Coming into Teaching: The Impact of the Profession on Novice Teachers' Feelings, Identities, and Wellbeing

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Abstract

Teaching is considered a difficult, demanding, and exhausting job. The interplay of several features, components, and hardships in the profession renders its sustainment arduous. Often, teachers have to learn and re-learn on the job, thus undergoing multi-layered transformations that provoke many tensions. Drawing upon the existing literature and a mixed-method study, this article examines the influence of the teaching profession on novice teachers' feelings, identities (professional and personal), and wellbeing. To collect data, a cohort of novice Algerian EFL teachers participated in the exploration through an online survey. The results, analysed graphically and qualitatively (thematically), reveal that novice teachers find teaching overwhelming and consuming. The participant teachers reckon that teaching has added to their stress and anxiety levels, affecting their physical and mental health, memory, and concentration. Therefore, it is concluded that teaching transforms novices' feelings, identities, and wellbeing through its processes, routines, responsibilities, and commitments. The study recommends relying on a support system that assists teachers in coping with the impact and adversity of the profession. Providing assistance and encouragement for teachers is also advised. Moreover, improving one's reflective practice, resilience, stress management, self-care, and dedication to the job can be functional mental and emotional resources for teachers.

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Introduction

As noble as teaching is, it is also a demanding and transformative job. If so in general, then the entry into the profession, the first year specifically, could be more challenging than the following years. As a matter of fact, the research conducted by Blomberg and Knight (2015) proves that teaching is arduous for beginner teachers due to its complex nature that blends in different concepts, practices, and dynamics. There are many sets of new feelings and experiences that emerge because of teaching. For instance, Adarkwah et al. (2022) think that one of the challenging tasks that new teachers have to learn and develop is the confidence to teach. Adarkwah et al. (2022) also state that instructors confess the struggle and pain of the first teaching years. Navigating these years is critical as this is the period during which educators learn how to teach and construct their sincerest feelings and genuine views toward the job. In sum, these are the years when novice or early career teachers build their bond with teaching and form their teacher professional identity. Some researchers showed that the first years are often a time of "disillusionment" as it settles on novices when they enter the field, leading them to quit teaching (McIntush & Garza, 2023). Other studies set an approximate rate of novice teachers' departure. About 40 to 50% of them would leave before the fifth year due to disappointment, dissatisfaction, inefficacy, and work conditions (Michel, 2013). A novice, new, or beginner teacher is a teacher with less than three years of experience in the field of teaching (Awang & Shaari, 2021).

Coming into teaching, a stressful and wearing area of practice, could have so much impact on the novices. It could affect their health, wellbeing, feelings, attitudes, and even identities. The latter represents "our understanding of who we are and who we think other people are" (Danielewicz, 2001, p. 10). Additionally, Messekher (2013, p. 467) affirms that the "professional teacher identity involves a personal and social realm. The personal realm is self-centered and the social one is mainly related to the professional context in which teachers evolve". Hence, who is the teacher? And how does teaching transform teachers? These questions are the real trigger behind this research. With an interest in teacher identity and wellbeing added to several accumulated observations, our study seeks to explore the impact of teaching on the people coming into it, in the first three years.

Moreover, this research wishes to explore what assists newcomers in alleviating the strains of the first years of teaching. An important rationale behind this quest is that becoming a teacher involves learning to teach which starts officially with the initial years of teaching, although it could begin earlier with teacher training and practicum. This learning-to-teach process involves building complex actions and developing thoughts, emotions, pedagogies, and relationships with new people (learners and co-workers). It launches the teacher into a period of reconstruction and transformation which indicates that beginning to teach could be a process of identity formation as novices get to re-define who they are and re-consider how they are seen by others as teachers (Danielewicz, 2001; Wilson & Deaney, 2010). Becoming a teacher is more than just learning skills and taking on new roles; it is about forming "a sense of self-identity and purpose" (Wilson & Deaney, 2010). Stepping into teaching means a lot at many levels, so what could it mean at the level of teacher identity, wellbeing, and feelings? This can serve as another basis for this study, and it will be investigated through the analysis of existing literature as well as through reading into findings from an empirical study.

