Pedota (2015) has illustrated that a lack of student success impacts teacher self-efficacy and ultimately the decision as to whether to remain in the profession. Teachers also realize that being certified alone does not guarantee success in teaching, and they are aware that the quality of teaching is a very important factor in student achievement and self-efficacy. Thus, teacher performance and satisfaction increase when they see student success in their subject area.

The issue of teacher shortages in the Arab world is substantial, as indicated in the study by Demirjian (2015). It was reported that due to the rise of the number of children/students in schools and the low supply of qualified teachers, the United Arab Emirates resorted to hiring foreign teachers. Now, the country relies more on foreign teachers than on Emirati teachers. The study also indicated that the rise of teacher attrition rates in the UAE among foreign teachers can be connected to the perceived low salaries in comparison to heavy workloads as the primary reasons for this (Demirjian et al., 2015).

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter begins by elaborating on the research context and research design of this project. This is then followed by providing information on the participants, sampling and data generation methods, procedure, and data analysis. Subsequently, the validity of the research and ethical considerations are presented at the end of the chapter.

### 3.1 Research Context and Design

#### *Context*

Researchers have emphasized that context plays an essential role in the process of any organizational change (Henriksen, 2004). This research project has been conducted in Qatari government schools, with novice teachers within the system as its participants. According to Henriksen (2004), it is important to explore the teachers' initial experiences, including deep understandings, reflections, perceptions, opinions and daily practices. In particular, an individual recipient's perception of change tends to be situational (Vakola, 2013). With this intention, this study aims to examine the commitments, challenges, and levels of motivation among novice teachers in their experience of teaching in the context of Qatari government schools. In addition, this work will explore the coping mechanisms or practices that teachers use in order to accustom themselves to their daily work in Qatari schools. This study specifically focuses on Qatar because there have been multiple reform decisions in Qatar's education system, which have in turn caused instability in the school environment. This results in a growing number of challenges that novice teachers face in schools, with the consequence that they have a difficult time coping with all these changes.

### *Design*

This research is aimed at understanding the experiences of teachers as they face challenges in school environments and offers opinions regarding the coping strategies that they use, rather than assessing their performance. Therefore, a qualitative research design was developed because it provides a deeper understanding and offers insight into teachers' lived experiences (Punch & Oancea, 2014). Indeed, qualitative research covers a meaning level and a factual level in order to obtain descriptions from different aspects of a person's life-world, which declares a person's interpretation between the lines; it depends in words and not numbers. (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Kvale, 1996; Patton, 1990; Punch & Oancea, 2014). This is the only method that has been utilized in answering the research questions, through the process of collecting and analysing the data in this study.

### 3.2 Participants

The target population for this research included novice teachers in Qatari governmental schools with teaching experience ranging from 0 to 3 years. This study did not attempt to focus on a specific grade level, a certain subject area, or any particular type of school. However, it targeted on accessible participants, whether from the primary, preparatory or secondary schools. Novice teachers of both genders were invited to participate, which was therefore taken into consideration in this study. It is important to note that Qatari teachers and non-Qatari residents who were born and raised in Qatar formed the target population sample of this study. The purpose of this study was to look for novice Qatari teachers and resident teachers who were born and lived in Qatar and were thus familiar with education reforms in the country, thereby focusing on their struggles and the kinds of challenges that they faced.

In addition, this study included not only novice teachers who still work in the education system but also teachers who had left the teaching field within the first three years of gaining teaching experience. The reasoning for this was to explore the various challenges faced by novice teachers in the first three years of teaching which resulted in their inability to adapt to the Qatari government school system and ultimately led them to leave their teaching careers. Novice teachers who had already left the teaching field also participated in this study via interview. Their inclusion empowered these teachers to share their experiences of working in the teaching field, giving us the opportunity to hear their voices and to share the challenges they faced in their teaching careers. Fifteen teachers were invited to participate in this study in both formal and informal interview environments (Table 1).

Table 1. Characteristics of the Study Participants

Teacher's Name	Gender	Status	Teaching Experience	Grade Level of Teaching	Educational Background	Nationality
T 1	Female	Stayed in teaching profession	11 Months	Secondary and preparatory grade level	Graduated from College of Education/ Islamic Studies	Born and raised in Qatar
T 2	Female	Stayed in teaching profession	3 Years	Primary, preparatory, and secondary level	Graduated from College of Education/ English Language	Born and raised in Qatar
T 3	Female	Stayed in teaching profession	3 Years	Primary level	Graduated from College of Education/ Math and Science	Qatari



Teacher's Name	Gender	Status	Teaching Experience	Grade Level of Teaching	Educational Background	Nationality
T 4	Female	Stayed in teaching profession	3 Years	Primary level	Graduated from College of Education/ Math and Science	Qatari
T 5	Female	Stayed in teaching profession	3 Years	Primary level	Graduated from College of Education/ Math and Science	Qatari
T 6	Male	Stayed in teaching profession	3 Years	Preparatory level	Graduated from College of Islamic Studies/ University in KSA	Qatari

Teacher's Name	Gender	Status	Teaching Experience	Grade Level of Teaching	Educational Background	Nationality
T 7	Male	Stayed in teaching profession	8 Months	Primary level	Graduated from College of Shariah & Islamic in KSA	Qatari
T 8	Male	Stayed in teaching profession	3 Years	Primary level	Graduated from College of Shariah & Islamic in KSA	Qatari
T 9	Male	Left the teaching field after finishing two years of an "Teach for Qatar" organizational contract	2 Months	Preparatory level	Graduated from Texas A&M/ Mechanical Engineering	Qatari
T 10	Male	Left the teaching field and finished the two years of an "Teach for Qatar" organizational contract	2 Years	Preparatory level	Graduated from Qatar University/ Chemical Engineering	Qatari

Teacher's Name	Gender	Status	Teaching Experience	Grade Level of Teaching	Educational Background	Nationality
T 11	Male	Left the teaching field after two years of an "Teach for Qatar" organizational contract	2 Years	Preparatory level	Graduated from Qatar University/ Mechanical Engineering	Qatari
T 12	Female	Left the teaching field	2 Years	Primary level	Graduated from College of Education/ English Language	Born and raised in Qatar
T 13	Female	Left the teaching field	3 Months	Primary level	Graduated from College of Education/ English Language	Qatari
T 14	Female	Left the teaching field and finished two years of an "Teach for Qatar" organizational contract	3 Years	Preparatory level	Graduated from Qatar University/ Social Work Major	Qatari

Teacher's Name	Gender	Status	Teaching Experience	Grade Level of Teaching	Educational Background	Nationality
T 15	Female	Left the teaching field and finished two years of an "Teach for Qatar" organization's contract	2 Years	Preparatory level	Graduated from Qatar University/ Social Work Major	Qatari

Table 1 shows the gender, status, years of experience, teaching level, educational background and nationality of the study participants. In brief, participants from T 1 to T 9 are teachers working in schools, and each of them works in a different school; the participants from T 10 to T 15 are teachers who had left the teaching profession after gaining teaching experience for a few months or years. Participants T 1, T 2, and T 12 were born and raised in Qatar, and the remainder are Qatari.

It is important to note that participants T 9, T 10, T 11, T 14, and T 15 are teachers with a “Teach For Qatar” contract of two years. This is an organization that recruits individuals who are from different careers (doctors, engineers, etc.) as teachers for two years (Teach For Qatar, 2019). This organization follows the national professional standards of MOEHE while recruiting individuals. It gives people the opportunity to be teachers for a short time, and after two years they can return to their original workplace or renew the contract and officially work as teachers (Teach For Qatar, 2019). To qualify, this organization requires that during the two years individuals should have in-depth knowledge of the subject areas that they want to teach and be in a training program to gain best teaching and learning practices through collaborations with the training team of this organization.

### 3.3 Sampling

Snowball sampling is the most widely used method in qualitative research across various disciplines involving education research. Snowball sampling yields a study with fruitful information through connections made among people who share or know of others who possess the same characteristics of the research interest. In this sampling, the researcher asks participants to recommend other individuals to participate in the study and

who share similar knowledge on a particular issue or topic (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981; Noy, 2008).

### 3.4 Data Generation Methods

#### *In-depth Interviews*

Interviewing is the most prominent data collection tool in qualitative research (Punch & Oancea, 2014). According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), “an interview is literally an *inter view*, an interchange of views between two persons.” Kvale (1996) added that the qualitative interview is a powerful method and is uniquely sensitive in capturing the lived meanings and experiences of the subjects’ everyday world. Subjects convey to others their own situations in their own words and from their own perspectives, which is unlike other forms of research that seek to study phenomena in abstraction from their context. Therefore, interviews provide a specific context for knowledge production (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2015). The researcher followed the quality criteria guidelines that have been provided by several scholars, such as Creswell (2013), Kvale (1996) and Kvale and Brinkmann (2015), which directed the researcher towards spontaneous, rich, and relevant answers for this study.

The interview process attempted to answer the research questions for this study, which are as follows: 1) “What are the major challenges novice teachers face in their first years of teaching?” and 2) “What are the coping strategies that help address the needs of novice teachers in Qatar?” One-on-one interviews are the choice for this study, conducted via audio recording. In turn, the interview questions followed the ‘introductory questions’, which involved an open-ended query that gave the researcher rich descriptions and

provided information about teachers' experiences (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). The interviewee expressed the challenges they faced during their teaching career in Qatari governmental schools. The researcher also elicited responses about the coping strategies that novice teachers have used in their teaching career. The duration of the interviews was between 30 to 60 minutes for each interviewee. Fifteen teachers volunteered to be interviewed, and all interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' permission. With this in mind, the interview questions asked of the novice teachers who ultimately left the profession differed from those who continue to work in the field (see Appendix C). Subsequently, the researcher transcribed the interviews. After transcribing the fifteen different interviews, the researcher then analysed the data by focusing on identifiable patterns and themes of teachers' experiences, which are further detailed in Section 3.6.

### 3.5 Procedure

The procedures for data generation and analysis followed the steps and timeline below:

- Mid-April 2018: applications submitted for ethical approval from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE) and from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) from Qatar University's Institutional Review Board (QU-IRB) (See Appendix ... MOEHE and IRB approval).
- May 6, 2018: received the MOEHE approval and on May 29, 2018 received IRB approval.
- Early September 2018: contacted participating teachers to arrange visits (date and place) for the interview locations.
- Mid-October 2018: finalization of interviews.
- Early November 2018: the transcription of interviews data was completed.

- December 2018 to January 2019: analysis of the transcriptions of interview data was completed.

### 3.6 Data Analysis

The purpose of qualitative research has been depicted as the interpretation and description of themes in the lived world of individuals. The interpretation is usually focused on context and meanings, and the report of data analysis is purposed to offer a condensed description of a phenomenon (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Specifically, analysing qualitative data usually deals with texts; text data are dense and rich and the process involves aggregating data into a smaller number of themes (Creswell, 2014 & Kvale, 1996). As a coherent interpretation, with related concepts and themes, emerges from the analysis, incomplete data will lead to new opportunities for collection and analysis that will serve to further strengthen the interpretation. In turn, interpretation takes shape as modifications become rare and concepts fall into established categories and themes. Ultimately, analysis is sufficient when critical categories are found, connections among them are established, and they are combined into an elegant, credible interpretation (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The overall process of analysis in this research involved an integrated approach of engaging in several rounds of comparing and contrasting the interview data, called a thematic analysis (Kvale, 1996; Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

In this study, a thematic approach to analysing qualitative data is considered in order to gain validity. This approach allows for the discovery of unconsidered themes, which produce new meanings in a bottom-up approach (Namey, Guest, Thairu, & Johnson, 2008).

In this study, thematic analysis was conducted in analysing the texts of the interview



transcripts to help answer the research questions embedded in the collected data (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

Several rounds of interview data analysis were conducted of this empirical study. The procedure was as is described in the following.

The recorded interviews were transcribed and manually coded through several rounds of reading the transcripts in order to connect the texts to meanings in relation to the research questions. In the first round of analysing the interview transcripts, the thematic analysis approach was used to analyse the current challenges that novice teachers face in Qatar's government schools. In this way, patterns were categorized, and themes and sub-themes were identified in order to answer the first research question of the study. Likewise, during the second round of data analysis, the main themes that were presented in participants' views and opinions were reported and identified based on categorizing meanings within the data (See Appendix D). This helped to clarify the second research question, regarding the strategies that these teachers used to cope in teaching environments (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

To answer the two research questions, the researcher spent some time transcribing the fifteen interviews with the study participants and followed several procedures as outlined by Kvale (1996) and Marshall and Rossman (2016). In the beginning, the written transcriptions were organized by listing the data on note cards instead of using software programs. Then, the data were organized according to interview questions, personal characteristics, and gender. Second, the data were reread so that the researcher could establish a personal connection with the participants, including people, events, quotations that helped to write some codes from the presented data. Third, for the transformation of

the codes into themes, the researcher listed down the themes of each research question, which were derived from the literature review or from new interpretations gathered from the teachers participating in this study (see Appendix D). Finally, after the analytical process, the researcher represented the qualitative data by writing and reporting the participants' responses (see Chapter Four).

### 3.7 Researcher's Role and Subjectivities

In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument of the study (Eisner, 1991). In addition, Peshkin (1988) mentioned that "It is no more useful for researchers to acknowledge simply that subjectivity is an invariable component of their research than it is for them to assert that their ideal is to achieve objectivity" (p. 17). Many studies turned their attention to the researcher's role, and researchers should systematically seek out their subjectivity as it has been found that subjectivity may be shaping their inquiry and its outcomes (Eisner, 1991; Mruck & Breuer, 2003; Peshkin, 1988).

Therefore, the researcher in this study addressed the subjectivity and reflexivity rather than an ambiguous task, especially when it reflects the experiences of people. The researcher employed the subjectivity in the sense that it did not impact on the data of the study nor on the results of the study. Subjectivity was used while choosing the research's nature, topic and accessible participants. Moreover, during the data collection and interviewing process, there was flexibility in choosing the location and time by the participants. Subjectivity was also employed when the researcher had difficulties eliciting answers from the participants regarding the research question, so the researcher asked open questions to participants that provided further explanation of the interview questions.

### 3.8 Ethical Considerations

Before conducting the study, the researcher sought ethical approval. First, approval was sought from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE) (see Appendix A) and from the Institutional Review Board at Qatar University (QU-IRB) (see Appendix B). Teachers were provided with consent forms with explanations of the purposes and potential consequences of the study. The teachers in this study participated voluntarily, and they maintained the right to withdraw from the study at any time. All teachers were kept anonymous following their suggestions. The research results will also be communicated with all participants at a later stage.

## CHAPTER FOUR: QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

In sections 4.1 and 4.2 the findings are shown according to the major domains covered during the interview process. Face-to-face interviews were conducted within the various teachers' school environments and in an informal environment in order to collect answers to the two primary research questions of the study. While a clear focus of the current study involves the challenges faced by novice teachers and their responses in terms of coping strategies, the data collected from the participants provided an alternative lens through which interpretations and comparisons could be made.

### 4.1 Research Question 1: What are the major challenges faced by novice teachers in their first years of teaching?

The first round of thematic analysis identified the challenges faced by novice teachers in Qatari governmental schools from the interview transcripts, indicating that these challenges can be categorized into three levels. To elicit these challenges, the question, "What are the challenges that you have faced so far as a young teacher?" was asked of all the interview participants. The three interrelated levels of challenges faced by the novice teachers emerged from the thematic analysis of interview data, as presented below (see Figure 1):

- Individual challenges
- Challenges within the school environment
- Challenges beyond the school environment

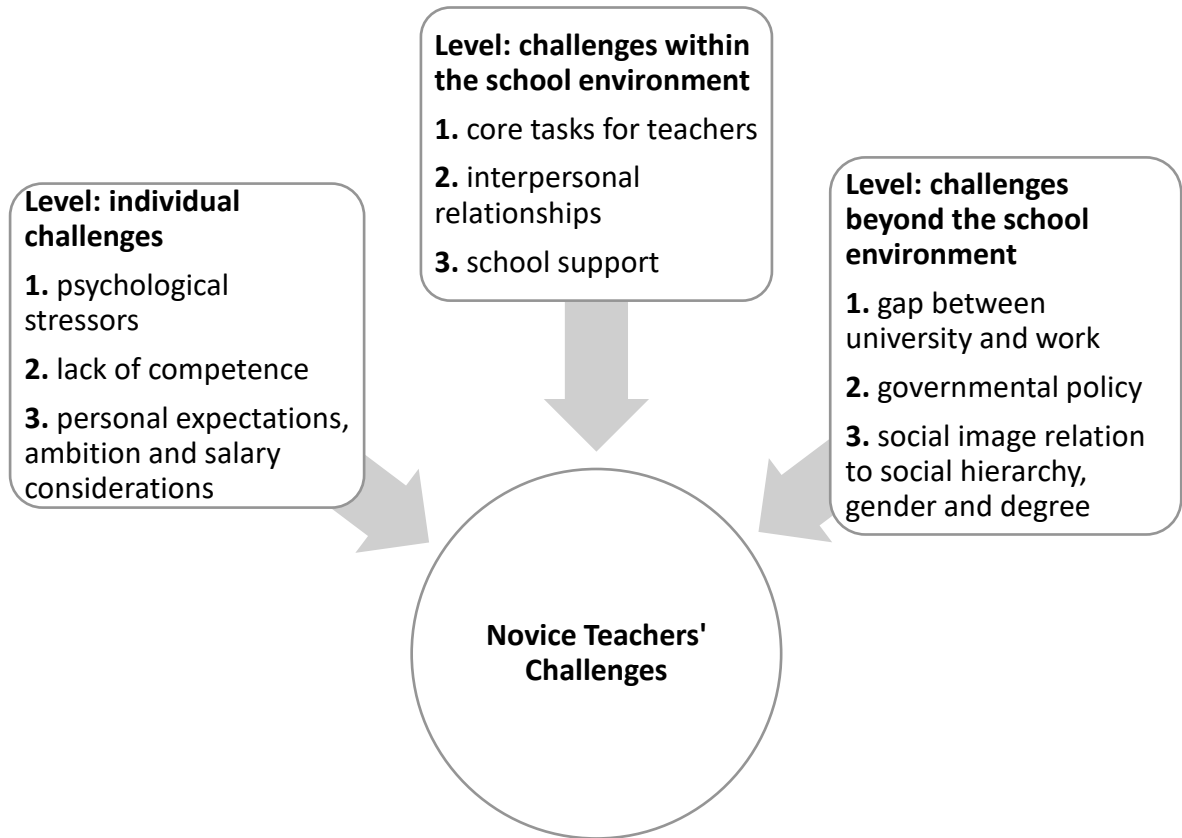


Figure 1. Three interrelated levels of challenges faced by novice teachers.

Level: “Individual Challenges”. The first level that emerged during the analysis process involves the individual challenges that ten participant teachers mentioned regarding this level of challenges in their interviews. This level can be classified into three main categories based on the thematic analysis, which are (1) psychological stressors, (2) lack of competence and (3) personal expectations and ambition (See Appendix D, Table 2).

Category (1): Psychological Stressors. Through the interviews among the 15 teachers, four female teachers (T1), (T2), (T12), and (T15) shared similar feelings of stress or of being exhausted throughout their workdays and at home. Two of them expressed that their psychological stressors were caused by both school administrators and students in the classroom space. The other two female teachers were stressed from the teaching system in government schools in general as well as paperwork and exhaustion arising from administrative demands. The most vivid description was by T1, who described feeling panicked all day in school because of the warning letters that she may receive from the school administrators if she did something wrong. In addition, T12 stated:

I am already exhausted with all the preparing, and they come and tell me take them to the morning line up or go with them to..., so many tiring tasks, it would be better if they left the teacher to do what she came to do, in the classroom.

Lack of self-confidence can be identified among the psychological stressors. Four teachers (T1, T2, T6, and T9) reported that some of the demands from the schools and the MOEHE were the main reasons behind feelings of self-doubt, which had the effect of lowering their self-confidence in their own teaching abilities. This was particularly apparent in the discussions about lesson plans or other academic issues. The teachers found it difficult to find opportunities to build their own identity in their academic work. T9 mentioned:

Teachers can't add their personal touch to their lesson plans, each teacher has his own way of teaching... my coordinator of the department did not like it, regardless if it was better or not. So this standardization is good for teachers to raise their levels, but it also bad for creative teachers.

A male teacher (T6) was so disappointed by MOEHE's decision to reject him for the coordinator position that he felt a diminished level of self-confidence and doubted his citizenship capabilities and management abilities within his department at the school. He stated:

When we went to the MOE to apply for a coordinator position, welcome us as a Qatari competence, but when we went out, it was a big no ... I think their decision process for a coordinator is not well-managed. They don't even consult with the school, not the principal, not even the vice-principal. That educational guidance person in MOEHE could be racist.

Category (2): Lack of Competence. Three teachers (T2) (T8) and (T14) held a similar interpretation of the topic of competence. Two female teachers (T2) and (T14) discovered in their first months of teaching that they were unable to master their teaching goals with their students due to a lack of competence and skills that more experienced teachers possessed. They reported that they had received insufficient support in the development of the competences required in the teaching profession. T14 also said:

My first year was really hard. I needed to work a lot on myself, by myself. So the load was on me, I had to develop myself; I worked hard and never expected anything from the school. Yes, some people offered help but the perception of weakness was always there.

A male teacher also admitted that he had problems with using technology and worked hard to improve this aspect: "I was not good with computers, and everything was

done electronically. ... I felt depressed at the beginning, I had to make PowerPoints that covered the material in a suitable way for the students.”

Category (3): Personal Expectations, Ambition, and Salary Considerations. Four of the teachers (T5, T8, T12 and T13) among the fifteen participants expressed concern about their personal expectations in relation to their teaching positions. Female teachers had a different perspective than the male teachers. Female and male teachers both preferred other lifelong learning plans rather than being a teacher for their entire lives. Therefore, some of the female teachers were seeking other jobs that would allow them to continue their higher education or work at a university at the same time as continuing their studies. In addition, for two female teachers (T12) and (T13), their primary reason for leaving the teaching field was their personal ambition to continue their PhDs, explaining that it would be impossible to complete their degrees if they continued on as schoolteachers. As T5 said:

“I just started my master’s because I want to be employed at the university. When I graduate I will continue at the university, studying and working. This is my future plan; I don’t see myself in the school anymore. I was really excited when I started but, you know, the ministry controls everything.

But, a male teacher (T8) planned to apply for a master’s degree and was only seeking a full-time break in order to continue his studies, not to leave permanently. He also expressed disappointment that MOEHE did not support him in continuing his studies. He said: “I want to apply for a master’s, [and] it needs to be a full-time leave; I have to be totally free, but the ministry has stopped taking applications for the moment.”



Finally, six female and male participants commented on salary considerations, and each of them held different opinions. Some male teachers found the teacher's salary suitable for their financial status, especially as teachers of religious studies, because the salaries for working at other religious sites or related professions would be comparably lower. As T8 said:

The principal told me he wanted to place me among the administrative staff, as vice-principal, to control the students since I know their families and stuff. But I did not want that, because if I went from an academic to be an administrative, my salary would go down, almost 10,000 QR less, I don't want that, I prefer to be an academic. Both of them are a lot of work. For Qataris, give it 5-7 years and you can be a principal—not a vice-principal, a principal.

Different opinions came from male teachers who were engineers and were placed in the schools with a two-year temporary contract via the "Teach For Qatar" institution. In contrast, they did not want to entirely sacrifice the salaries, benefits, and life insurance that they collected from their private companies. T10 elaborated:

As a Qatari and an excellent engineer, there are better choices in private companies, especially from a financial point view. Why I would stay in teaching with low salary? So, I went back to the Dolphin Energy Company, because did not want to sacrifice on the financial part.

Furthermore, some female teachers viewed the salary as an insignificant reason to stay in the teaching profession for the rest of their lives; therefore, they changed their jobs after some time and look for new opportunities. T13 also said:

Okay, for 99% of teachers the most important thing is the salary. For example, I don't care about the salary as much as I care about the creativity and achievements of the job. If I don't see any progress, I feel that it restricts my creativity.

And T15 stated that: "teachers don't want salaries, we just want to feel appreciated and highly regarded in society".

Level: "Challenges Within the School Environment". To obtain information related the challenges within the school environment of novices, the question "How do you describe your daily life of being a young teacher in a Qatari governmental school?" was asked of all teachers interviewed for this study. In response to this question, the participants discussed their beliefs in terms of how they interpreted their role in the school and classroom. Although each role's interpretation will be discussed separately, there was considerable overlap among the participants. Fifteen of the teachers participating in the study expressed encountering a number of challenges within the school environment, exceeding individual challenges and even challenges beyond the school environment. This indicates the complexity of the school context and how these young teachers struggled in a new environment. A thematic analysis of the interview data divided the challenges within the school environment into the three following categories: (1) core tasks for teachers, (2) interpersonal relationships and (3) school support (See Appendix D, Table 2).

Category (1): Core Tasks for Teachers. Teachers received the same number of teaching assignments as their more experienced peers during their first years, and these core tasks could be summarized as classroom management, planning of lessons, administrative demands, extracurricular activities for the school, professional development sessions and methods of evaluation.

Classroom Management. Ten participants, including both female and male teachers (T2, T4, T6, T7, T8, T10, T11, T12, T14 and T15), viewed classroom management as a primary challenge for any novice teacher entering the world of teaching in a school environment, and this was a core task for the teachers. Ten participants reported several viewpoints regarding classroom management, and each of them gave different accounts of how they coped with this challenge.

Five of the male teachers (T6, T7, T8, T10 and T11), agreed that the number of classes/periods that they were assigned to teach in their first year was too much for them, and this was combined with a high density of students in each class. Each class had more than 30 students. This meant that the male teachers could not cover all the learning objectives of the lesson in order to finish the lesson on time. It is hard to cover more than four learning objectives while at the same time maintaining classroom discipline. T6 said:

But at first the most challenging thing was the workload that they gave me, as it was my first year. They shouldn't have given me this many periods—they gave me 12 periods/week. Yes, most teachers teach as much, and it is not easy, but I was new. They could have given them to me little by little, 4 periods/week, which is one section, then two sections, then three, and then I would be able to manage 4 sections no problem. Giving me 12 periods/week at the beginning was hard.

Similarly, female teachers (T2 and T4) also suffered due to the high numbers of students in the class. The female teachers found that the high numbers of students in the classes prevented the teacher's productivity; as an example, for the writing lessons, the English teacher wanted to have the students to write two to three drafts for each writing prompt in the class and then have the students share their pieces of writing with their peers.

In addition, the teacher needed time to review student writings and correct mistakes in-class. This process is hard to follow if there is a large number of students, and the novices were disappointed in the principal and the vice-principal because they are the ones tasked with distributing the classes to each teacher. According to the study participants, the principals did not consider the needs of the novice teachers when it came to the load or the number of students in a class. Regarding this issue, T4 said:

I wanted to make a student improvement plan. So students' levels are A, B, and C, and I take the C group because they are the most in need for improvement, while giving the other two groups exercises. I am alone in the class, so everyone is calling for me, but I want to focus on C group, they need to see and touch stuff to understand, they need time... To be able to produce a well-educated generation. 20-25 students is good for the teacher to be able to focus on each student.

Female teachers (T12, T14 and T15) added that some administrators would not distribute punishments if there was poor behaviour among the students, and therefore, misbehaving students posed a challenge for novices who lacked classroom management techniques. Moreover, teachers claimed that the level of the students was considerably below average, while the textbooks had high standards; as a result, two of the teachers who had left the profession voiced that they had a hard time dealing with students who did not know how to read and write. T14 stated: "If I tell you about the challenges, the ones I faced with students are normal behaviour problems, it is expected for anyone going into teaching to have a hard time with the students, this generation isn't easy."

In addition, individual differences were another big challenge for the teachers and because of their limited experience in the teaching field, novices had difficulties in dealing

with several academic levels of students within the same classroom. Therefore, female teachers (T4, T12 and T15) as well as male teachers (T8, T10 and T11) mentioned in their interviews the difficulty of applying strategies to address the individual needs among their students.

T8 mentioned this issue of individual differences with boys at the primary level and how students' achievement levels differed among them, resulting in the fact that novices put extra effort into raising their academic levels. He explained:

We have more than 150 students who don't know how to read and write, coming from 4<sup>th</sup> grade. How did they pass? ... Those students mostly come from illiterate families, their mothers or fathers don't read and write, very old parents. We come across sensitive cases like orphans; it's hard.

Lesson Planning. The second challenge that most of the participants mentioned in their interviews involved lesson planning. The process that new teachers went through, such as selecting educational objectives, diagnosing learner characteristics, and choosing from alternative instructional strategies in order to achieve certain learner outcomes, appears to have been hard for them. Seven among fifteen participants in this study, namely (T1), (T2), (T9), (T11), (T12), (T13), and (T14), mentioned the planning issues arose from various perspectives. A number of female and male teachers were disappointed with the standardized lesson plan, which they viewed as unfair and restricted their planning abilities in some way. Teachers in governmental schools do not have much freedom or independence to make alterations to lesson plans, and they are required to hand the lesson plans to their department coordinators weekly or as requested. The teachers' interview data shows that their department coordinator controls both the selected educational objectives

and the instructional strategies for each daily lesson. Teachers also could be questioned if they did not finish the required educational objectives on time.

An example of this connection can be found in the following statement by T9:

They standardize the lesson plans, so everyone delivers the same lesson, asks the same questions. I tried once to change something, and they did not like it in the department, regardless if it was better or not. So this standardization is good for teachers to raise their levels, but it is also bad for creative teachers and dulls their skills.

In addition, a female participant also complained that she was required to plan for two grades, and there was a considerable gap between them: one was primary, and the other was preparatory. There is no link between the two curriculums. Weekly, she had to plan almost 10 lesson plans with different activities and worksheets, and she became very tired with these issues. Administrative Demands. Most of the teachers thought that they would only have a teaching load and the responsibilities connected to students, especially novices who had education degrees. They were unaware of the additional administrative demands assigned by school administrators. Teaching is not an isolated job; all teachers are required to fulfil administrative tasks and responsibilities in their schools. However, it seems that the administrative demands posed a major challenge for most of the participants in this study. A question was asked of all participants to demonstrate whether the novices experienced administrative demands beyond their daily workload in the schools. The question was: “What do you think are the reasons behind the challenges that young teachers are facing in their daily lives of teaching?” Nine among the fifteen participants (T1, T2, T3, T5, T6, T8, T10, T11, and T14) responded that school administrators make everything

complicated in the school system by taking their personal demands to the teachers, and moreover, MOEHE is unaware of some of these demands. The school administrators ask teachers to take on extra workload which is far from their primary teaching responsibilities. In addition, some teachers were surprised by the tasks they were asked to perform, as female teacher T1 commented:

There are lots of administrative demands. For example, in my last school I used to look after the girls during their break time. ... And If I didn't want to come, the administrators, I have to sign a warning paper. ... For us as teachers, the academic vice-principal, she demands a lot. ... If we do not want to do something, she gives warnings, so all the time I feel terrified...

A male teacher also commented that none of the teachers can refuse administrative tasks. T10 said: "There is a written item, that 'The teacher should do whatever the administrators required them to say', which means that the teacher should do everything without questioning why or having an argument with the school administration."

Additionally, a female teacher expressed that one of her first reasons for leaving the school was the workload of administrative tasks, commenting:

All at once, the teacher is a social worker, an officer, a principal; it is all in the classroom. The teacher is responsible for everything, which is such a load ... but if others did their part right, then I might be still teaching. I would adapt more easily to the students, I would have achieved the success I wanted; but as you can see one year, two years, and then the third year drained me ... but it does drain the energy, because your energy goes to things and tasks that aren't necessary.

Extracurricular Activities in the School. Teachers are aware of the significance of extracurricular activities for the school's development and the potential benefits for the students. However, six participants (T1, T2, T4, T6, T8, and T14) of this study felt that these extracurricular activities turned their attention from their main priority, which was the academic success of their students. Both female and male teachers who remained in the profession shared the same belief that focusing on their students is more significant than extracurricular activities, which they view as a waste of time and effort. They believe that a teacher's role should focus on supervision. However, in schools now the teachers prepare all these activities and hand the students only to present in front of all. This creates an extra workload for the teachers. One of the female teachers (T4) echoed this:

If there is an in-class activity, I have to document it. I have 30 students in class and they want me to take pictures, to finish the material, there is no time to go around and take pictures. Then, I have to write a report about it. Count with me, in a day I make, say, 3 activities.

Male teachers also suffered because of extracurricular activities, claiming that most of the activities were a burden to the teacher, and these extracurricular activities were more tiring than the core job of teaching. T8 said that "tasks like teaching students, being responsible for their grades, for raising their academic levels, being accounted for these things ... but we do these things aren't for teacher's duty."

Professional Development (PD) Sessions. Teachers in this study sought high-quality professional development sessions which would increase their instructional competence as well as increase awareness of the latest useful teaching strategies for their students. The answer to the question, "Do you feel that the training prepared you well for



your job? Are there specific areas in which you feel more training would have been helpful?” brought up comments from seven teachers among the fifteen (T1, T2, T3, T7, T8, T9, and T14) in relation to professional development sessions.

Pertaining to the workshop level in schools, the female novice teachers viewed these workshops as not beneficial and a waste of time after a long day of work and following multiple other meetings that day. T14 confirmed this position, stating:

Workshops were mandatory. Every Thursday we had new teacher development, they gathered us together and gave us sessions. But we had different needs, and the workshops were superficial; we did not need them at all. If you evaluated me in the class then you would know exactly what I need. Then you could tell me and help me develop, but it is not worth it to gather us all together and waste our time. So much time wasted on that.

For female teachers with a degree in education, they found school workshops to be repetitive in terms of the instructional strategies and classroom management tools that were presented since they had already studied these topics while in college. T1 said:

The College of Education helped me so much, and I had very good training. The College offered me many courses that helped me to teach my students with new teaching methods, and how to behave in front of our students, and how to deal with all type of students. But when I came to reality, it was so different.

However, two male teachers (T7 and T8) believed that school workshops were useful, and they were overall more satisfied with these workshops. Male teachers enjoyed

attending the professional development sessions and looked forward to attending more and applying new things in their classrooms. T7 said:

Yes, there are workshops. We taught for March, April, and May, then in June there were exams and at that time we attended 4 or 5 workshops at Al Faisal Foundation; they offered a teacher package. Also, these days we are attending a course that has a workshop every Tuesday, and on Sundays we have a Teaching and Learning Forum, where we have three workshops for Qataris already paid by the ministry. So there are plenty of courses and development workshops for those who are looking to develop themselves.

Teachers working on a contract with “Teach For Qatar” were pleased with the support they received from this institution. This demonstrates that the teachers in this institution are collaborative, team-oriented and willing to share their experiences about their students in their daily meetings with each other. They also felt that these institutional workshops were more useful and interesting than those offered by the schools. T14 also agreed with this sentiment, saying:

The development sessions that they offered at the organization was very useful. They understood where we came from and where we are going and our goals, but in the school, it was almost mandatory ... The organization offered us courses in everything, psychology; for me and my students, and with the teachers, academics, strategies and methods, a lot of courses that included things we needed.

Evaluation System. In Qatari governmental schools, school administrators such as the principal, the academic vice-principal, and the administrative vice-principal are

responsible for evaluating teacher performance. Six among the fifteen interviewed teachers (T1, T3, T4, T5, T10, and T11) complained about the school administrators' evaluation system; teachers saw that the school administrators shifted from actual productivity evaluations to more subjective evaluations. Two of the male teachers admitted that teachers had to maintain good relations with the administrative staff in order to get positive feedback and good evaluations. Even if the teacher met the students' academic outcomes, administrative work accounted for 50% of the evaluation's overall grade or score. T10 stated: "The evaluation in schools are friendly because my relationship was good with the administration, I got an 'A'."

Teachers always link their performances to the evaluation results they receive at the end of the academic year, and if the teachers refused to accept some administrative tasks, this could reflect negatively in their final evaluations. Teachers were tired of the administrative staff tracking their everyday performances and work tasks, which ultimately affected their sense of having a comfort zone within the school. T3 described her own experience:

I am on the online learning committee, I have to follow up with the teachers, offer them my experience and develop their technological skills, I sit with them... This position will not help me really, it might help you at the end, in your annual evaluation, that you've done something, you might get an excellent evaluation. But as a certified experience, no.

Category (2): School Support Resources, Facilities, and Materials. New resources, facilities, and materials have emerged in recent years with all the new changes that MOEHE is implementing in governmental schools. School resources enhance student

achievement and can improve the quality of education; therefore, MOEHE is using new resources, such as the LMS website for student use and the Lesson Planner application for teacher use. Five interviewed teachers (T1, T2, T4, T9, and T10) mentioned the LMS and Lesson Planner in their interviews, saying that they struggled with these resources while balancing other teaching responsibilities. Two female teachers (T1) and (T2) voiced the sentiments of many of the participants. They found using LMS difficult, as it is a website that provides all kind of technological activities, like assignments and videos related to their lessons. Teachers can use LMS for uploading assignments, quizzes, and videos for students' practice and learning. Teachers expressed feeling exhausted by uploading these tasks and observed that students did not take advantage of them; students continued to depend more on books as a primary learning resource. In addition, one female participant (T4) mentioned that the Lesson Planner application tended to be a waste of time and effort for the teachers. She wondered about the benefit of uploading their lesson plans electronically in this application. T2 stated:

LMS is such a waste of time. What's the point of uploading the plans or opening discussion threads, actually students don't open them or even look at them ... The thing that I feel is a serious workload is the system called "Lesson Planner." Why does it matter anyway? I go into every class with my lesson plan in hand. They gave me a warning because I wouldn't upload my lesson plans. I put up a quiz and a discussion thread which are more beneficial to the students but it didn't matter..."

Male teacher (T10) agreed with other female teachers with this point, saying:

Everyone should know that what schools asking teachers, is mostly showing off. Like the technology system, LMS. The teacher in this system should upload

homework, but in reality, the students do not use this system, and so it is not beneficial. Some students do not have computers or internet in their homes, while some others have difficulty to use this technology.

Moreover, T10 added his dissatisfaction with MOEHE's massive attention to technology resources by declaring:

The MOEHE should be more realistic with technology problems we have. For example, when they decided to buy an iPad tablet in recent years, it was a waste of money and not successful. Also, the internet connection is very slow, not all students are able to "log in" at one time on the server. ... Lesson Planner application where teachers upload their lesson plans. I would like to ask the schools and MOEHE, are the parents or students benefiting from us uploading these plans!