1. Review of Literature

Teachers' professional journeys are formally initiated when they start teaching. Their professional lives are often hectic to the extent that the professional and personal spaces may meld and fuse. Teaching ends up becoming part and parcel of teachers' daily routine and

reflection. It can also change who they are and how they feel. Varghese et al. (2005, p. 22) assume that understanding language teaching-learning requires understanding teachers, which in turn necessitates a clear image of who they are: their personal, individual, cultural, and professional identities. The latter starts to shape probably with teacher education. However, transitioning from teacher training to actual classroom practice causes what has been dubbed "reality shock" wherein new teachers come to realise that there is a discrepancy between what they received in training and the real classroom (Farrell, 2003). Novice teachers are often heard complaining of this discontinuity mainly because they are compelled to the same responsibilities and duties as experienced teachers (Senom et al., 2013). For elucidation, Herihiri's study (2021) shows that novices hold negative views toward their training experience because of the gaps existing at many levels: between the induction programme and real school teaching, inappropriate preparation, insufficient practical training, and the lack of supportive measures for beginner teachers. All these could justify why approximately 50% of the world's teachers abandon their jobs within the first five years of practice (Räsänen et al., 2020).

The practice/reality shock contributes to teachers' struggle in the first years. With the consistent and daily stressors, this shock leads to depression, burnout, disease, and leaving the profession (Tait, 2008). The career choice of teaching has been characterised by its emotionally challenging nature, high stress, as well as adverse repercussions like absenteeism, burnout, and even attrition (Bottiani et al., 2019). Novice teachers end up with unpleasant attitudes and feelings toward the profession with its teaching-contextual adversities, like classroom management, time management, lesson planning, assessment, the dense workload, large classes (Herihiri, 2021), student-misbehaviour management, shortage of resources, and absence of support (Richards et al., 2018). Undeniably, teaching is laden with requirements from multiple sides: learners, parents, administrators, supervisors, and colleagues, which all add to teacher stress (Admiraal, 2023) mostly for novices who are often not accustomed nor equipped to handle these challenges. Eventually, excessive stress induces low job satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007), wanting to leave the profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015), reduced motivation, and burnout (Bottiani et al., 2019). These symptoms are often accompanied by a sense of unpreparedness, depletion, insufficiency, inefficacy, non-accomplishment, and unwellness (Admiraal, 2023).

There is no disagreement that teachers need more support and guidance, and that there is a lack of these two in most schools, which forces teachers into "learning while doing" (Flores, 2006). In this regard, while new teachers are teaching and learning to teach, their teacher identity is shaping up. The concept of teacher identity is accepted as a dynamic, hybrid, and social construct "that is shaped by discourse, narrative and emotions, and influenced by social and organisational contexts" (Rushton et al., 2023, p. 3). Chong et al. (2011) corroborate that professional identity builds with time and experience as the teacher gains insights into the teaching practices, competencies, principles, interactions, and knowledge. Erikson defines identity as the individuality style "which coincides with the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others in the immediate community" (1968, p. 50). In general, identity represents the way an individual views their self and the way they play their roles in different settings (Burns & Richards, 2009, p. 5), which insinuates that teacher identity is specific to the teaching

setting and teachers' roles. Even more so, vocational practice and training impact self-image and perception. While every teacher has a personal identity and a professional one, Dimitrieska (2023) substantiates that every language teacher has a language teacher identity (LTI) which has a consequential role and effect on teachers' personal and professional profiles, depicting how teachers present themselves and how members of the community see them as individuals and as teaching professionals. Similarly, Messekher (2013, p. 468) posits that teacher identity is either empowering or disempowering for classroom pedagogical practice as well as for one's professional progress and belonging to multiple communities. All in all, teaching, as is documented by the literature, modifies teachers' identities, affects their feelings, and has a bearing on their wellbeing.

2. Methodology

The study uses an exploratory mixed-method design for data collection. The latter has been a long process conducted throughout four years with novice EFL teachers in the three initial years of practicing as full-time teachers.

2.1 Research questions

The main questions addressed through this research are:
RQ1: Does teaching have an impact on novice teachers' feelings, identities, and wellbeing?
RQ2: How does coming into teaching transform new teachers' feelings and identities?
RQ3: What help(s) teachers in coping with the adversities and hardships of teaching?

These three research questions are investigated through the use of one research tool, an online survey that encompasses both open-ended and close-ended inquiries. The instrument was piloted in the first year (2020/2021) as the first cohort of novice teachers was invited to take part in it.