Some female teachers and one male teacher (T1, T4 and T9) also claimed that there was a shortage in the facilities and materials that they received from their schools. For example, T1 said: "In my previous school I used to pay 1000 QR per month ... Designing reinforcement activities for students also wasted my time and added workload for me."

Meanwhile, T4 added:

I'm telling you, one of the challenges we face is the shortage of tools and materials. For instance, if I have a science experiment that we need to see the result of after four days ... if I need 10 plants for one period, and there are four science periods, so 40 plants, too much, you see? The problem isn't about money, it's about time and how the school forces us to spend it.

Teachers also claimed in their interview data that schools use learning sources that do not help students to actually learn. They see that school administrators (department coordinators, academic vice-principal, and the principal) only need students to get high grades or pass without making sure whether these learning sources will help them to learn the lessons. Teachers said that they knew their students' needs and learning sources, but that the school required them to do a lot of paperwork to show what they were using during their teaching in the classroom. Thus, a participant who left the teaching field but was under the "Teach For Qatar" institution's control had the advantage of using learning resources and strategies that suited the needs of the students. T10 stated:

Schools like to show off a lot of things. All things done are not reflected in our students' level. This is the advantage of the 'Teach For Qatar' institution: we do not have to deal with school demands and all of the paperwork. I used to be free from what teachers do. For 2 years I only focused on teaching my students.

Category (3): Interpersonal Relationships. Teachers always need positive social relations with their colleagues, the department coordinator, the principals and the administrative staff; this may promote a stronger feeling of belonging to their schools. However, five of the fifteen teachers interviewed in this study had a negative feeling of belonging to their schools because of low cooperation and support from their more experienced colleagues. Females and males (T2, T9, T12, T13 and T14) alike experienced unease with their colleagues in teachers' rooms, which spread negativity about teaching careers to any novice teacher who had been recently hired. T9 declared that:

I am trying my best, but teachers here are old, this is one of the issues I am facing.

Already there is a gap between me and my students, imagine the gap between other

teachers ... They do the work just because the ministry asked them to. This mentality is what destroyed them. They're all older than me at department.

Also, T14 said:

Even if I suggested a new idea I wanted to implement, they would say stuff like 'you think you know what you're doing', so I either went along with their methods to avoid any problems with them or you stand by your idea and do it regardless.

Level: "Challenges Beyond the School's Environment". Importantly, teachers also faced challenges beyond the school walls. Fourteen of the fifteen teachers in the interview data mentioned that the universities and educational institutions, the policymakers in education, culture, and society were the external factors that affected the daily performance of teachers and even impacted their beliefs and past experiences. The participants (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10, T11, T12, T13, and T15) categorized the third level of the challenges beyond the schools' environment into the three following categories: (1) the gap between the College of Education and work, (2) governmental policy and (3) social image in relation to social hierarchy, gender, and degree (see Appendix D, Table 2).

Category (1): Gap Between University and Work. The female and male teachers (T2, T3, T4 and T6) who graduated from the College of Education agreed that what they learned and were trained for during their studies was useful and helped them in their daily routine in the school environment. This was especially the case when it came to the knowledge of teaching methods and learning strategies, developing lesson plans, and classroom management techniques. According to some of the participating teachers, however, they found that upon interacting with other teachers coming from backgrounds

other than education, the interviewed teachers were more effective in their roles and had a solid knowledge of the subject or curricula that they taught. T2 noted:

Preparation at the College of Education helped a lot in my first year in teaching; they taught us how to control a class and many other important things. Even the new principal attended one of my classes and was over the moon with my teaching style and language. She said that I was very confident, like an experienced teacher or something. I am a QU graduate, after all.

Some of the female and male participant teachers (T1, T5 and T9) felt a gap between what they had studied at the university and what they were experiencing in schools. These participants received knowledge, beliefs and practices from their college related to the teaching profession. It was difficult and shocking for them to experience such a distinction between their college's practice and the school's practice. For instance, a participant was disappointed by the planning and designing of lesson plans, saying that the result was not as refined as the College of Education used to teach them. In addition, another participant claimed that the PowerPoint slides were very ugly, and it was not at the level of professionalism that his university used to teach him; rather, it should grab the students' attention, but it did not. T5 also shared a similar idea, saying:

From my point of view, I think I learned from college more than what is required from me here. I am talking about myself—when I graduated and went into the field, I was shocked. What we learned and what we apply here are totally different. At first, I would disagree with what they told me to do and tell them that at college we were taught this and that, they would tell me for forget about that because the



ministry has its own rules and regulations and strategies. I am still to this day not even 60% convinced of the stuff we do.

Two participants (T12 and T13) who ultimately left the teaching field felt a huge gap between what they learned at the College of Education. They constructed their beliefs with regard to the teaching practices from this college, and they relied on those beliefs; they found it challenging to reconcile what they experienced in the college and what happened at the school. Participants claimed that the schools were not offering new teaching strategies, and they used to have freedom and creativity in their internship experience of teaching. The college gave them space to search and apply teaching strategies that suited student needs, which was difficult to apply in the schools where they taught as everything was controlled by school administrators. As T13 stated:

They have already studied some courses in university; we are already professional in them, so you're not offering anything new. They could offer new strategies, that would be great to learn, you could offer the latest research, global research, and how can we apply new concepts to our classes. Instead, they teach us how to write objectives, of course we know how... they're not helping me to develop—they're just repeating old stuff.

Participant T12 expressed dissatisfaction with the College of Education because the program prepares future teachers by providing a more theoretical overview of the teaching profession and offers general information that tends to be idealized. She also said that during the internship, the college should show that the reality in the school is different compared to the idealistic images that they had been taught.

Category (2): Governmental Policy. Schools received new policies and decisions from the MOEHE, which affected instructional practices and daily performances for teachers. Ten out of the fifteen participants (T1, T3, T4, T5, T6, T10, T11, T12, T13, and T15) reported that governmental policy decisions were the second biggest challenge that novices faced beyond the context of the school itself.

The majority of teachers who continued to work in the profession (T1, T3, T4, T5, and T6) were displeased with the overnight decisions of policymakers in the MOEHE, which translated into a sudden regulatory change in their schools. Teachers faced problems because of these regulations; for example, some participants discovered that at the beginning of the year there was a new curriculum – involving new textbooks – and novices claimed that they should have been given advance warning in order to have time to examine the new curriculum. Teachers take great pains in creating lesson plans and setting learning strategies for their students, and therefore they should feel that the curriculum they are using is stable. In addition, the participants thought that most of the administrative tasks at school were not in the hands of the school administration; the ministry was responsible for these demands. As T5 said:

This year it is a new curriculum. They should have given us a chance to examine it, you know, or give it to the teachers a year prior for them to get good feedback. Instead, they bombarded us with new curricula and asked for new plans, new formats, new everything without any kind of notice or research or workshops. Just like that, take it and get going.

However, some of the male teachers questioned the policymakers of the Qatari government, wondering why teachers did not hold the power or authority to make changes

or to be even creative and implement their own ideas in the classroom. They felt that MOEHE policymakers entirely disempowered teachers within the Qatari educational system. Moreover, when faced with the implementation of new changes, teachers are expected to accept them without complaint. When problems arose, however, it was deemed to be the teachers' responsibility, just as students' failure tends to be seen as being the teachers' responsibility. T11 clarifies by saying:

Teachers don't have a say; no one hears their opinions. Orders are given to them without knowing if they can undertake them or not ... I see that teachers are always the weakest, always blamed, and always threatened with the loss of their jobs. The problem is that they have not created a system that gives the teacher the opportunity to do his best, regardless of the results, because they always evaluate the teacher according to the results and paperwork. Because in the end, many factors affect the results of the students which the teacher cannot control.

Moreover, female teachers (T12, T13 and T15) who left the field voiced disappointment with the fact that the MOEHE brings foreign and Western thoughts into Qatari society and culture, which is not necessarily suitable for the students. Teachers see that MOEHE does not listen to the suggestions of its citizens, and in a related way, the Ministry does not trust Qatari competence in further developing its own educational system. Participants claimed that in taking the opinions of outside experts who do not study in Qatari governmental schools, the MOEHE is letting outside experts shape national policies instead of teachers from within the system. Participants indicated the value in taking the ideas of competent Qatari professionals who understand Qatari history, society, culture, and have previous experiences in the country's schools. T15 stated:

They brought experts to develop our educational system and even teachers to teach our students; they are from all around the world, since they have many internal experts here at the Ministry or Qatar University ... Our people know us best, not people from outside who don't have any kind of background about our teaching history.

Category (3): Social Image in Relation to Social Hierarchy, Gender, and Educational Degree. Each country projects a particular social status onto teaching, which connects to the amount of respect reserved for teachers in society. Therefore, the social status of teachers is a significant area mentioned by the participants of this study, and it provides further insight into the Qatari educational system. Seven among the fifteen participating teachers consider the social image to be a challenge for them in terms of remaining in the teaching profession.

Five male teachers (T6, T7, T8, T9, and T10) felt that teaching is not an appropriate career path for Qatari men, and the participants gave many reasons for this assumption. Men in Qatar do not see teaching as a prestigious job to hold; consequently, there is a shortage of male Qatari teachers in schools. In addition, the work culture in schools is very different from other companies. For example, a participant who had worked for eight years at a petroleum company and then had the experience of working in school expressed surprise at the fact that there is no mutual trust between school administrators and teachers. School administrators were constantly monitoring teachers, which is not like administrators in a company. The participant was surprised that teachers enter the schools via a fingerprint reader in the early mornings, do work, make presentations, and use the

smartboard because the ministry or school told them to, even though they would not choose to do so if they could voice their preferences. In this regard, the participant said:

I told them that I go when work starts, and leave when it ends. I do the fingerprint thing, but even without it I would come at the same time and leave when I finish my work, which is when the day is typically done.

This shows that employees in companies have space for creativity, trust and support from their administration, which is lacking in schools. Therefore, then men preferred to work in companies. Comparatively, the military is highly regarded in Qatari society, due to special services that are offered to them in order to facilitate their transactions all over the country. Likewise, they have better salaries than teachers, including health care and airline tickets for them and their families. Teachers only receive salaries at the end of each month.

A male participant complained that they face issues accessing public services. For example, when they go to government institutions in the mornings and take a number, they find that there are 200-300 people ahead of them. Teachers are expected to return to school and catch up on their teaching. This ultimately means, however, that they cannot manage to fit in their personal needs and have to return at another time. Comparatively, someone in the military would not have this experience. He would just come and not have to wait in line in order to have his needs addressed by government institutions. Male teachers seem to voice much less satisfaction with their jobs than female teachers in this study, and this is largely due to the reduced privileges and respect that these male novices receive from Qatari society. T9 said:

Guys here look for prestigious positions, so they look for any position with the title of manager, head, or coordinator. A teacher is... they tell me 'You went into teaching?' as if it's such a low job-- that's the perspective. Often, they tell me 'Are you serious? A teacher? You were an engineer!' Even my family tells me, 'Yu went to university to become an engineer, and you to became a teacher'... they look down on the job, unfortunately.

Male participants who left their teaching career also expressed annoyance that teachers do not hold any respect within this educational system, which is contrary to the past. The participants expressed this by explaining that:

The respect of the teacher is destroyed completely. There is no kind of consideration of the teacher. People make fun of any person who becomes a teacher. There is not any protection for teachers, from the school or the MOEHE. Teachers are now the weakest figures in the entire educational system.

It is not the same for female teachers. Instead, they reported that they gain a high level of respect in terms of the social image in Qatar. However, some of these teachers left the profession because they planned to pursue higher education. It is hard to apply for a full-time study leave as a teacher, and the Ministry of Education does not offer this opportunity. Female novices, therefore, preferred to leave the profession and obtain a higher degree rather than be a teacher. T15 stated that:

From day one I told them that I would leave because I wanted to get a PhD, because it really hard to pursue that while teaching. And I told the school that I would teach for two years, and then I would go to Qatar National Library (QNL) because it fits

into my career path and they facilitated my studies. I also wanted an immunity for my academic research, about teaching and curriculum in the field of education.

4.2 Research Question 2: What are the coping strategies that help address the needs of novice teachers in Qatari governmental schools?

The second question informing this study explores the various types of coping strategies of novice teachers who recently worked in Qatari governmental schools.

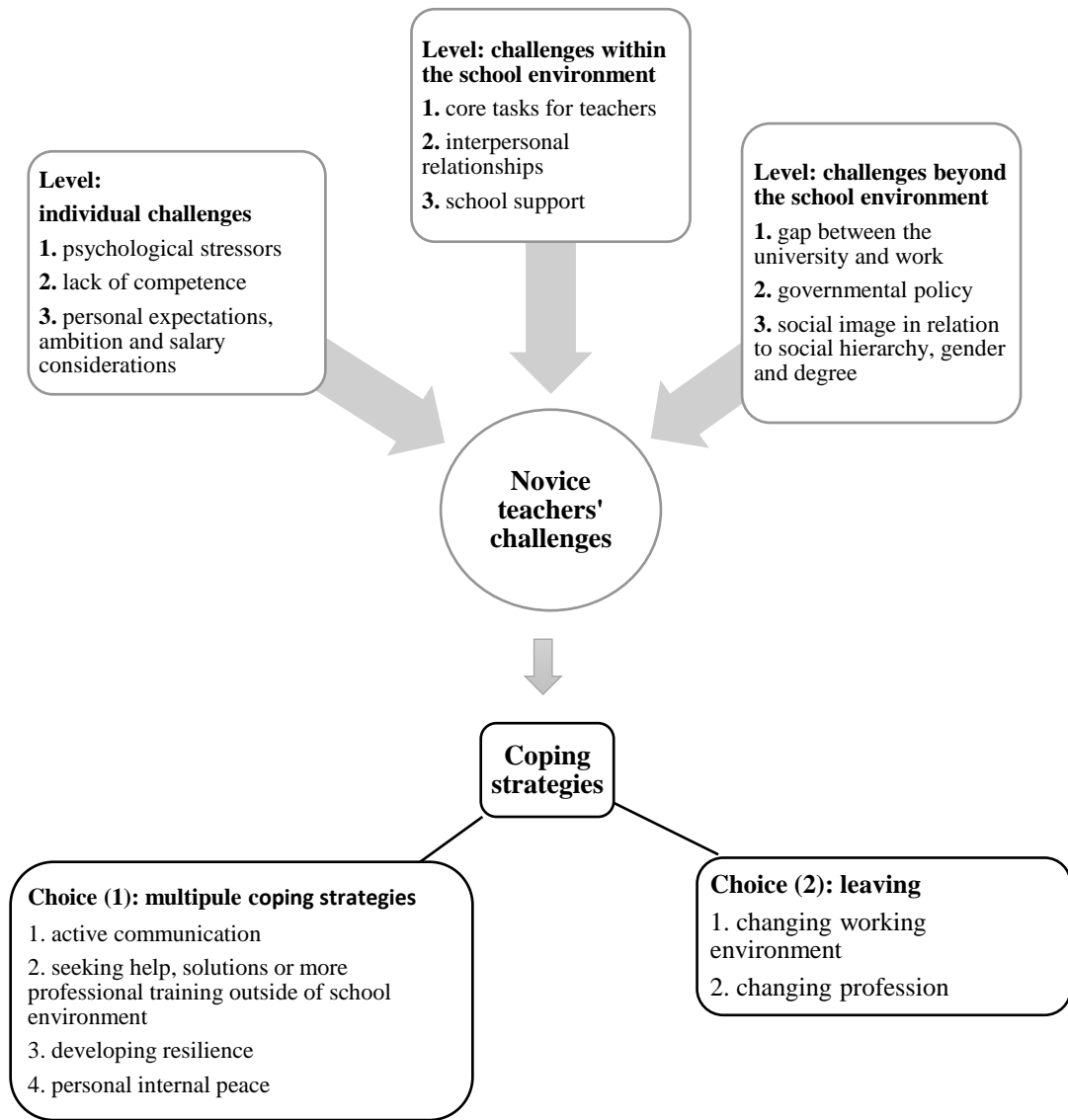


Figure 2. Coping strategies used by interviewed teachers.

To obtain answers for this second question, fifteen participants were asked: “Where do you go/whom do you ask when you have any questions or you need help?” Or



alternatively: “How did you deal with the challenges you faced?” Each participant answered the question depending on the situations they had experienced in the school environment, in the classroom environment, and with their colleagues and/or administrative staff.

This question reflects the struggle that teachers experience in their first years of teaching, and they continuously seek various sources of help in order to survive in the profession. Participants in this study passed through a multitude of challenging situations, which were highlighted in the first research question outlined above. The three interrelated levels of challenges faced by the novice teachers in the first section (Figure 1) of this chapter are confronted by coping strategies that participants use to keep themselves in the profession if they don’t choose to leave (Figure 2). Coping strategies have been classified into two main choices: (1) teachers who use several strategies to face challenges in their daily situations at school; and (2) teachers who decided not to continue in the profession and thus opted to leave. Both of these choices have multiple types or patterns of coping strategies (see Figure 2).

#### *4.2.1 Choice (1)*

Twelve out of the fifteen teachers interviewed suggested coping strategies as their first choice in dealing with schoolwork challenges. A few strategies were reported by the teachers in this study, which can be summarized as follows: (1) active communication; (2) seeking help, solutions, or more professional training beyond the school environment; (3) developing resilience; and (4) personal internal peace (See Appendix D, Table 3).

Active Communication. Ten out of the fifteen participants (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, and T14) preferred to make direct requests for help from school administrators, department coordinators or experienced teachers whenever they wanted to learn new regulations in their schools or to solve problems they faced. Teachers said that ongoing administrative support such as the principal's open door, informal meetings with academic vice-principals or the general availability of administrators were effective in their first year. Because of this availability on the part of the administrators, as well as effective communication with their colleagues, there was an increase in their attentiveness and satisfaction in the work that they did. Participants who experienced working with principals who were kind felt that the workflow was great for them. Participants who had mutual trust and respect for their school principal would compete to gain her/his respect and work hard for school improvement and this was kind of principal that the teachers feared would be replaced. In addition, the participants felt more comfortable speaking and working with supportive administrative and academic vice-principals because they offered these novice teachers some space to voice their opinions and concerns. For example, when the teachers finished their classes, they were permitted to leave for a hospital appointment or other obligation; supportive vice-principals did not infringe upon rights and provided effective workshops toward increasing the competences of new teachers. T8 said:

If the administration is strong, students will be well disciplined; if not, then the teacher shoulders everything. In my first year, the principal was different, at that time it was a kind man, who let everyone do as they pleased. They changed him the next year, and the school totally transformed. You entered the school and you felt like you're in an enrich school environment.

Department coordinators have an important administrative position in Qatari governmental schools. Indeed, coordinators are the key link between teachers and school administration. Coordinators in Qatari governmental schools help to build mutual trust between teachers and administrators, and for this reason, participants often described their experience with their coordinators, including the ways in which they encouraged teachers and pushed them to keep up with all challenges that they faced. These types of connections helped teachers to continue in the profession. T2 stated that:

There is this coordinator, Ms..., she's an experienced one, almost 20 years of teaching. She's such a great and experienced person. There is also the deputy coordinator, Ms..., she's the one who pushed me, encouraged me and she was the one to observe my classes as I requested, even though she had a heavy load, she took the time to observe and supervise me.

Furthermore, some participants were grateful for their experienced colleagues, as further expressed by a participant who stated:

An experienced teacher, ... made me love my profession even more, and made it easy for me because she taught me how to reach my goal[,] which is to make the students love the subject and find it easy – not difficult. She taught me how to leave an impression on them, either morally or education-wise.

Another participant also said that what really increased her confidence in teaching practices was an experienced teacher who attended her classes, expressed her honest opinion, and said that she liked the teaching methods used in the classroom.

Male and female teachers alike who held contracts with the “Teach for Qatar” institution received sufficient support and shared their everyday experience with their colleagues rather than communicating with the school staff. T14 said that:

Also there is the organization, [where] the program managers were helpful. I tell them if I have this issue, [and] they will come observe the class the next day, ... they come a couple of times to see the class[,] and then advise me.

Seeking Help, Solutions, or More Professional Training Outside of School. Five among the fifteen participants (T7, T8, T9, T10, and T12) used networking or website searches as other means of obtaining information about their subject of teaching, rather than asking anyone at their schools. Males were most likely to use technological methods and web searches to get answers for problems that they faced or to seek new teaching methods toward increasing their knowledge of the subject. For example, a male participant who graduated from Texas A&M tried to teach students the skills that they would require later in life. The participant said he observed a student who had good tech skills and asked the student to make a video with iMovie. The student then explained the lesson on camera, edited the video and performed multiple other related tasks. Students appreciate such gestures, and it encouraged them. The participant had many ideas for lessons on technology. In addition, a few female teachers preferred networking on the internet and using YouTube to gather new ideas for their students’ learning or used these options when they did not receive convincing answers from their department coordinators. T10 said:

I worked after graduation in Dolphin Energy Company, [for] about 4 years. I am already an engineer and I am good with networking ... I used to search for new

applications that helped to increase students' achievements in [the] classroom and applied these applications in my classes.

Other interview participants expressed their need for intensive professional development plans with some professional development sessions in their first probationary months; therefore, participants were particularly grateful for professional development opportunities during this period of their careers. The workshops that the participants attended tended to focus on learning strategies, individual differences, and time management, topics which are relevant to a teacher in the classroom. Teachers often looked for effective classroom management strategies in order to create a safe classroom environment for learning. Therefore, they constantly updated their knowledge with professional training sessions that could provide them with classroom management techniques. T7 mentioned: "I took two workshops on time management; they aided me, and gave me experience".

Developing resilience. Eleven participating teachers (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, T12, and T15) struggled to remain resilient in the face of the daily challenges that they faced. Some of the more resilient teachers had a set of personal values, beliefs and future goals that guided them in continuing their work. Indeed, novice teachers wanted to thrive in the teaching profession with all its hardships because they value that which only teaching develops: the process of guiding a human being and having an influence on their students. Participants also opted to stay in the profession because they wanted their religion or customs to be carried on to subsequent generations. Other participants wanted to be experienced teachers in order to work at the MOEHE in the future as a curriculum specialist in their subject, aiming to make improvements. Some novice teachers wanted to continue

on to master's level studies in order to better understand the work of the school environment, and after gaining more years of experience to eventually become a coordinator and help to develop schools in the future. T6 also stated:

I won't stop teaching. I have ideas, I want to develop myself either in the field of teaching or in the Ministry. I have ambitions to change schools or the Ministry processes for the better. You see, I think that it is essential for people who went into teaching and have field experience [in order] to have positions in the Ministry, because they know the problems [and] what things can fix them or what should be avoided. If I have about 7-10 years of teaching experience, and then I go to the ministry, I will have collected ideas and solutions to so many problems that schools in Qatar suffer from.

Some other participants expressed their personal resilience by staying focused on students and their learning and doing whatever was necessary to help students be successful. Participants had the vision that they wanted to instil curiosity in students towards learning and encourage students to go and learn on their own. They wanted students to search for why something happens or why things are the way they are. Resilient participants aimed to change the culture of studying from just learning for an exam to trying to teach their students things for the life ahead of them and training them in skills they will require later on. Thus, most of the participants' main goal was the students and their learning and they were anxious about the personal and external challenges in their students' future. T4 narrated her feelings by saying:

Honestly, I forget all worries and pressures when I'm in the classroom with my students. The way they are attached to you, away from academics, I really forget

my worries when I see how much they love me. At the beginning of the year, they're so hyper and dismiss the rules but then they come to love you and get attached. If I am absent or something, they cry. Therefore, there is a special relationship between them and myself. When I [feel] so much pressure with the workload, I enter the classroom and relax.

Five other male and female teachers (T4, T5, T7, T8, and T9) maintained resilience by accepting workplace difficulties, which allowed them to feel more comfortable. The participants looked for a supportive environment, whether at the school or with students who were the main pupils those teachers dealt with every day. Some participants asked the MOEHE to place them in schools that were located close to the areas that they were raised in, preferring to work with students who had similar values and characteristics. For instance, a novice male teacher expressed his happiness towards his teaching career, saying: "that is also something great about teaching; they assign you to the school closest to your home." Another female teacher worked at Mesaieed School, which is very far from Doha but located in the industrial area where she was born and raised. She continues to teach small numbers of students at this school. She completed two and a half years at this school and she does not want to change or transfer to another school.

Personal internal peace. Six female novice teachers (T1, T2, T4, T12, T13, and T15) demonstrated several individual internal peace strategies. The teachers reported that they used immersion in activities, isolation, and taking temporary time out in order to de-stress and regain equanimity. Other teachers were able to manage their emotions, health and well-being by seeking assistance from health professionals. Female teachers were found to be sensitive, having a hard time forgetting the situations they were going through

at work. Therefore, they went to some therapists to help remove some of the negative perceptions about schools arising from previous experiences. T15 stated:

My first year was a disaster, and because I was aware of how this traumatic experience could affect me, I went to four therapists at the same time because I was shocked by what was happening. I visited therapists, I went to Kuwait, to KSA and Jordan to talk to them to get rid of this, I even went to Australia to meet with someone who could help me understand this chaotic environment.

In addition, four of the study participants (T1, T2, T4, and T15) used several activities to relieve the daily stress of work. For example, some of the participants used to call their best friends and share their experiences at work, and this made the teachers feel refreshed and gave them the opportunity to receive some advice about the challenges they faced. Other participants relieved their frustrations by binge-eating sweets, and these participants felt uncomfortable with their personal appearance because of being overweight. These participants worked every day at school and in their home and did not have time to be physically active in order to maintain their health; they saw food as the only outlet to escape from their daily workload. In contrast, some female teachers went to a spa or salon and felt refreshed from a long working day, while other participants went shopping for clothes or makeup. These participants expressed regret that they spent money on unnecessary things. One female participant (T15) who had left teaching used to write daily in a journal and she said that: “I used to write a daily journal of 20-30 pages; I wrote what I went through during the day. I went through some unbelievable stuff that you just couldn’t imagine happening in Qatar, in this society.”



According to teachers participating in this research, isolation became a type of stress relief strategy. Two participants (T12 and T13) who left the profession always got a negative impression while they were in their teachers' break room, and they did not like to listen to complaints, feel jealousy, envy, or hatred all day around other teachers. Therefore, these participants left the teachers' room so that they could avoid negative feelings, which subsequently contributed to their negative perception of the teaching profession. These two participants are now working in other jobs, and in their new offices, they have more positive interactions and are highly professional in terms of public relations skills. T12 said:

I would isolate myself from them. I don't react [to] their negativity; it's as if I didn't hear a thing. In Karanaa School, I sat in my own corner, [and] I left the teacher's room. [There] was so much negativity and complaining, so I had to leave the room so that they don't make me hate my work and dislike teaching.

#### 4.2.2 *Choice (2): Leaving.*

When participants were unable to cope in the schools where they worked, they would opt to leave the situation. However, based on the interview data, this could mean either moving to another school and continuing to teach or leaving the teaching profession entirely (see Appendix D, Table 3).

Changing the working environment. Two of the female teachers who still work in the field (T1 and T2) decided to change the location where they worked from one school to another, hoping to find a place that suited their teaching beliefs. In their interviews, teachers described that their new schools were more flexible about modifying lessons,

accepting new teaching methods, and adding lesson plans. They also found department coordinators who were easier to negotiate with and who were helpful and worked hand-in-hand with teachers. One female participant changed to a new school and chose to teach primary rather than preparatory and secondary levels. This participant thought that she would never teach secondary after what she went through in the previous school at the secondary level of students. However, when she transferred to a more suitable environment for students, she continued with her teaching career. T2 said:

During my last week in my previous school I heard there was a principal looking for teachers in several subjects in Mesaieed School. I found her number and contacted her. I sent her my CV and she was pleased with my credentials, ... I am a QU graduate with a major in English from the College of Education. She had a vacancy for an English teacher, so I told her I would like to teach primary grades, thinking that I would never teach secondary after what I went through in the previous school. So, I transferred to Mesaieed School, which has all grades from first to twelfth grade.

Changing to other professions. A male (T9), who was a new teacher in his school and new to the world of teaching, was looking forward to going back to his old job as soon as he finished his two-year contract with “Teach for Qatar.” He said, “I worked for 8 years in QP, it’s a whole different culture there ... And after I finish my two-year contract, I will go back to my previous job at the QP company.”

Some teachers (T10, T11, T12, T13, T14, and T15) ultimately left the teaching profession. Female teachers left to complete their master’s degrees or found other places to work, such as universities or offices which did not have any teaching loads. T12 said:

I did a Master's of Arts in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment ... Now, I am looking to get my PhD and work at the College of Education ... You know, after leaving the school, the administration would always contact me and tell me that the students were still asking about me. That's because there was love.

Male teachers who finished two years of the “Teach for Qatar” contract viewed themselves as excellent engineers and knew that they would have better options in private companies, especially from a financial point of view. Males focused on the financial aspect, and therefore, they generally preferred not to continue teaching. T11 said: “When I completed my teaching assignment, I still had my salary and all the benefits from QP, and I did not want to lose that. Teaching salaries, compared to the petroleum and private sectors, [are] very low...”

## CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Following the framework for the analysis, this chapter discusses the results of the current study with the use of the thematic analysis and in relation to the previous literature in the same field. This chapter also includes a discussion of the study's findings in terms of its implications and recommendations for the field of education, schools and teacher education programs.

### 5.1 Challenges Faced by Novice Teachers in their First Years of Teaching

One of the first aims of the study was to explore the first years' challenges faced by novice teachers. For this purpose, teachers participating in the study were asked to elaborate on a list of challenges they encountered in their schools during their early stages of being professional teachers. There were three interrelated levels of challenges as summarized in Chapter Four. The uniqueness of the study is that there is currently no single study or research that presents, organizes and divides these three interrelated levels of challenges together into collective or combined findings that can be used as a reference for any new teacher in the profession of teaching.

The level of individual challenges was divided into three categories, these being psychological stressors, lack of competence, and personal expectations, ambition and salary considerations. These three categories were addressed by the previous studies mentioned in Chapter Two. For instance, regarding the first category of psychological stressors, the feelings of stress or being exhausted were investigated in 31 studies on teacher stress (Beers, 2012; Kyriacou, 2001). According to Beers (2012) and Kyriacou (2001), the most common stressors investigated involve problems with time pressures and

workload, school policy and administration, students' misbehaviour, teaching pupils who lack motivation, classroom environment and problems with colleagues. These stressors are similar to the findings from the teachers in this study. Four teachers in the study mentioned a lack of self-confidence and feelings of self-doubt (see Chapter Four). These results support Kyriacou's (2001) findings, which indicate that most novice teachers seem to encounter a period of self-doubt, reassessment and disenchantment. This decrease of self-confidence is due to the level of pressure, stress and high administrative demands made on a new teacher, who may be unable to perform well in the tasks given in the first years.

The second category of individual challenges is the lack of competence, as mentioned in Chapter Two. In facing complex challenges in the teaching profession, novice teachers should have a wide range of competencies including heuristic competency, technological competency and axiological competency (Boyatzis, 2008; Ivanitsky, 1998; Powell et al., 2014). Supporting studies on competencies, the participants of the study admitted that the lack of competence or skills causes problems and they struggled with multiple types of challenges. In addition, other participants had a lack of technological competency.

The third category of individual challenges refers to the personal expectations of the novices. In the early years of teaching, novices often struggle with achieving their goals or ambitions and search for the best opportunities for job security; thus they either stay in the teaching field or leave this profession. This study reports that four among the fifteen teachers expressed their future ambitions, goals of lifelong learning and salary considerations. This finding was also addressed by previous studies asserting that novice teachers are always open to continuous development and seek higher education. Some

female teachers' concerns in this study were that in the Qatari context, there is a lack of support from the schools and the MOEHE in providing opportunities for pursuing their masters or PhD degrees as part of their lifelong learning goals. Therefore, some female participants in the study left the teaching field and worked at Qatar University while pursuing an advanced degree to achieve their personal ambitions.

The male teachers in the study showed more concern about their financial status rather than continuing their education. Males focused on salaries, life insurance and other job privileges for them and their family. This is why three of the male participants left the profession and preferred to work at companies with more job privileges. Previous studies agree with this finding regarding males' concern for higher salaries (Rumberger, 1987) because male teachers are more likely to be the primary breadwinners in their households than women (Hall & Carroll, 1973). The three male participants were graduates from the College of Engineering and with many years of working experience in petroleum companies. These individuals then changed their profession to mathematics and science teachers. They taught for two years in schools and then returned to their companies or found another job with higher privileges comparing to the lower wages of a teaching career.

The findings further revealed the second level of novice teachers' first years of challenges. Fifteen teachers participating in the study agreed in relation to the multiple challenges they faced within the school environment, expressing their confusion whether to continue in teaching or leave the profession. The thematic analysis of the interview data enabled a categorization of the challenges within the school environment into three main categories, namely the core tasks for teachers, interpersonal relationships and school support, as demonstrated in Chapter Four. There is a lack of previous studies combining

these three categories of these types of challenges. However, most of the studies classify the challenges within the school environment as being organizational. Each of these three categories was examined in several studies using various situations and interpretations (see Chapter Two). Similar to this study is that of Dickson et al. (2014), which addressed the challenges faced by novice Emirati teachers. The study found that there were certain major areas of challenges faced by the novice teachers in relation to the school environment. It is important to note that Qatar and UAE have similarities in their Arab culture and education systems, with both systems undergoing substantial educational reform and rapid changes in school functions every year, causing the same types of challenges to teachers' work in governmental schools. The challenges are (1) implementing the new curriculum and (2) a perceived lack of resources to do this, (3) administrative demands, (4) classroom management, (5) a perception of a lack of support to deal with this, and (6) relationships with colleagues and dealing with parents of students (Dickson et al., 2014).

These challenges could be classified as the core work for any teacher, and the participants in this study mentioned similar challenges. However, the participants added additional challenges to the previous scholarly work, as well as noting how the challenges in the Qatari context are different from other contexts. Participants expressed the difficulties they faced in planning lessons, conducting extracurricular activities for the school, professional development sessions and the methods of teachers evaluation used by the administration. Studies have addressed these challenges and, as discussed in Chapter Two, the challenges within schools represent a crucial issue for novices. Many studies reported the importance of the school climate and the interrelationship with experienced teachers to better support and enable the adaptation of novice teachers during the first year

of teaching. According to Meristo and Eisenschmidt (2014), a positive school climate enhances teachers' opportunities for continuous academic and social growth and promotes shared beliefs, responsibility and feelings of trust and values. Moreover, encouraging cooperation fosters a professional learning community, and hence a positive school climate is important, especially for novice teachers in need of guidance and assistance during the initial years of their career in order to become professional and confident teachers.

Finally, the third level of challenges is those which lie beyond the school environment. Fourteen of the fifteen interviewed teachers addressed the gap between the College of Education and work, governmental policy, and social image in relation to social hierarchy, gender, and degree as external factors that affect teachers' daily work or even the retention of teachers. Research studies have examined beginning teachers' learning needs, concerns and aspirations that are within the circle of teaching, students' learning or the school's climate (Gibbs & Coffey, 2004; Parker, 2007). However, there is a lack of studies examining the external influences and factors that unconsciously affect novice teachers' daily performances or decisions to stay in or leave the teaching field.

Regarding the first category, the gap between the College of Education and work, the literature on induction and mentoring reveals the distinction between the College of Education pre-service teachers' programs and the reality of teachers' work in schools (Feiman-Nemser, 2012). The literature and previous studies support the findings of this study. For example, four of the female and male teachers in this study found that the gap between the College of Education's pre-service program and the reality of teaching or the school demands was small, and the teachers were able to achieve most of the teaching tasks. Gibbs and Coffey (2004) examined novice teachers who were trained at several



institutions and found positive attitudes toward the schools' environments, teaching and even the prospect of improving their students' learning. In addition, the finding of the study shows that the majority of the male teachers and one female teacher were shocked by their experience in governmental school practices. Participants' experience regarding the knowledge, beliefs and practices they received in their colleges related to the teaching profession was distinct from the reality of the schools.

This finding supports the emerging studies on 'reality shock' among beginning teachers. Kim and Cho (2014) explained that reality shock in beginning teachers is due to the gap between what they have learned in the teacher education programs and the reality that they may face during the first year of teaching with respect to the work of teaching and the context in which teaching occurs. There are a number of studies that examine pre-service teachers' expectations of reality shock during the first year of professional teaching. The results show that beginning teachers have a high reality shock and leave teaching after completing four to five years in the classroom (Kim and Cho, 2014; Mahmood, 2013). This is similar for participants T12 and T13 of the study, who ultimately left the teaching field because of the huge gap between what they learned at the College of Education and the reality of the schools' daily practices.

The second category is the new policies and decisions from MOEHE, which affect instructional practices and the daily performance of teachers. Ten of the fifteen participants in the study agreed that the governmental policy decisions form the biggest challenge of the beyond school context for novice teachers (see Chapter Four). Concerning this issue, participant teachers criticized the multiple decisions of the MOEHE. They were concerned that the curriculum is unstable and that this affected their instructional practices, hampering

effective learning. Finally, they were concerned with the many demands from school administration stemming from new regulations.

In addition, teachers thought that in the MOEHE's system, there was no power or authority for teachers to make changes, and they were concerned that the MOEHE brings foreign and Western thoughts into Qatari society and culture. Teachers claimed that they are better suited to developing the Qatar educational system and that their suggestions should be taken into consideration. Fredricks et al. (2004) and Swanepoel (2008) address this issue suggesting an increase in teachers' involvement for successful educational reform or changes. Darling-Hammond (1990) documented that it is necessary to talk with teachers as a way of illuminating the effects of policy changes, that time teachers hardly be presumed or to be objective with their views. Teachers were once an important part of the policy process, but this has faded over time (Darling-Hammond, 1990). Therefore, policy changes and decisions need to be better communicated if they are to be well understood by teachers, especially novice teachers. It seems that the directives are not clear, and a meaningful discussion and improved communication would help schools to offer extensive professional development for any new changes and regulations.

Social image is the third category of the challenges that move beyond the schools' environment. This issue is isolated to Qatari male teachers in the Qatari educational system and Qatari society. The issue is the lack of respect for male teachers. Female teachers already receive a high level of respect in terms of the social image in Qatar. Five male teachers addressed this issue in their interview responses as there is a substantial shortage of male Qatari teachers in schools. Being teachers for males is not prestigious in Qatari society compared to professions in engineering or the military. Male teachers receive no

preferential treatment from most public services and many governmental facilities, they do not have privileges such as health care and airline tickets for themselves and their families, and salaries are much less than those of engineers or military personnel.