2.2 Sample and setting

The target population is novice EFL teachers. Convenient sampling was employed; therefore, a sample of 100 Algerian EFL new teachers at both high and middle schools was selected according to their availability and accessibility. The questionnaire was shared with them online, not all at once though. Each academic year, between 2020 and 2024, the questionnaire was shared with a new cohort of novice teachers. Each cohort consisted of less than 30 beginner teachers. Over four years, 38 replies were returned. Consent was obtained before accessing the questionnaire as all 38 respondents agreed to allow their answers to be used for research purposes. The majority of the teachers (n=°35/92.1%) are female and 7.9% (n=°3) are male. Their ages range between 21 and 31 years old.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Data presentation and analysis

After data collection, the findings were analysed using the descriptive graphical analysis method for close-ended questions (5 questions), whereas the content and thematic analysis methods were used for open-ended ones (4 questions). The first content question is: "Do you find teaching overwhelming?". Three main options were provided: yes, no, and other (an open option for participants to add extra answers). The findings reveal that 84.2% (n=°32) chose yes, only 1 participant said no, and 5 participants inserted a different answer each (other). Their answers are:

"Not all the time, it depends on the lesson, learners, my mood as a teacher, the schedule, etc.", *"Sometimes"*, *"Overwhelming in terms of responsibility and high pressure on teachers by the administration and the environment as a whole"*, *"Overwhelming sometimes and enjoyable most of the time"*, and *"It depends"*. These findings are displayed in Figure 1. The percentages were automatically rounded by Excel (this applies to all pie-chart figures in this research).

Figure 1: Do You Find Teaching Overwhelming?
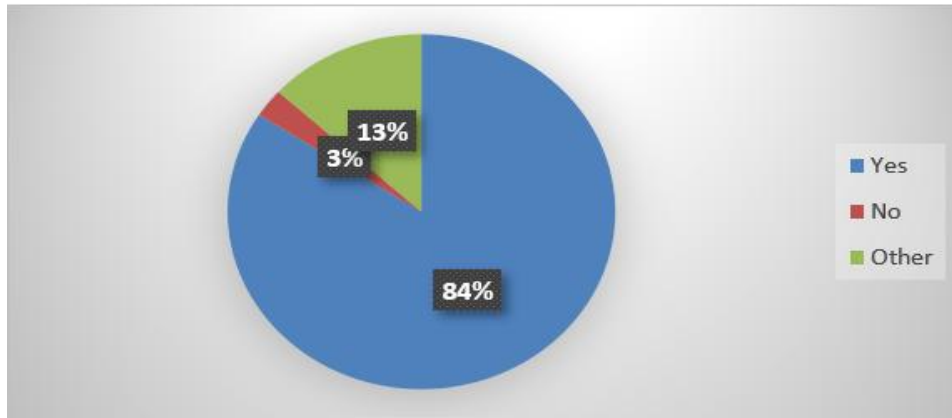
The second question says: "What has been changing after you started teaching?". Seven options were provided besides "other". The findings can be read in Figure 2.

Figure 2: What Has Been Changing After You Started Teaching?
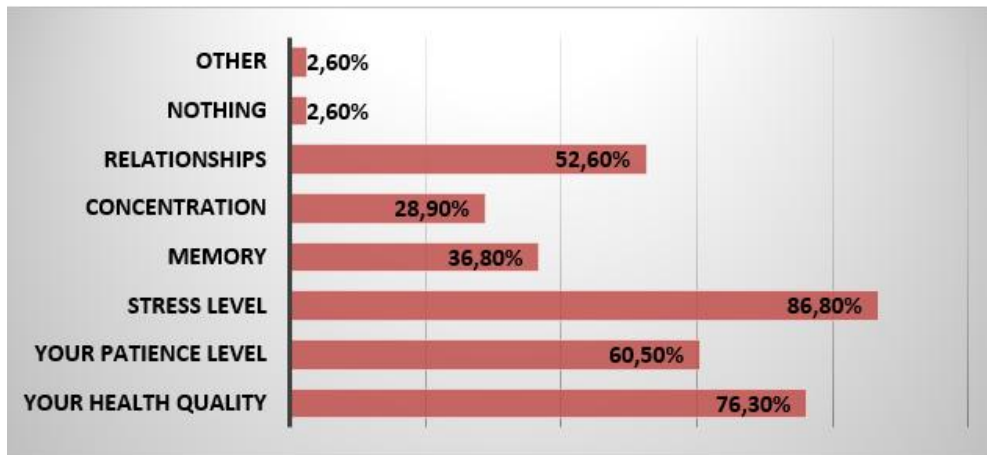
33 participants chose "stress level", 29 said that it is their "health quality" that has been changing since they started teaching, 23 participants ticked "patience level", and 20 of them said that it is "relationships". While 14 teachers opted for "memory", 11 chose "concentration", and one participant inserted an answer stating "free time" as what has been altering. Interestingly, only one respondent opted for "nothing" as an option. The following question is related to the previous one as it says: "Can you explain your answer to the previous question?". Being an open-ended question, participants submitted their answers freely, while 9 of them abstained from replying. We analysed the participants' explanations in five stages following Creswell and Poth (2018). First, we managed and organised the data into a table where the answers were named as numbers (1-29) and printed out so coding could be completed by hand (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Second, we read through the explanations provided carefully, annotating the answers on the document then did a first-cycle coding by practicing inductive