The literature has highlighted this issue in many countries that struggle to recruit men into elementary schools as there is a need for male teachers in elementary education because young boys benefit from having male role models in their lives (Hansen & Mulholland 2005; Mills, 2000; Mills et al., 2004). This lack of male teachers is because in societies that see teaching as ‘women's work’, men choose other professions (Apple, 1986; Kaestle, 1983).

## 5.2 Coping Strategies that Help Address the Needs of Novice Teachers in Qatari

### Governmental Schools

The classification of the participating teachers’ two main choices in this study (see Chapter Four and Figure 2) offers multiple patterns for coping strategies.

First, participant teachers choose active communication; seeking help, solutions, or more professional training beyond the school environment; developing resilience; and personal internal peace as coping strategies for dealing with the challenges faced from the students, experienced colleagues or schools’ demands. For many decades, research findings have indicated a concern about the effects of stress on teachers and how the stress impacts on their health, both mentally and physically (Greenglass, Schwarzer, & Taubert, 1998; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Mearns & Cain, 2003; Rubino et al., 2009). Therefore, scholars started to access and study coping resources to see if coping was one of the most important aspects of interventions designed to buffer the negative effects

associated with stress caused by the many demands teachers face daily (Cooper, Dewe, & Driscoll, 2001).

This study suggests several coping strategies that were recommended by the participant teachers as an important resource to deal with the multiple demands of the teaching tasks in Qatari governmental schools.

First, ten out of the fifteen participants considered active communication with school administrators, department coordinators or experienced teachers as a successful strategy for any novice teacher. Participants saw this strategy as the easiest way to learn new regulations in their schools or to solve the problems they face. It also increases the level of satisfaction and attentiveness in the teacher's work. As shown in Chapter Two, several studies address active communication such as collaboration and social support. During the process of communicating and collaborating with colleagues, the novices are able to reduce their stress in the first stages of understanding a teacher's work. Beginning teachers who attempt to handle their own problems or deal with all perils and troubles encountered in school tasks or classroom practices by themselves end up causing multiple challenges for themselves and the whole department in the future (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014). Still, there is a lack of studies that examine novice teachers' professional involvement, collaboration and communication skills in order to succeed in all types of challenges emerging in the first years of teaching. For example, one teacher participant in the study expressed her experience of active communication from one of the experienced teachers in the department and how her colleague attended her classes and gave an honest opinion, which helped to increase her self-confidence in her teaching abilities.

The second coping strategy expressed by teacher participants is seeking help or more professional training outside the school. Male teachers in the study used YouTube and attended professional training outside the school to learn new teaching methods, considering these useful ways to get answers for problems that they faced rather than asking anyone at their schools or waiting for assistance. This finding was addressed by previous studies and termed 'direct-action strategies' or 'problem-focused coping', and it is a traditional strategy suggested by scholars. Beers (2012) and Sharplin et al. (2011) describe how beginning teachers are able to directly address challenges and problems by utilizing various strategies such as getting information from websites and accessing professional development without the schools' help. It is similar to male participants who graduated as engineers, and it seems that they enjoyed searching the Internet about anything related to the subject taught or students' learning in classrooms.

Developing resilience is another one of the coping strategies mentioned by the participants of the study. Ten participants mentioned their personal struggles to remain a resilient teacher, previously discussed in Chapter Four. There is a connection between the previous literature about teacher resilience and the findings of this study, namely that all novice teachers use productive energy and thoughts to achieve students' and schools' goals in the face of certain conditions and situations (Patterson et al., 2004)

Equally important is the fourth coping strategy, which is personal internal peace. Six female participants considered individual internal peace strategies as essential ways to relieve stress. These strategies included immersion in activities, isolation and taking temporary time out. Specifically, they would call their best friends, go to a spa or salon, and stop spending time in the teachers' room so that they could avoid negative feelings.

These personal internal peace strategies have been presented in previous studies as palliative strategies or as avoidant coping (Sharplin et al., 2011). In addition, Murray-Harvey (2001) reported that personal coping is one of the main categories of coping strategies. Participants reported the various ways in which they used this strategy, including setting realistic expectations, positive thinking, blocking negative comments, pragmatism, sport, watching TV, listening to music, simply relaxing or talking, and reading. These two studies support the findings of this study that any novice teachers have their own choice or way to release the stresses they feel and reduce the stress resulting from the teaching workload.

The second choice for the participant teachers is leaving. Leaving in the study's finding presented two paths, namely the changing of the working environment (to another school) and changing to other professions. Two of the female participants in the study changed to another school since they found it difficult to negotiate with the department coordinators about modifying lessons and proposing new teaching methods; the coordinators also created difficulties with the planning process on a daily basis. The students' grade level was another reason, as one participant shifted to teaching primary rather than preparatory and secondary levels.

Chester and Beaudin (1996) found the importance of the collegial school culture in their research on beginning teachers' changing the school environment. They found that beginning teachers in schools which were perceived to have high degrees of collaboration among administrators and experienced teachers increased their level of self-efficacy compared to teachers who worked in schools with little opportunity for collaboration and support. Many of the latter later dropped out of the profession.

However, in this study, six of the novice teachers ultimately left the teaching profession and worked in different careers. Four of the female participants decided to end their teaching career in order to complete a higher education degree or work at a university or office where they did not have a teaching load. There were two male teachers who viewed themselves as excellent engineers and thought they had better options in private companies where they would receive high privileges and opportunities, which they could not attain in a teaching career. Karsenti and Collin (2013) highlighted the four main factors (see Chapter Two) regarding teachers dropping out within the first teaching years. These are the teacher's core task-related factors, individual factors, social environment factors and socioeconomic conditions. All of these factors are associated with the participant teachers who left the teaching profession.

### 5.3 Implications and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, some recommendations are suggested to better support novice teachers and to reduce the level of challenges or attrition rates among novice teachers in Qatari governmental schools. Also, these recommendations provide insight into teachers' coping strategies. The recommendations are specifically provided for teacher education programs, the Ministry of Education and government schools. Also, each of these recommendations offers directions for further research. These recommendations have been suggested based on the three interrelated levels of novice teachers' challenges, as presented in the findings of this study.

#### *5.3.1 Recommendation for teacher education programs*

Reducing the gap between the College of Education and schools. From the very first day on the job, most novice teachers contact their pre-service teacher preparation

programs to explain the gap between what they learned in college and the reality of schoolwork. The majority of teacher participants in the study experienced a huge gap between the College of Education's pre-service program training and daily schoolwork. Perhaps the only way to ease the shock of this transition is to offer some form of supervision and support during the first year of teaching, provided by the College of Education. The supervision of first-year teachers could reduce the reality shock experienced by beginning teachers. In addition, to make the pre-service teacher-education programs more effective, studies suggest developing a shared vision between the program and schools and providing pre-service teachers two years of training in schools before graduation, thereby helping them to gain knowledge and understand more about the school environment and its challenges (Harvey, Yssel, Bauserman, & Merbler, 2010; Tuncer, Tekkaya, Sungur, Cakiroglu, Ertepinar, & Kaplowitz, 2009).

### *5.3.2 Recommendation for the MOEHE*

Lifelong learning. A well-prepared beginning teacher will fulfil standards of teaching, learning, achievement and other educational purposes. Therefore, beginning teachers always intend to maintain and improve their contributions through career-long learning (Day, 2002). Studies have recommended universities offer facilities supporting a learning culture for pre-service teachers and beginning teachers who are working at schools in order to develop themselves and become effective teachers in the global environment (Köksal & Çögmen, 2013).

PD sessions. It is vital that professional development addresses beginning teachers' needs rather than focusing on expert teachers. Professional development sectors should provide sessions with enrichment activities and active workshops related to pedagogical



practices and keep up with updates and trends in the teacher education field so these can be communicated to teachers. In addition, there is a need to prevent frustrated timing and disappointment in professional development activities (Barrett, Jones, Mooney, Thornton, Cady, Guinee, & Olson, 2002). This can be considered a recommendation for the educational system in Qatar.

**Governmental Policy.** Teacher participants see teacher participation in decision-making as very beneficial and encouraging. This is especially true if it has an impact on student achievement when the emphasis is on the core tasks of teaching and learning in schools. Studies show that teacher empowerment increases job satisfaction and reduces conflict in teachers, and it seems a crucial factor that affects school effectiveness (Bogler & Somech, 2004).

**Social image in relation to the social hierarchy.** There are political, social and economic influences that impact the status and image of teachers. These play a role in occupational prestige and the satisfaction of having a teaching career. As an example, teachers in Taiwan enjoy teaching because there is political awareness of teacher retention policies and so they are provided with generous remuneration and enjoy life-long employment. Teachers there are no longer regarded as authoritative figures to inculcate the nationalist ideology but rather as facilitators to prepare citizens for a democratic society (Fwu & Wang, 2002). Moreover, Qatar's Ministry of Education's strategic plan and future agenda should call for more male primary school teachers because of the educational needs of the country and the importance of positive male role models in boys' schools. Studies have emphasized that male teachers produce positive attitudes amongst boys as well as

increase students' motivation and engagement in the classroom (McGrath & Sinclair, 2013).

### *5.3.3 Recommendations for schools*

Psychological Stressors. Stress, a lack of confidence and a lack of competency appear to occur with considerable frequency among beginning teachers. For a positive school environment, it is central to address teachers' work-related stressors, their perceptions of coercion effectiveness, isolation or rejection, and their struggles in their daily work. Therefore, it is highly recommended that each school assign professional mentors who are able to listen to novices' psychological concerns and needs, especially in first three years (Coates & Thoresen, 1976; Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, Cuevas & Lonsdale, 2014).

Classroom management. Novice teachers often contend with a large number of students as well as a large number of assigned class periods in the first year. Beginning teachers face several classroom-management issues, including students not following instructions or arguments occurring between students during an instructional period. With this tension, novice teachers often lack classroom management techniques, lack subject knowledge and find it hard to communicate with their students, including the use of questioning or exchanging ideas and thoughts. Hogan et al. (2003) recommended that school administrators give novices space and time to de-emphasize students' behavioural issues, assign only a small number of students and focus on students' achievements, giving novices time to gradually develop their classroom management techniques and skills.

Planning. Novice teachers are not the same as experts in creating lesson plans. Novices also take a longer time to plan each lesson than experienced teachers. Department

coordinators should provide novices with initial and revised drafts of lesson plans as well as time for the negotiation and improvement of novice teachers' capacity in planning. Moreover, novice teachers need support in developing creativity in planning. Novice teachers may lack planning skills and thus they should have extensive professional development sessions and work on evaluating, developing and revising lesson plans. This will enable beginning teachers to improve their knowledge of planning and teaching (Ding & Carlson, 2013).

**Administrative workload.** Beginning teachers often have substantial amounts of paperwork that takes their attention from the main task of promoting an effective learning environment for their students. Teachers in the education system in Qatar have struggled with this challenge, but several studies have examined and addressed the issue. It has been recommended that beginning teachers with less than three years of experience should have a lightened administrative workload and each administrative-related task should be clearly explained beforehand (Bivona, 2002). Administrators should be aware that increasing stress and job dissatisfaction among the beginners in the teaching profession can cause significant drop-out rates (Smith & Bourke 1992).

**Evaluation system.** Teacher evaluation is based on the belief that a teacher's effectiveness is measured based on student and school achievements. Unfortunately, schools have used various tools and instruments in evaluating novices in a manner similar to expert teachers. Evaluation tools should be viewed as instruments of professional development and not as judgment tools for new teachers. Successful education systems use multiple classroom observations, draw on multiple sources of data such as expert evaluators, and provide meaningful feedback to beginning teachers. The MOEHE should

ensure that evaluators of the novices are well trained, that evaluation and feedback are frequent, and that mentoring and professional development are available (Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardsley, Haertel, & Rothstein, 2012).

Resources used in schools. Novice teachers found the technological resources such as the LMS website and the Lesson Planner application unusual, as they had not been well trained by the College of Education in use of these resources. Teachers claim that any new resources should be integrated into the curriculum and be useful for both teachers and students. Training is necessary for any new regulations or resources, as is technical support from technicians, especially for technological resources. Before implementing any new technology, the school, the Ministry of Education and the College of Education should study teachers' and pre-service teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards this new resource. They should address how it will be integrated into the curriculum and how it will be useful for students (Wozney, Venkatesh & Abrami, 2006).

School support. Schools are in the position to help beginning teachers develop effective coping skills, prevent challenging situations and address the stressors in teachers' work environments (Griffith et al., 1999). Thus, schools should provide effective training on coping strategies for first-year teachers. As an illustration, they could provide the teachers with effective ways to deal with challenges rather than allowing their emotions to define the situation and thereby exacerbating it.

Mindfulness training has the potential to help teachers at each step of the coping process. As a result, novices might become more aware of the emotions that arise from stressful episodes (Beers, 2012; Skinner & Beers, in press). In addition, this study's teacher participants suggested several coping strategies that suited their psychological and

emotional conditions and the challenges they faced in their school, whether related to students, administrative demands or relationships with colleagues. With this in mind, each teacher should work to be more aware of the sources of stress and the challenges related to the school at which he or she works in order to take the necessary action to cope.

#### 5.4 Conclusion

In sum, the current study aimed to investigate the challenges novice teachers face during their first three years of working in Qatari governmental schools, as well as the coping strategies they employ. The results of the study show that are various, interrelated levels of challenges novices must face, and that there exist a number of coping strategies teachers use on a daily basis. At the end of the study, there is a list of implications and recommendations for maximizing the effectiveness of the teachers' work, minimizing their stress and addressing their intentions towards this career. The limitations of this study are that it relied only on qualitative data; other sources of data such as surveys may be considered in future studies. Furthermore, future studies may include other perspectives, such as those of school leaders and experienced teachers.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Ministry of Education and Higher Education Approval

61512018



**تسهيل مهمة القائم بالبحث الميداني في المدارس**

السيد : مدير المدرسة  
المحترم

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

نود إحاطتكم علماً بأن الباحث / الباحثون المذكورة أسماهم أدناه ، بصدد إجراء دراسة ميدانية في  
مدرستكم وبياناتهم كالتالي :

اسم الباحث : شيخة راشد صبر المهنا التميمي  
جهة البحث : جامعة قطر

عنوان البحث : التحديات التي تواجه المعلم المبتدئ واستراتيجيات التكيف في المدارس الحكومية القطرية.

هدف البحث : تهدف الدراسة إلى تحديد مدى استعداد المعلم المبتدئ لمهنة التدريس و ماهي النواحي التحديات في هذا المجال  
وكيف يواجه تلك التحديات. كما تهدف أيضاً إلى معرفة مدى استخدام المعلم المبتدئ لاستراتيجية التكيف لمساعدة نفسه في  
استمرارية التدريس في المدارس القطرية.

عينة البحث : المعلم المبتدئ ( معلمين ومعلمات) في المدارس الحكومية في قطر.

عليه ، يرجى التكرم بتسهيل مهمة الباحث ، علماً بأن البيانات ستكون سرية ولاغراض البحث العلمي..

مع شكرنا لحسن تعاونكم معنا ...

  
د. عزيزة أحمد السعدي  
مدير إدارة السياسات والأبحاث التربوية

3

## Appendix B: Qatar University Institutional Review Board



### Qatar University Institutional Review Board QU-IRB

APP-20/05/2018/QU

May 29, 2018

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Dear Ms. Shaikha Al Naimi,

Sub.: Research Ethics Review Exemption / Graduate Student Project  
Ref.: Project titled, "Novice Teachers' Challenges and Coping Strategies in Qatari Governmental Schools"

We would like to inform you that your application along with the supporting documents provided for the above proposal, is reviewed and having met all the requirements, has been exempted from the full ethics review.

Please note that any changes/modification or additions to the original submitted protocol should be reported to the committee to seek approval prior to continuation.

Your Research Ethics Approval No. is: **QU-IRB 944-E/18**

Kindly refer to both your application tracking number and the IRB approval number in all your future correspondence pertaining to this project.

Best wishes,

Dr. Khalid Al-Ali  
Chairperson, QU-IRB



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## Appendix C: Samples of interview questions:

### Sample of interview questions:

#### - Teachers who still working in teaching field

- 1) Could you please tell me something about your background? For example, Educational background, past teaching experiences, how long have been working in Qatari schools and the current schools.
- 2) How do you describe your daily life of being a young teacher in Qatari governmental school?
- 3) How do you feel about your confidence and qualification in managing the job (specifically in your teaching career)?
- 4) What are the challenges that you have faced so far as a young teacher?
- 5) What are the reasons of these challenges from your opinion?
- 6) Where do you go/whom do you ask when you have any questions or if you need help?
- 7) Do you feel that the training prepared you well for your job? And what other support needs might be helpful for your teaching career?
- 8) What is your career plan in the future?
- 9) Anything else you would like to address.

#### - Teachers who left the teaching field

- 1) Could you please tell me something about your background? For example, Educational background, past teaching experiences, how many years have you lived in Qatar? How long have been working in Qatari governmental schools as a teacher before you changed your job?

- 2) Do you get any pre-service education or training before you been a teacher?
- 3) Could you provide me with some reasons behind leaving the teaching career?
- 4) What do you think the reasons behind the challenges that novice teachers are facing in their daily life of teaching?
- 5) When you had some challenges, who do used to ask for help?
- 6) Anything else you would like to address?

## Appendix D: The Process of Thematic Analysis

Table 2. Categorized the challenges faced by novice teachers:

Interrelated level of teachers' challenges	Categories of teachers' challenges	Teacher code number	Example of teachers' quotation
Level (1): Individual challenges	CATEG (1): Psychological stressors	T 1/F/ in teaching	“I feel nervous all the time because of these warnings received by the school administrators.”
		T 2/F/ in teaching	“I don't sleep well, go to work and hold in your temper, you face problems with the students depending on the grade, you might have issues with the administration, ... where do I relax? You go back home and you have your house chores. ...”
		T 12/F/ left teaching	“I am already exhausted with all the preparing and they come and tell me take them to the morning line up or go with them to.., so many tiring tasks, it would be better if they left the teacher to do what she came to do, in the classroom”
		T 15/F/ left teaching	“My first year was a disaster, and because I was aware of how this traumatic experience could affect me, I went to four therapists at the same time because I was shocked by what was happening. I am a sensitive person .. I suffered a great deal psychologically, even though I knew, and I understood this it how it is, I wanted to quit so many times, but I gave my word to teach for two year”
CATEG (2): Lack of competence		T 1/F/ in teaching	“they destroyed self-confidence and especially when I disuse about lesson plans or any academic issue, ... I did not have a chance to build my own identity, or personality..”
		T 2/ F/ in teaching	“ ... coordinator did not like me and thought that I was dying to get a full-time contract in my previous school. She thought anything I did voluntarily like cover classes or helping out in other things was because I had ulterior motives. She didn't know I did those stuff out of my own good to receive good lucks from Allah. I was very depressed. Actually, she was the first reason when I considered transferring from the school. She did not perform her responsibilities and when the English specialist from MOEHE came to oversee, she would go around telling people she was the one

	T6/M/ in teaching	preparing my lesson plans and she would tell other lies that made me look bad like how she did not like my teaching and other things I don't know about.”
	T 9/M/ in teaching	“When we went to the MOE for applying for a coordinator position, they welcome us as a Qatari competence, but when we went out, it was a big no ... I think their choosing process for a coordinator is not well managed. For example, recently something happened in one of the schools. If the educational guidance person knows someone they recommend him to be the coordinator, by connection, they praise him so that he would become the most eligible candidate, they don't even consult with the school, not the principle, not even the vice principle. That educational guidance person could be racist.”
		“teacher can't add their personal touch to their lesson plans, each teacher has his own way of teaching... my coordinator of the department did not like it, regardless if it was better or not. So this standardization is good for teachers to raise their levels, but it also bad for creative teachers..”
Lack of self- confident	T 2/F/ in teaching	“... I felt like I couldn't deliver my mission as I would like with these students. I loved my work I wanted to excel and for my students to excel as well. Aisha bint Abi Bakr Independent Secondary School of Girls in area that most of students are Bedouin their families are used to “live in desert, and they share a common culture of herding camels and goats.” Most of the Bedouin boys or girls hate to learn English or any western things. I didn't know how to raise students' motivation levels”
	T 8/ M/ in teaching	“I was not good with computers, and everything was done electronically. This is one of the challenges I faced, because everything you have to submit electronically. ... I felt depressed at the beginning, I had to make PowerPoints that covered the material in a suitable way for the students”
	T 14/F/ left teaching	“my first year was really hard. I needed to work a lot on myself by myself. So the load was on me, I had to develop myself, I worked hard and never expected anything from the school. Yes, some of them offered help but the weakness perception was always there”
CATEG (3): Personal ambition	T 5/F/ in teaching	“I just started my masters because I want to be employed at the university. When I graduate I will continue at the university studying and working. This is my future plan, I don't see myself in the school anymore, i was really excited when I started but, you know, the ministry controls everything”

	T 8/M/ in teaching	“I want to apply for masters, it needs to be full-time leave, I have to be totally free, but the ministry stopped taking applications at the moment...”
	T 12/F/ left teaching	“I have to get my Ph.D. which I won’t do while teaching because I don’t have time to finish preparation at school and I have to take my work home, so I won’t have the time for my studies”
	T 13/F/ left teaching	“My personal ambition to continue for master’s and then Ph.D. I didn’t have an issue with going to back to teaching after I complete my degrees ... Another thing is the job title that remains with you 20-30 years into teaching, there is no career development, school are supposed to be always developing, teachers are like doctors, life-long learners, always looking out for what’s new in the field. But unfortunately, schools here...”
Salary considerations	T 8/ M/ in teaching	“The principal, told me he wanted to put me as an administrative staff, vice principal to control the students since I know their families and stuff but I did not want that, if I went from an academic to be an administrative, my salary will go down, almost 10,000 less, I don’t want that, I prefer to be an academic, both of them are a lot of work so. For Qataris, give it 5-7 years and you can be a principal not a vice principal, a principal.”
	T 10/M/ left teaching	“As a Qatari & an excellent engineer there are more better choices in private companies, especially from financial point view, why I would stay in teaching with low salary. So, got back to the Dolphin Energy Company, did not want to sacrifice from financial part”
	T 11/M/ left teaching	“When I completed my teaching assignment, I still had my salary and all the benefits from QP, and I did not want to lose that. compared to the Petroleum and private sectors, it’s very low...”
	T 12/F/ left teaching	“Honestly, even though I am not Qatari, the salary they give us is nothing next to the work and effort we do .. They think because we have this salary, they can crush us with work”
	T 13/F/ left teaching	“the salary... I think the salary is one of the biggest reasons. But you should know that the salary is not everything for some people. Okay, for 99% of them the most important thing is the salary. For example, I don’t care about the salary as much as I care about the creativity and achievements of the job, if I don’t see any progress, I feel that it restricts my creativity”
	T 15/F/ left teaching	



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Level (2): Challenges within the school environment	CATEG (1): core tasks for teachers, SUB-CATEG 1: Planning of lessons	T 1/F/ in teaching	<p>“teacher don’t want salaries, we just want to feel appreciated and regarded highly in the society..”</p> <p>“The most challenge I am facing is that I can’t do any kind of editing or changes, in lesson plans or activities or PowerPoints that we presents for our students. Like you know that each 2 teachers, some teachers are not qualified to do lesson plans. I am very depressed with their work, it is very annoying also for the students”</p>
		T 2/F/ in teaching	<p>“for me, dealing with 5th and 6th graders is much simpler. I taught them for a year and both curriculums were similar which helped me; .. But now I am responsible for 6th and 7th grades. Two very different classes one is primary and the other is preparatory, such a big gap, there is no link between the two curriculums where you could at least work on similar lesson plans, and worksheets or something, which is really bad”</p>
		T 9/M/ in teaching	<p>“They standardize the lesson plans, so everyone delivers the same lesson, asks the same questions, I tried once to change something, and they did not like it at the department, regardless if it was better or not. So this standardization is good for teachers to raise their levels, but it also bad for creative teachers to dull their skills. There are other creative teachers at the school, so this thing doesn’t allow them to do what they want to do”</p>
		T 11/M/ left teaching	<p>“I planned them, but I did not follow the other teachers’ plan since they were traditional. I did not want the same thing so I prepared the plans using other ideas and implementing them in the classroom.”</p>
		T 12/ F/ left teaching	<p>“the school come and tell you you should follow the instructions to a tee, the lesson plans are to be followed as is. We had Maharati, if you heard about it, they ask me to follow everything even though I knew they don’t suit my students, I have other methods that can benefit my students more. You might have someone barge in during class time telling you that it’s minute 29, you should be in that part of the lesson plan, tch! They don’t understand that the students have different levels or what they really lack, they just want me to put the lesson plan above everything else. The pressure of having to follow everything to the tiniest details regardless of the students’ needs is really unfortunate.”</p>
		T 13/ F/ left teaching	<p>“you are restricted to teach their curriculum, you have to teach the book, and I didn’t have the freedom to teach students extra material not from the book. That was the first limitation. Then, me as a teacher, I had</p>

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	T 14/ F/ left teaching	<p>my own opinions about the books, some standards are too high for the students' levels, they are standards for older students, for students whose English is their first language. This is the student's second language, there is no way both groups are on the same level. It's really high, so I tried simplifying things for them which made a huge conflict; do I stick with the curriculum or commit to simplifying the material, so they could understand it and achieve 70% of the required"</p> <p>"you have specific standards you want to follow, it's okay, you have a curriculum, a unified curriculum that's perfect, but at least give me the freedom of delivering your material my way. Don't force that on me. To the extent that even the simple starter and closure of the classes are to be followed, can you imagine? It's like you're a robot that delivers the material and nothing else."</p> <p>"The old curriculum that we taught was very high and it was such a gap between its level and the students levels."</p>
		<p>"After I gave the lesson, other teachers would come and tell me they taught it this or that way because students understood it easier or because they simply did like my way. So I realized that new teachers must spend one day a week, for one hour, to plan for the week ahead. They did not find this important because they were busy doing other unimportant tasks"</p>
CATEG (1): core tasks for teachers, SUB-CATEG 2: Classroom management	T 2/F/ in teaching	<p>"The number of students, then it helps the teacher be more productive. For example, for the writing lessons, I would teach them the way I think is easy for them to understand not the traditional what they used to teach us; I prefer to have the students write a 1<sup>st</sup> draft where they can take it home and review it and correct the mistakes, ... So, if I can do 3 drafts for all writings throughout the year, they need that since they're still in primary.</p> <p>"The academic vice principal isn't considerate when it comes to the load or the number of students in a class. These matters are important. Of course, the ministry set a number of students, but the principal and the vice principal are the ones who distribute the number of period for each teacher"</p> <p>"What would you do, if the administration itself spoils the students even when they misbehave. What can I do. The student is an adult who knows that her behaviour was wrong, but because she knows that the administration won't punish her for disrespecting me ..."</p>
	T 4/F/ in teaching	<p>"If I want to make a student improvement plan. So students levels are A, B, and C. I take the C group because they are the most in need for improvement, and I give the other two groups exercises. I am alone in the class, so everyone is calling for me and I want to</p>

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T 6/M/  
in  
teaching

focus on the C group, they need to see and touch stuff to understand, they need time... To be able to produce a well-educated generation. 20-25 is good for the teacher to focus on each student. If there are 25, maybe there will be 5 C students which is manageable. But 10 is too much because some students don't even know how to hold a pencil ..."

T 7/M/  
in  
teaching

"But, at first, the most challenging thing was the load they gave me, as it was my first year, they shouldn't have given me this much periods, they gave me 12 periods/week. Yes, most teachers teach as much, and it is not easy, but I was new, how would I manage 12 periods/week?! They could have given me little by little, 4 periods/week which is one section, then two sections, then three, then I would be able to manage 4 sections no problem. Giving me 12 periods/week at the beginning was hard. As per a report by the Ministry of Education, we are the top of the list when it comes to student density. We had 900 students, 33 students in a class, where it's supposed to be 27-30 students per class. Other schools have 18-20 students per class so controlling the class must be easier for them. So I end up skipping on things in the curriculum because of the big number of students"

T 8/M/  
in  
teaching

"A huge challenge I faced at the start was managing the class time ... that period time is divided by the number of objectives I have. For instance, I have 2 or 3 objectives I must cover in one period. The periods are 45 minutes so 10-15 minutes for each objective. So the biggest challenge for me was the time"

"The period is 45 minutes, the first 5 minutes are lesson introduction with a slide show. this is from the ministry, the weekly value/moral, for example, "teacher respect". There is also lesson objectives, each objective has 10 minutes, its fine but sometimes we get four objectives, so it's hard to cover them all, and if you can't control the classroom how will you do it? Moreover, we are required to conclude the objective and close it. Then close it by solving exercises or having a good student summarize it for others. If you have a special needs student in your class, you should include a special plan for him, the white board should be organized and you go around in class and grade exercises, you also grade books and update them, support and encourage students. This is all weekly, it's not simple to do all that"

"We have more than 150 students who don't know how to read and write, coming from 4<sup>th</sup> grade. How did they pass? We raised the issue to the principal, submitted a letter to the ministry, took books from

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T 10/M/ left teaching	<p>Awqaf to teach them Noorani Qaida for reading and writing, we gave them extra support classes ... Those students mostly come from illiterate families, their mothers or fathers don't read and write, very old parents, so they don't have anyone at home helping them. We come across sensitive cases like orphans, it's hard"</p> <p>"We have 800-850 students all are Bedouin, they come with so much energy, they come to school from 7 to 2 and some get the bus at 5am. This is a lot on them. But now it's much better, we give 7<sup>th</sup> period and students are well focused, which reduced the load on us, they used to pray Dhuhur in school, 700 students it was hard, however, this year they go home early, they don't have to pray at school. The curriculum too, they shortened it as well. It was two books; exercises here and there, now it's one for Islamic Studies"</p>
T 11/M/ left teaching	<p>"Schools like to show off things a lot. All things are doing are not reflected into our students' level. This is the advantage of "Teach For Qatar" institution that we do not do schools' demands &amp; all these paper load. I used to be free from what teachers do. In 2 years I focused in learning my students only"</p> <p>"some students were could not even write and read and they are in grade 7, but others were amazing as high achievers. This is a biggest challenge could a teacher face, which is students' differentiation of academic level. I faced that in same class I helped a boy to read the question, but another boy I gave him more advance activities to keep up with his level"</p>
T 12/ F/ left teaching	<p>"there is the issue of the students' weak education level from the previous grades and the teacher is held accountable for the student learning outcomes. For example, students enter preparatory schools not knowing how to read, multiply or add numbers. And by the end of the year, the teacher is evaluated for the students' poor performance even though the student did not cover the standards from the previous year. This is an indicator of a defect in the educational system; students go up a grade without completing the standards and every time a student goes up a level, the burden is on the teacher; should he teach the student from zero or just give the current year's curriculum. "it was how the students treated you and you handle them, it was the biggest challenge as I taught 8<sup>th</sup> grade which is the most difficult level to teach"</p>
T 14/ F/ left teaching	
T 15/ F/ left teaching	
	<p>"6<sup>th</sup> grade students don't know how to read their ABC's. the reality is really different; the level of the students is really below average, and the books have high standards"</p>

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		<p>“if I tell you about the challenges, the ones I face with students are a normal behaviour problems, it is expected for anyone going into teaching to have a hard time with the students, this generation isn’t easy”</p> <p>“On my very first day, they trained us to get to know students on the first day, so I asked the students to write on a note their name, date of birth and interests. One of the students wrote her name in a weird way, keep in mind its 7<sup>th</sup> grade, and her birthdate was 1/ 1/ 1 8 8 9. I asked her what year were you born, she said 98, I asked her about the date she wrote, I am a science teacher, I have nothing to do with special needs kids, she said its 1998, I asked her what grade was she supposed to be in, she told me that since 3<sup>rd</sup> grade she has been failing and the school passes her to the next year, she fails three times in each grade and the school passes her to the next grade. The student was dyslexic, and they did not identify the student as that, she is a student who is subject to expulsion if she did not pass this year. I couldn’t take it, I could have used all connections I have to make it a big societal issue”</p>
CATEG (1): core tasks for teachers, SUB-CATEG 3: administrative demands	T 1/F/ in teaching	<p>“There are lots of administrative demands. For example, in my last school I used to look after the girls in their break time. ... And If I don’t want to come, the administrators, I have to sign a warning paper”</p> <p>“some kind of complexity came from the MOHE, but the most is from the schools, they are creating problems. For us as teachers the vice principle of academic, she demands a lot. ... If we are do not want to do something, she gives warnings, so every time I feel like I terrified”</p>
	T 2/F/ in teaching	<p>“Because the principal and the vice principal are the ones to distribute the classes, we suffer a lot ... They would got mad if your load is 10 periods, no, they would move mountains just to give you more”</p>
	T 3/F/ in teaching	<p>“ ... but the administration here makes everything complicated, you’re forced to take a certain number of periods that they assign and so on and so forth”</p>
	T 5/F/ in teaching	<p>“there is a load on some teachers who manage the files. Also, we must be members in more than one committee ... I manage more files, four files, plus the scientific research.. We are three teachers and a coordinator. Most of the work load is on me and my colleague, the other teacher, not much. Last year was worse.”</p> <p>“now they give teachers administrative tasks, like shifts during breaks, which they transferred it to the TA this year. In the last two years I had a daily shift every other week. Also, participation in committees such as the School’s Vision Committee and the Safety Committee. They form committees and put teachers as</p>

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T 6/M/ in teaching	<p>members, it's mandatory to perform the tasks required"</p> <p>"I did not expect to have so much work load as a teacher; the teacher doesn't only deal with the students or plan how to deliver the materials, no we face great challenges in student behaviours, and the administrative ... Last year we had a big issue since the whole administration was changed, the academic vice principal, the vice principal, the supervisors"</p> <p>"other administrative tasks are the ones assigned to the teacher by the administration; mandatory tasks under the contract between the teacher and the administration. supervising students during the break and the morning line-up"</p>
T 8/M/ in teaching	<p>"each teacher has three files: student behaviour, improvement &amp; lesson plans, and professional development. These things are convenient for the teacher"</p>
T 10/M/ left teaching	<p>"there is an item written, as "The teacher should do whatever the administrators required them to say." Which means that the teacher should everything without questioning why or do an argument with the school administration.</p> <p>For example, when the school told me to do "Scientific Research" competition which is supported by the MOEHE, and school selects number of teachers to do it. The school offered me to collaborate with my students to select a topic and do a research. I refused that because the schools are doing this activity as showing off. The school did many problems to me and tensions that why I did not accept their demand of doing the "Scientific Research" competition.</p>
T 11/M/ left teaching	<p>"the issues come from the school administration. In some disciplined schools the administration is sound and capable, in other undisciplined schools the administration is weak and incapable and as a result the students won't be disciplined and the teachers won't be well controlled"</p>
T 14/F/ left teaching	<p>"The essential tasks for me were to prepare, plan, get my material and tools ready, these things already take much of my effort besides paperwork, grading, and other mandatory tasks. But, then, come other tasks like preparing for the morning line-up, and after morning line-up, write a report, and during the line-up do this and that, so many things, events, anything they put such a big load on teachers. Even the scientific</p>

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		<p>research is considered a big load because it is mandatory.</p> <p>“at the same time the teacher is a social worker, an officer, a principal, it is all in the classroom. The teacher is responsible for everything which is such a load sometimes to the extent of... but if other did their part right, then I might be still teaching. I would adapt easier with the students, I would have achieved the success I wanted, but as you can see one year, two years and then the third year drained me. It was a nice experience with all its ups and downs, but it does drain the energy, it goes on things and tasks that aren’t necessary”</p> <p>“All that the administration cares about is the files, documents, reputation in the ministry, and above all, the ministry. Because the ministry come and examine papers and documents, the whole school panics if someone from the ministry comes to review documents. Nothing is more important, not what was achieved, nothing. we had files in the department and the coordinator gives us tasks to do in these files. It is not a big load, because if I did not do them, the load goes to the coordinator, so as a team we helped one another. It is also a waste of time for me and the coordinator because she taught classes as well”</p>
<p>CATEG (1): core tasks for teachers, SUB-CATEG 4: Extracurricular activities for the school rather than focus in teaching</p>	<p>T 1/F/ in teaching</p>	<p>“The teachers’ role as supervision. But, now we do all these activities and hand the students only to present in front of all ... it is an extra workload for us as a teachers”</p>
	<p>T 2/F/ in teaching</p>	<p>“Honestly, online learning and scientific research are...well at least the scientific research is optional. The vice principal came to me once and wanted to have a research done for each grade and kept saying that it was mandatory from the ministry. I told her my plate was already full of teaching and preparing for both grades, and I have three weak students who I need to focus on improving”</p>
	<p>T 4/F/ in teaching</p>	<p>“if there is an in-class activity, I have to document it. I have 30 students in class and they want me to take pictures, to finish the material, there is no time to go around and take pictures. Then, I have to write a report about it. Count with me, in a day I make say 3 activities ...”</p>
	<p>T 6/M/ in teaching</p>	<p>“the administrative role of the teacher is mandatory in general. The online learning is such a burden to the teacher. If the teacher got a few minutes to spare, they can’t relax, because they have to complete the electronic bending tasks, or grade exams and books. It is like stuffing more than teaching”</p>
	<p>T 8/M/ in teaching</p>	

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T 14/ F/ left teaching	<p>“tasks like teaching students, being responsible for their grades, for raising their academic levels, being accounted for these things .. but we do these things aren’t for teacher’s responsibility”</p>
CATEG (1): core tasks for teachers, SUB-CATEG 5: Lack of professional development OR ineffective PD sessions	T 1/F/ in teaching
T 2/ F/ in teaching	<p>“the scientific research, I did not like it. I thought it did not achieve anything with the students. The student participates just because, they even have conditions for the nationality of the student and I don’t know what, and at the end, the teacher is the one who is pressured to get it done and submit it on day x with content xyz. I had to make the whole research, honestly, 99% of the teachers do the research under the students’ names. Then we have to train the student so that they go and present it. I am talking from my personal experience teaching for three years at the same school, 99% if not 100% of teachers are doing this because they are pressured to. If there is a mistake in the research or if it is not up to the school standards, the blame is on the teacher, they want the researches to be so high that it doesn’t fit the student level anymore. That is why there is a huge pressure”</p>
T3/ F/ in teaching	<p>“whenever the “vice academic” of the principle come and do an observation of my lesson, she sits with me and criticize each point I did at the classroom and then I sign a paper. Means that I had a professional development. I asked them that there is form of “developing &amp; evaluating” a novice teacher. But, the “vice academic” of the principle told me that this is not for me, I guess it’s for Qataris. ... PD sessions at schools it’s a headache and not useful at all” “The College of Education, helped me so much, and I had very good training. The College gave me many courses that helped me to teach my students with new teaching methods, and how to behave front of our students, and how to deal with all type of students. But when I came to reality it is so different.”</p>
	<p>“The vice principal doesn’t care for the development of non-Qatari teachers. Imagine, I already completed two years of teaching, and during that time I have asked for a “standards workshop” many times. Every year she ignores my requests, and never have she sent me on one. Some workshops such as “how to write an exam” are mandatory from the Ministry for 3rd and 6th grades, and there is one for preparatory school too.” “Preparation from College of Education helped a lot in my first year in teaching, they taught us how to control a class and many other important things.”</p>
	<p>“good the school workshops, they focus on the strategies, individual differences, time management,</p>



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		<p>all of these things benefit the teacher in the classroom. Maybe the various teaching methods, I noticed that some teachers, who didn't major in education, know simple teaching styles and strategies. Stuff that we did not study in university because they aren't recognized.</p> <p>T 7/M/ in teaching</p> <p>Us from an education background know good and practical strategies like Jigsaw or 5Es strategy, stuff that other teachers don't know about."</p>
		<p>T 8/ M/ in teaching</p> <p>"I had a probation period of three months in the school. It is in the ministry law, to have three months after joining a school. But before join the school, I did not have any PD sessions"</p>
		<p>T 9/ M/ in teaching</p> <p>"In our school a teacher assigned to train the new teacher. Assigned by the Vice principal for academic affairs. He chooses someone who is good at class control because it is the most important thing. The teacher has to have a strong personality to control the class, if he can't, the teacher wouldn't be able to deliver a word from the material. You're dealing with kids after all."</p>
		<p>T 14/ F/ left teaching</p> <p>"They taught us some good stuff in the organization, even other teachers asks me where I learned them, I give them in-class strategies, how to manage or deal with students if they acted a specific way. There are other things a teacher learns from practice, but at the organization they taught us things that other people learn by practice and time, you know. We benefited a lot from the summer training."</p>
		<p>"The development session they offered at the organization was very useful. They understood where we came from and where we are going and our goals, but in the school, it was almost mandatory ... they offered us courses in everything, psychology; for me and my students, and with the teachers, academics, strategies and methods, a lot of courses that included things we needed. But still I had to develop myself more because every person is different."</p>
CATEG (1): core tasks for teachers, SUB-CATEG 6: Evaluation system	T 1/F/ in teaching	"Every time the school administrators want to catch us that we are doing something wrong. They lets us feel like we do everything wrong and we have to be punished"
	T 3/F/ in teaching	"I am in the online learning committee, I have to follow up with the teachers, offer them my experience and develop their technological skills, I sit with them... This position will not help me really, it might help you at the end, in your annual evaluation, that

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	T 4/F/ in teaching	you've done something, you might get an excellent evaluation. But as a certified experience, no"
	T 5/F/ in teaching	"they tell me to do some administrative tasks, if I did them, then its fine, if not, the evaluation reflects it. All the academic work I have done is worth 50% of the evaluation. Even if you outdone yourself with students and helped them, it's still 50% for administrative work like reports"
	T 10/M/ left teaching	"I am a teacher whose responsibility is the students. There are so many things I reject to do, even if they impacted my evaluation"
	T 11/M/ left teaching	"The evaluation in schools are more friendly type. Because my relationship was good with the administration so I got "A"."
		"my evaluation for the paperwork wasn't that good, because I thought it was pointless really"
CATEG (2) school support: SUB-CATEG 1: Resource, facilities, and materials	T 1/F/ in teaching	"... it does not have any usefulness because students know it is not necessary to do the assignments related <a href="#">LMS</a> . LMS is "a website provides all kind of technological activities, like assignments, videos related to their lessons, and quizzes ... Previous school I used to pay 1000 QR per month ... Designing reinforcement activities for students also wasted my time and a workload for me"
	T 2/F/ in teaching	"LMS is such a waste of time, what's the point of uploading the plans or opening discussion threads, actually students don't open them or even look at them ... The thing that I feel is a serious work load is the system called "Lesson Planner". Why does it matter anyway? I go in every class with my lesson plan in hand. They gave me a warning because I wouldn't upload my lesson plans. I put up a quiz and a discussion thread which are more beneficial to the students but still"
	T 4/F/ in teaching	"We do it ourselves, they just would give you the OK and you have to do it all on your own. Not any kind of support, not financially or emotionally .. I'm telling you one of the challenges we face is the shortage of tools and materials. I'm talking about tools and materials such as if I have a science experiment that we need to see the result of after four days ... if I need 10 plants for one period, and there are four science periods, so 40 plants, too much you get it? the problem isn't about money, it's about time and how the school forces us to spend it"
	T 9/M/ in teaching	

T 10/M/ left teaching	<p>“uh printing, well I understand because it is a school, the coordinator has to approve the printing ... But really, I can’t blame them, because if they gave free reign, teacher will finish all the papers in Qatar”</p> <p>“everyone should know that what schools asking teachers, mostly are showing off. Like the technology system, “lms system”, the teacher in this system should upload homeworks but in reality, the students do not use this system, does not have benefits. Some students do not have computers or internet in their home, some others have difficulty to use this technology.</p> <p>“the HOEHE should be more realistic with technology problems we have. As example, when they decided to ipad Tablet before previous years, it was a waste of money and not successful. Also, the internet connection is very slow, not able all students to “log in” at one time in the server. In short, a lot of technical challenges that MOEHE solve before assigning teachers &amp; students to do the work ... Lesson planner application that teachers upload their lesson plans. I would like to ask the schools &amp; MOEHE, are the parents or students having any benefit of uploading this plans!”</p>
CATEG (3) Relationships with colleagues:	<p>T 2/ F/ in teaching</p> <p>“... in the teachers’ room where they are either jealous or conspiring something against you ...”</p>
T 9/M/ in teaching	<p>“I am trying my best, but teachers here are old, this is one of the issues I am facing. Already there is a gap between me and my students, imagine the gap between other teachers ... They do the work just because the ministry asked them to. This mentality is what destroyed them. They’re all older than me at department”</p>
T 12/F/ left teaching	<p>“the mood around the teachers; jealousy, envy and hatred ... They spend their time depressed, whining, complaining and it’s all about negativity ... their mentality is that so much negativity and hate for the work they do, it’s unbelievable. If you started with enthusiasm, they would put you off”</p>
T 13/F/ left teaching	<p>“the first and the most annoying one for me was that English teachers were in one room. These teachers had a lot of personal problems with each other, so imagine, in a working environment like that. I wasn’t comfortable at all because they would fight 24 hrs a day”</p>
T 14/F/ left teaching	<p>“Even if I suggested a new idea I wanted to implement, they would say stuff like “you think you know what you’re doing”, so I either went along with</p>

			their methods to avoid any problems with them or you stand by your idea and do it regardless”
Level (3):Challenges Beyond the School’s Environment	CATEG (1): Gap between the university and work	T 1/F/ in teaching	“Being a beginning teacher which has been graduated from the College of Education, the surrounded people like the mentor teachers, and other teachers, they see me like I don’t understand anything. But, when I see their work for example, the planning and designing of lesson plans are not so perfect and not like how the College of Education used to taught us ... The College of Education, helped me so much, and I had very good training. The College gave me many courses that helped me to teach my students with new teaching methods, and how to behave front of our students, and how to deal with all type of students. But when I came to reality it is so different”
		T 2/F/ in teaching	“Preparation from College of Education helped a lot in my first year in teaching, they taught us how to control a class and many other important things. Even the new principal attended one of my classes and was over the moon with my teaching style and language. She said that I was very confident like an experienced teacher or something. I am a QU graduate after all”
		T 3/F/ in teaching	“I noticed that some teachers, who didn’t major in education, know simple teaching styles and strategies. Stuff that we did not study in university because they aren’t recognized. Us from an education background know good and practical strategies like Jigsaw or 5Es strategy, stuff that other teachers don’t know about.
		T 4/F/ in teaching	We have many teachers like that, we had a teacher whose background was in veterinary, another from the college of science”
		T 5/F/ in teaching	“The university helped me so much. I did not face problems with planning or with the students, or how to control the classroom. Hamdullilah, I was ready to go in class and face the students or come across cases. I did not have a problem with all of that, but the administration”
		T 6/M/ in teaching	“from my point of view, I think I learned from college more than what is required from me here. I am talking about myself, when I graduated and went into the field, I was shocked. What we learned and what we apply here are totally different. At first, I would disagree with what they told me to do and tell them that at college we were taught this and that, they would tell me for forget about that because the ministry has its own rules and regulations and strategies. I am still to this day not even 60% convinced of the stuff we do”
		T 9/M/ in teaching	“in the internship” Imam Muhammad ibn Saud University in Al-Ahsa” , first of all we had a dense curriculum, so this curriculum is like drop in the sea, so it’s easy for me to teach it. Second of all, during my internship I did

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		<p>exams, notebooks, morning line-ups, managing scouts, all this helped me form an idea about how schools work”</p> <p>“On my very first day they gave me a lesson plan to teach for the day and a PowerPoint, I opened the PowerPoint and saw that it was very ugly. I mean, in university they taught us that it should be colorful and done in a way that attracts attendants, not to cramp information in one slide, all that we learned was done the exact opposite in that presentation. .... I told them honestly, it is ugly and the person who has done it doesn’t have a taste, students are used to HD quality things and they see this 2MP picture all over the presentation, it wouldn’t work, it is mainly done for the student, so it should fit them”</p>
T 12/ F/ left teaching		
		<p>“Because, what we study in the university and what we face in schools are two different things. The doctors don’t the real situation out there, they go through the semester not knowing what the correct methods are to teach Arabic language or social sciences or English. They don’t even know one lesson from the primary school curriculum, they don’t know how their books look like. They teach you general stuff that are perfect and ideal, but the reality is such a mess ... the university has a role for sure. To have such an education and the internship that we do, it should be related to the reality, not teach us something that is ideal and wow, the foreign movies and classrooms they show us is different from schools here”</p> <p>“Some courses they have are already studied in university; we are already professional in them so you’re not offering anything new. They can offer New Strategies, that would be great to learn, you have offer the latest researches, global researches and how can we apply new concepts into our classes. Instead, they give us how to write objectives, of course we know how, we studied it and we are already writing them in schools, they’re not developing me, they’re just repeating old stuff”</p>
T 13/ F/ left teaching		
SUB-CATEG (2): Governmental Policy	T 1/F/ in teaching	<p>“Many times happened that the school received decisions from MOEHE and we as teachers got into problem. For example, the MOEHE decided to remove all servers and it a “computer program that manages access to a centralized resource or service in a network.” We all teachers put our work in these servers and sure together the resources. So, when the MOEHE did the decision of deleting. We took many hours to upload all files and it is very important we needed for other semesters.</p> <p>Also, this year the MOEHE changed the books, we received the books before one day of students came</p>

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T 3/ F/  
in  
teaching

from vacation. Next day we have to teach the students new lesson. It was workload and I got exhausted from preparing lesson plans with activities”

“I think these things aren’t in the hands of the school administration, the ministry is responsible for the committees. It even indorsed specific committees with official names and has people to manage them. On the other side, there are committees that aren’t mandatory for each department to manage, but the school picks the most competent teachers, who know the system of the files and are used to managing them, they give them the responsibility of managing these files. Often, I feel that it isn’t right, they should allow other teachers to manage files, some teachers want to participate”

T 4/ F/  
in  
teaching

“it’s not about only the administrative tasks at school, it’s the ministry, they issue decisions over nights, just like that suddenly a new regulation is there. This confuses the school and the whole administration. We were glad students finish the school day early, we thought we would have time to finish our tasks and not to have to take them home. No, it’s a meeting after meeting. This week we had three meetings already”

T 5/ F/  
in  
teaching

T 6/ M/  
in  
teaching

“this year it is a new curriculum. They should have given us a chance to examine it, you know, gave to the teachers a year prior for them to get a good feedback. Instead they bombarded us with new curriculums and asked for new plans, new formats, new everything without any kind of notice or research or workshops. Just like that, take it and get going. Everything this ministry is like this now, take and do”

T 10/M/  
left  
teaching

“The MOE also have a grave problem, their HR is open to public two days a week, the Examination Department that equates certificates is open three days a week that are not on the same HR days. If I want to visit both departments in the same day? I can’t I have to go on two separate days. This shows that within the ministry, there are no communications. HR has Sundays and Tuesdays and the other has Mondays and Wednesdays. Should I leave work every day to get things done? This is something that happened to me just yesterday. I went to Omar Bin Al-Khatib for the HR, finished my transaction with them and went to the Examination dpt. To find that they don’t receive customers on that day. I was forced to go out the next day to be able to finish my business with them. So these are issue in the ministry itself, so how about other governmental institutions”

“The MOEHE are focusing on the student-centered learning on students, but we hope the MOEHE ask the school administrators to have a teacher-centered

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approach. Therefore, whenever a problem happened it becomes teachers' responsibility or the students' failure even teachers' responsibility ... it is a very complex system and like many columns share to develop this system. For example, the administrative system in schools, the teachers, parents, students, and the MOEHE. These are columns should integrated together. There should be a clear vision that all these columns follow in one way. This system not going to develop from one side, the all sides should be integrated. Even if the MOEHE is doing their best, the teachers should be well qualified, no one will succeed their vision. The policy makers in the country, should hand in hand to solve the problems that the education system face."

T 11/  
M/ left  
teaching

"Teachers do not have the power or authority to make changes, or to be even creative and do his own ideas. The teacher always surrounded with useless demands & paper load ... Then, any implementation happened; the schools or MOEHE should sit with the teachers later and try to develop that idea"  
"There should be have Qataris with high qualifications, to put our own curriculum and supported from many organization in the country. I know we will do mistakes a lot but, should start and little by little we do the modifications. The implementation should be gradually and not suddenly"

T 12/ F/  
left  
teaching

"Another thing is that teachers don't have a say, no one hears their opinions. Orders are given to them without knowing if they can undertake them or not ... I see that teachers are always the weakest, always blamed, always threatened to lose their jobs. The problem is they haven't created a system that gives the teacher the opportunity to do his best regardless of the results because they always evaluate the teacher according to the results and paperwork. But, if they can create a system that allows the ministry to evaluate

T 13/ F/  
left  
teaching

not according to the student results but according to his work, if he does it well or not. Because at the end, many factors affect the results of the students which the teacher cannot control"

"First, the MOEHE should set their goals. They should understand if they want to implement any idea, should be realistic for the teachers & students and are able to do it. Not only for showing off. Any idea should follow with clear vision and clear goal ... The wrong is that we are thinking that we are changing our education system in a right way, which is not! Here in MOEHE trying to follow the abroad and western thoughts into our society and culture.

"... especially now that they are changing everything, new curriculums and new rules and plans. Everything

T 15/ F/ left teaching	<p>is new now, so you can imagine double complaining ... the ministry is 90% the responsible party. Every year we write to the ministry a report of all the stuff that needs to be changed in the books, the English book. We were very eager that they were going to edit it as we suggested, but alas, when we received the books, nothing we noted was changed, they changed stories. What about the more important stuff we commented on? The ministry really is a mystery to us. We don't know where the problem is, who is responsible for all the chaos that happens all the time. "There is no way the whole ministry body doesn't care this much about education. If someone came and looked at the situation objectively, they would say who is trying to retaliate against the teachers and students!"</p> <p>"I just think that it would be great if they take experts' opinions, they bring people from outside who didn't study here, people from Australia or wherever and they make them establish national policies in the ministry. How is that when that person is not even there to observe how classrooms proceed. They should consider the teacher's opinion when it comes to curriculum, or strategies that would best work with students. It has to be someone with practical experience not someone from outside, who doesn't know the environment. Take the opinion of Qatari youth who we have done studies on previously. Consider their experiences. Our people know us best, not people from outside who don't have any kind of background about our teaching history ... They brought experts to develop our education system and even teachers to teach our students; all are from around the world, when they had great human resources here at the ministry. Qatar university also they are all on the same board of directors, it's all interrelated ... Our people know us best, not people from outside who don't have any kind of background about our teaching history"</p>
SUB-CATEG (3): Social image relation to social hierarchy, gender and degree.	<p>T 5/ F/ in teaching</p> <p>"I just started my masters because I want to be employed at the university. When I graduate I will continue at the university studying and working. This is my future plan, I don't see myself in the school anymore, i was really excited when I started but, you know, the ministry controls everything. Both, it's the same thing. Teaching is teaching anywhere. If I continued in the university, I'll try to be a TA or something then I will go for Ph.D."</p> <p>T 6/ M/ in teaching</p> <p>"It's true that the teacher is distinguished from others in this country, but it should be the mother of all professions with incentives such as financial, mental and other benefits that makes Qataris want to have this job. If for examples, they allot a higher salary than a government employee and lessen the load, then people will consider the job. If they offer special services for</p>



T 7/ M/  
in  
teaching

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teachers to facilitate the teacher's transactions all over the country. We face issues with public services. I can't go more than twice in the month or my colleagues will have to cover for my classes. I go to government institutions, take a number, and I find there are 200-300 people ahead of me. How can I finish and go back to school? I have to come back tomorrow? I have this thing that I need to get done with the ministry, yesterday I excused to go, and the day before, and still nothing's been done! The large number of students affects the classroom. To prepare a lesson, the teacher has to be focused. If a personal matter affected my performance in the classroom, I am a human after all, not an angle with the same mood every day of the year. So, if someone wants to observe my class they should specify the date this way I can prepare a well, then you can come and criticize me as much as you want because I had time to prepare. But coming unannounced and criticizing me isn't nice" "Qatarization, we hear it everywhere, but we see nothing. There is not enough encouragement for it ... last year I took recommendation letters from managers and principals, I brought the letters to the ministry to apply for a coordinator, there was a vacancy. They told me I had to have at least three years of experience, I only had two. There was a non-Qatari teacher who had three years of experience. So you ask the non-Qatari for 3 years just like the Qatari, so where is the encouragement of Qatarization? Nothing. Even though I brought letters of recommendation"

"I have my ambitions in the academic field. Either in schools or if Allah wills, I would like to have a Ph.D. and be a faculty at the University. But if not, I would continue teaching. It is a noble job and a great message"

"... you know even with my circle of friends and family, they tell me why did you go for teaching. I went to in the ministry told me. That I am Qatari, and they should employ me because they needed Qatari male teachers, females they had issues, but still I suffered, almost one year and a month. Then I started teaching which is what I love"

"I applied in the ministry and for the military. I received an offer from the ministry before the military. For the military. I applied for an academic position there not as a military. They opened applications for Islamic Studied lecturers when they opened the National Service, my friends are academics there; teachers"

"It is how the society perceives the military. It is highly regarded. For instance, if they say X is a military man, then when you come to the teacher, what is a teacher next to that? That is what motivates guys, even if the military's salary is twice less than the teacher's, as long as it has its high spot in the society,

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T 8/ M/  
in  
teaching

they will go for it. We need to change that, how the society view teachers. They need to have as much high regard as other high positions. If we instilled this within the society, in our students, we would make such a difference. Students nowadays, tell you, you shouldn't hit, its banned from the ministry, or that you shouldn't speak with me like that. Students know these stuff, so if they know that teachers have such a high position, then...However, the system needs development as well as the perception of the society regarding the issue of hiring male teachers”

T 9/ M/  
in  
teaching

“... It is a challenge that is why I decided to leave schools and continue my studies so that maybe I get a position at the ministry where I have a say to fix so many stuff. This is what I aspire for”  
“When my friends from university came back to Qatar and did not find jobs, for a year and a half Awqaf did not employ us, some of them went into teaching. After six months, they all resigned, why? They said it's too much work, it's not a job for Qataris. That is why I did not want to teach, but after two years, I wanted to try and hamdullilah. Some people, they don't have the mood and patience for it, or they can't deal with students from such environments”

T10 /M/  
left  
teaching

“I have to teach for two years then I will go back to my company. Currently, I am receiving my salary as an employee at the company, but if I transferred to the ministry, the salary will reduce, and I don't want that. But, it depends if they give me something good, though I know they have lower salaries”  
“guys here look for prestigious positions, so they look for any position with the title of manager, head, coordinator. A teacher is...they tell me “you went into teaching?” as if it's such a low job, that's the perspective. a lot, they always tell me “are you serious? A teacher? you were an engineer!” even my family they tell me “you went to university to become an engineer and you to be a teacher” they look down on the job, unfortunately”

T 15/ F/  
left  
teaching

“This culture is very different from mine. The admin work they take it as a load. I worked for 8 year at companies and I never signed attendance. I told them that, they were surprised, then when did you go to work? I told them I go when work starts and leave when it is done. I do the fingerprint thing but even without it I would come at the same time and leave when I finish my work which is when the day is done typically. I don't come and leave on time because I have a fingerprint, but the teacher feels that he has to enter the fingerprint, work, make presentations, and use the smart white board because the ministry said so”

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“The respect of the teacher is destroyed completely. There is not any kind of consideration of the teacher. People make fun of any person become teachers. There in not any protection for the teacher, from the school or MOEHE. Teachers now weakest persons in the whole education system”

“... from day one I told them that I will leave because I want to get a Ph.D., because it really hard to pursue that while teaching. And I told the school that I will teach for two years then I will go to QNL “Qatar National Library” because it fits my path and they facilitated my studies. I also wanted an immunity for my academic researches about teaching and curriculum in the field of education.”

“But I had the ability to control not only my students but the whole department’s, teachers allowed me to control their students as well because I was the only Qatari, so it doesn’t have anything to do with competence. Because, see, when I was in preparatory school and we were just new to independent schools, they brought Indian and Pakistani teachers. Kids here have a perception that these nationalities are just like the drivers or maid we have, so whatever they did, they couldn’t gain respect from my friends back then. And this thing has been passed down through generations, I saw it as a social worker and as a teacher, if the teacher did not speak the dialect I wouldn’t respect her. So I really had the advantage because I spoke Qatari even though I have colored eyes and such. I was able to 100% manage the students in the classroom”

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Note: “T” for teacher “F” for female/ “M” for male/ in this table the teachers distributed into (who still in teaching and who left teaching).

Table 3. Categorized the coping strategies demonstrated by novice teachers:

Main Categories of teachers' coping strategies	Sub-categories of coping strategies	Teacher code number	Example of teachers' quotation
Choice (1)	SUB-CATEG (1): active communication	T2/ F/ in teaching	<p>“the old principal Ms. Fatima Al Muftah, she was kind and the workflow was great, no cheating no nonsense. The teachers loved and respected her, and they competed to gain her love. They worked hard for that, it is a funny thing, but it worked. They wanted her attention and satisfaction. Teachers got jealous of each other when someone gained her love, attention and satisfaction. This kind principal went, and a principal who doesn't fear god replaced her. Let us not talk about that, but it is such an infuriating topic. On the other hand, the “admin vice principal” Ms. Hessa Eissa Al-Muftah is an amazing person who is considerate. For her, what matters is the work, if you finished your periods you can leave if you have an appointment or something, she doesn't deny you your rights, if you have a hospital appointment that you have been waiting for three months, she wouldn't say no. However, the “academic vice principal” sometimes she does stuff... , like when I ask her for workshops during the whole year, two years I have been asking to go to workshops she doesn't care, so I had to do something myself, remember when Dr. Nesreen gave a workshop in QU? I registered for it and took approval from the school administration, and I told my coordinator, and everything was good to go. Then she comes and tell me I'm not allowed to go.”</p> <p>“When I came to Mesaieed school these issues were almost nonexistent; the principal Ms. Fatima had a good control over the students plus they loved her, the school was doing great at that time to the extent that my coordinator took off for some time and she was teaching 10<sup>th</sup> grade, they told me to take over until she comes back. I did not face any problems with the students as I did in the old school. I realized at that time that the problem was not with the grade itself, it was with the students and how the administration controls and disciplines them. The students would be rude with the teachers only when they don't fear the consequences. We have a saying the goes [when punishment is neglected, they misbehave].”</p>
		T 8/ M/ in teaching	<p>“if the administration is good and are on the teacher's side, you get back your right, the student stops because he knows there are consequences for his actions. In some schools the administration is weak, if you reported, or something nothing happens, they are weak, they aren't strict with students, so the teacher suffers because he is doing the administration work as well.”</p> <p>“If the administration is strong, students are well disciplined, if not, then the teacher shoulder everything. In my first year, the principal was different, at that time it was a kind man, let everyone do as they pleased. They changed him the next year. The school totally transformed. You enter the school and you feel like you're in a school, there a boards and bulletins ...</p>

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		<p>This principal, told me he wanted to put me as an administrative staff, vice principal to control the students since I know their families and stuff but I did not want that, if I went from an academic to be an administrative, my salary will go down, almost 10,000 less, I don't want that, I prefer to be an academic."</p>
Seeking assistance from colleagues	T 1/ F/ in teaching	<p>"To my coordinator and experienced teachers"</p>
	T2/ F/ in teaching	<p>"There is this coordinator, Ms. Naeema Al-Zeyara, she's an experienced one, almost 20 years of teaching. She's such a great and experienced person. Any question you, she is a sea of information. There is also the deputy coordinator, Nada Talib, she's the one who pushed me, encouraged me and she was the one to observe my classes as I asked her, even though she had a scary load, she took the time to observe and supervise me."</p> <p>"(an experienced teacher) .. this person made me love my profession even more, and made it easy for me because she taught me how to reach my goal which is to make the students love the subject and find it easy not difficult. She taught me how to leave an impression on them, either morally or education wise."</p> <p>"what really increased my confidence was the teacher I told you about, the one who attended my classes, she would tell me her honest opinion, and that she really liked my teaching methods."</p>
	T3/ F/ in teaching	<p>"If I want to understand more I go to the science track teachers because the curriculums are similar, primary school teachers, second and third grades. If I face issues inside the classroom, naughty students, classroom control, I go to the social specialist. If there is a student that doesn't speak, I go to the school counselor, so I try to report these matters regularly so that the problems don't get bigger. Sometimes we go to the vice principal since she manages the whole thing. If there is something related to the department I go the coordinator."</p>
	T 5/ F/ in teaching	<p>"I don't think the coordinator has put an effort into helping me. There were no one-on-one meetings. This is my third year, and during all this time maybe I had met with her only 3 times. She should have sat with me more during my first year because I was still new to teaching. Me and my friend who graduated together with me support each other."</p>
	T8 / M/ in teaching	<p>"In our school a teacher assigned to train the new teacher. Assigned by the Vice principal for academic affairs. He chooses someone who is good at class control because it is the most important thing. The teacher has to have a strong personality to control the class, if he can't, the teacher wouldn't be able to deliver a word from the material. You're dealing with kids after all."</p>

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	T 9/ M/ in teaching	“that is my first try at finding solutions to problems by self , other than that, I listen to podcasts about teaching and strategies. Also there is the organization, the program managers there are helpful. I go tell them I have this issue, they tell me we will come observe the class the next day, and they come a couple of times to see the class and then advise me. For examples, I have this class that I can’t control, I shout at them but no use, so I told them, one of the managers came to see my class and then he told me that when I shout I shouldn’t do this or should do that. Their support is really great, and it makes it so much easier for me.”
	T 14/ F/ left teaching	“I consulted with other teachers in Teach for Qatar. The program manager was always there. My colleagues from other schools.”
SUB-CATEG (2): Seeking help, solutions or more professional training outside of school environment	T 7/ M/ in teaching	“My brother entered school as teacher before me, and he was suffering because he has lack of competence in using internet and doing PowerPoint slides and I used to help him, but after one year I entered school and become a teacher, everything was very easy because I am very good in technology.”
	T 8/ M/ in teaching	“I was not good with computers, and everything was done electronically. the year after, the principal nominated me for an ICDL course, now things are fine because everything you have to submit electronically. The weekly letter to the parents and students and their weekly progress. Now we have a system created. A system where he can see student violations from the administrators’ computer, this is done to push staff to work. I come tell them I want to write a report on a student, they writes one and submit it to the vice principals. So now it is on the system, the whole school can see it.”
	T 9/M/ in teaching	“I graduated from Texas A&M, I studied mechanical engineering ... I try to teach them things for the life ahead, I try to train them on skills they will require later on, for example, the science of cells, they won’t need that after a few years, so I see a student who is good at tech skills and I ask him to make me a video with IMOVIE, he goes and explains the lesson on camera then edit the video and do other multi job things, he brings it to me and I play it to the class, they love such things, and it encourages them. I have a lot of ideas on this topic.” “students are used to HD quality things and they see this 2MP picture all over the presentation, it wouldn’t the old PowerPoint slides.”
	T 10/M/ left teaching	“I worked after graduation in Dolphin Energy Company, about 4 years, I am already an engineer and I am good with networking ... I used to search for new application that help to increase students’ achievements in classroom and apply these application in my classes.”
	T12/ F/ left teaching	“I ask them, if I am convinced by their answers then great, if not, I look for an answer. The internet and YouTube are full of ideas.”

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Accessing professional development	T 7/ M/ in teaching	“I took two workshops about time management, it aided me, and with experience...”
SUB-CATEG (3): developing resilience	T 1/ F/ in teaching	“I want to be an experienced but also I want to work in the MOEHE as a curriculum specialist in my subject. I want to improve many things in Islamic studies subject. After many years of experience, I want to reach this position.”
	T 2/ F/ in teaching	<p>“At the end of the day, students are like our daughters they are the net generations who will graduate to be great doctors and engineers, they will continue building this country, that is why we don’t want to harm them or end their futures.”</p> <p>“I want to thrive in my teaching profession, with all its hardships, you are developing and guiding a human being, you guide them and put your fingerprint on them. There are a lot of people who I don’t like how they are, their way of thinking and how they’re so far from religion or customs, so through my teaching I want to maintain and keep these simple things alive in the student’s hearts, I want them to adopt them and pass them to their kids and the generations after. This is the most important thing for me.”</p> <p>“why don’t I become a principal? Maybe one day I will have my own school if the law allowed. May I can’t be a principal, but I can open my own private school that goes in line with the ministry’s rules and regulations and has the same curriculum standards, maybe higher. There are a lot of issues with the current education methods even the students’ grades don’t reflect their actual level sometimes, and I don’t like that, the cheating and how some teachers are known for their lack to proper teaching skills. Another thing I need is to attend workshops to get familiar with the administration side, since I have 0% experience in that. You also need to be the type of person who has an effect on people, you are loved. You need to have a goal that doesn’t conflict with your morals or the ministry regulations or Qatar’s vision. You should have these things to be able to move forward and get promoted to be a principal one day.</p>
	T 3/ F/ in teaching	“I want to continue my studies, but first I plan to gain experience, to understand the work environment, then go for masters. And in the future maybe, maybe, with more years of experience, maybe I will become a coordinator.”
	T 4/ F/ in teaching	<p>“I want to continue my studies and teach at University. I did apply for Master’s of Arts in Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, but I withdrew because I have some issues this year, but next year InshaAllah I will have a master’s degree.”</p> <p>“I forget all worried and pressures when I’m in the classroom with my students. The way they are attached to you, away from academics, I really forget my worries when I see how much they love me. At the beginning of the year, they’re so hyper and dismiss the rules but then they come to love you and get attached. If I am absent or something they cry. So there is a special relation between them and me. When I so much pressured with the work load I enter the classroom and relax.”</p>

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- T 5/ F/  
in  
teaching “last year I was the presenter for all events, I liked doing it and it benefited me. On National Day celebration I do this and that because I want to. But when they come and force me to do things that I think is a waste of time and would cost me classes, I reject. At the end of the year, this affects my evaluation.”
- T 6/ M/  
in  
teaching “I wouldn’t stop at teaching. I have ideas, I want to develop myself either in the field of teaching or in the ministry. I have ambitions to change schools or the ministry processes for the better. You see, I think that it is essential for people who went into teaching and have a field experience to have positions in the ministry. Because they know what are the problems or what things to fix or avoid. If I have field experience of about 7-10 year, then I go to the ministry, I would have collected ideas and solutions to so many problems that schools in Qatar suffer from. I only want to suggest for the ministry to have a committee to be the focal point between the ministry and the schools, to see what problems the schools are facing and raise them to the ministry to be examined, because schools are the field, they know best not someone who is sitting on a chair all day long in the ministry.”
- T 7/ M/  
in  
teaching “maybe because I applied because I wanted to be a teacher. So I did not find any issues, or maybe I overcame them.”
- T 8/ M/  
in  
teaching “of course I want to be a school principle, I wouldn’t be like that forever, I have ambitions, and I intend to continue my studies if they allowed me to free my time for it.”
- T 9/ M/  
in  
teaching “At first, it was hard, but I started the year having my mind set on students not how I will change everything and anything. I set aside the idea of changing the administration way of work, the principal, the paperwork.”  
“My vision is that I want to instill curiosity in students, to encourage them to go and learn on their own, not only the material we teach them, they need to go and search why this happens or why that it is like that. The second thing is the culture of studying just because they have exams, I don’t like it. I try to teach them things for the life ahead, I try to train them on skills they will require later on, for example, the science of cells, they won’t need that after a few years, so I see a student who is good at tech skills and I ask him to make me a video with IMOVIE, he goes and explains the lesson on camera then edit the video and do other multi job things, he brings it to me and I play it to the class, they love such things, and it encourages them. I have a lot of ideas on this topic.”  
“I like it, I go to the library check if my students are reading books, I gifted a few books to a few of my students. I enjoy doing that, I want to build this relationship with my students. Sometimes a student comes to me and tell me that he has done a research on that subject without being asked, I feel happy when I see that. If other teachers see these things, I think they would get motivated.”
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		T 12/ F/ left teaching	“The one thing that helped me adapt is my love for teaching, my love for this profession and students. This is what holds me together. You know, after leaving the schools, the administration would always contact me and tell me that the students are still asking about me. That’s because there was love.”
		T 15/ F/ left teaching	“When a person goes through pain, or a disease, they go through 5 stages. First denial, then anger, then they stop feeling anything, they become numb, then relief. The final stage is acceptance, you become used to what is happening to you. After teaching for two years, teachers get used to the situation, they develop a routine that they wouldn’t want to change.”
	SUB-CATEG (4): personal internal peace	T 1/ F/ in teaching	“I cried a lot and get sick leave, yesterday I took sick leave because I took 4 classes each day. I had back pain. And when I cried I want to leave this profession, they broke me from inside.”
		T 2/ F/ in teaching	“I put my frustration into binge eating sweets, when I am frustrated I eat.”
		T 4/ F/ in teaching	“I go shopping or to the spa.”
		T 15/ F/ in teaching	“I used to write a daily journal of 20-30 pages; I wrote what I went through during the day, I went through some unbelievable stuff that you just couldn’t imagine happened in Qatar, in this society.”
Choice (2)	SUB-CATEG (1): Changing to another supportive school environment or changing their jobs	T 1/ F/ in teaching	“In my new school is very flexible with modifying the lessons. but the previous school, the coordinator of the department gave me many warnings, when she saw any kind of changes I made ... The previous school followed very old kinds of methods in teaching their students, and wasn’t accepting any new teaching methods ... my new schools the coordinator she is very helpful and hand-in hand with me”
		T2/ F/ in teaching	“During my last week in my previous school I heard there was a principal looking for teachers in several subjects in Mesaieed School, I found her number and contacted her. I sent her my c.v. and she was pleased with my credentials that I am a QU graduate majoring in English from the College of Education. She had a vacancy for an English teacher, so I told her I would like to teach Primary grades, thinking that I would never teach secondary after what I went through in the previous school. So, I transferred to Mesaieed school which had all grades from 1 <sup>st</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> grade.”
		T 8/ M/ in teaching	“School where I work is strong, disciplined and gives you whatever I want, it helps teachers, and controls the students. In some schools, teachers aren’t regarded highly, students are not

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		<p>controlled, and you don't feel like a respected employee. You go in class, students give you a hard time and when you take action to correct them, it's disregarded. If you want to scold students, you don't have a stick, you only have the standard process where you report the student, if the administration is good and are on the teacher's side, you get back your right, the student stops because he knows there are consequences for his actions."</p> <p>"They shortened the hours, one hour less makes a huge difference for us. Even the student, they used to go crazy in this last hour, their brains are fed up and this become a trouble for the teacher, no use trying to quieten them down, especially here, in this Bedouin environment, which is different from other schools in Qatar that have 400 students."</p>
	T 9/ M/ in teaching	<p>"Our school is an exception I think, they are strict with students, any misbehaving students are suspended from the school, or transferred to another. So students are good, the simple quarrels between students in class are okay, you know pushing and stuff."</p> <p>"In the organization "Teach For Qatar" they tell us every teacher has to have a vision, every time we lose hope we should remember this vision and get back on track again."</p> <p>"One of the good things at this schools is that we are allowed to contact parents, in other schools you should go to the supervisor's office to call the parent. We communicate through WhatsApp messages as well; each class has a group. I send students YouTube clips if I find something related to the material, you know, to enrich their knowledge."</p> <p>"I worked for 8 years in QP, it's a whole different culture there ... And after I finish my 2 years of contract, I will be back to my previous work in QP company"</p>
SUB-CATEG (2): Leaving	T 12/ F/ left teaching	<p>"I would isolate myself from them. I don't react with their negativity, it's as if I didn't hear a thing. In Karanaa School, I sat in my own corner, I left the teacher's room. It was so much negativity and complaining, so I had to leave the room so that they don't make me hate my work and dislike teaching."</p> <p>"I took a Master's of Arts in Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. After I got my degree I went back to teaching and my determination to follow my goal got stronger, but I couldn't continue because of many reasons ... but I am looking to get my Ph.D. and work in College of Education ... You know, after leaving the schools, the administration would always contact me and tell me that the students are still asking about me. That's because there was love."</p>
	T 13/ F/ left teaching	<p>"I would take my stuff, my laptop and go to the Arabic teachers' room. A peace of mind. These were personal issues that I couldn't really do anything about."</p>
	T 15/ F/ left teaching	<p>"from day one I told them that I will leave because I want to get a Ph.D., because it really hard to pursue that while teaching."</p>

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