coding (Miles et al., 2018), capturing ideas and patterns. Third, we conducted a second-cycle coding summarising and at times renaming the different codes, thus creating headings to organise the codes into themes. Fourth, we condensed multiple codes into one new code for each category examining carefully the relationships between themes. Fifth, we summarised and organised the overall themes and sub-themes each under one. Below are the major emergent themes and sub-themes. The majority of them are negative and highlight novice teachers' struggles and challenges, yet a few positive and promising themes also emerged.

1. **Health problems**
   a. **Physical health problems**

   They appear in long commuting times that engender fatigue, decline in exercise and diet quality resulting in weight gain and poor health, and physical symptoms like hair thinning, back problems, insomnia, and dark circles around the eyes due to work stress and lack of sleep.

   b. **Mental health problems**

   They are seen in increased stress levels from time constraints and workload, mental fatigue manifesting in memory problems and decreased cognitive functions like concentration and focus, mood changes, constant tiredness, anxiety, sensitivity, and depression.

2. **Impact on social life**
   a. **Strained relationships**

   This is due to restricted relationships with family and friends due to lack of time and energy, decreased social interactions, and avoidance of social settings like crowded places.

   b. **Work-life imbalance**

   It is about the difficulty of managing professional responsibilities and personal time leading to overextended workdays both at school and home.

3. **Disruption in daily routines**
   a. **Sleep patterns**

   Sleep schedules are disrupted leading to either oversleeping or lack of sleep for extended periods, besides insomnia and thoughts of work interfering with sleep quality.

   b. **Time management**

   It is difficult to ensure work-life balance by managing professional responsibilities and personal time leading to overextended workdays.

4. **Stress and lack of patience**
   a. **Increased work-related stress**

   It is due to facing challenges in handling undisciplined learners, large classes, heavy workloads, and lesson planning.

   b. **Increased irritability**

   It is caused by a lower tolerance for noise and disruptions, leading to quick anger, frustration, and reduced patience with students and co-workers.

   By and large, we notice that novice teachers face significant challenges affecting their health, social life, routine, stress level, and behaviour, which collectively impact their overall wellbeing. Amidst the struggles and challenges faced, some positive themes appeared in the participants' explanations even though scarce. They are listed in the following part.

1. **Commitment to teaching**

   Despite the challenges, many teachers strive to do their best to provide the basics and to ensure quality education. Also, their commitment remains high even though it impacts their health and social lives.

2. Resilience and dedication

Teachers show a significant amount of dedication and resilience, continuing to work hard despite huge stress and difficult circumstances.

3. Awareness and understanding of teaching

Teachers demonstrate an acknowledgment of the nobility and awareness of the importance of the teaching profession.

## 4. Striving for improvement in lesson planning and adaptation

Teachers are continuously focused on improving their lesson plans and adapting their teaching strategies to meet students' needs.

5. Effective support systems to cope with struggles and challenges

Effective support systems help manage stress and bounce back through various actors including parents, family, friends, colleagues, and students at times, in addition to self-support.

The following question is close-ended. It reads: "Have you been feeling more anxious and stressed since you started teaching?". After applying the graphical analysis method, the findings, as in Figure 3, demonstrate that the majority of the participants (73.7%) have been feeling more anxious and stressed since the beginning of their teaching career. While only 2 participants (5.3%) said that they have not, 13.2% (n=°5) chose maybe and none "I do not know". 3 participants noted their suggestions within the "other" option, saying the following: *"Never felt that stressed before!"*, *"Only these late times. Otherwise, no."*, and *"Sometimes"*.

Figure 3: Have You Been Feeling More Anxious and Stressed Since You Started Teaching?
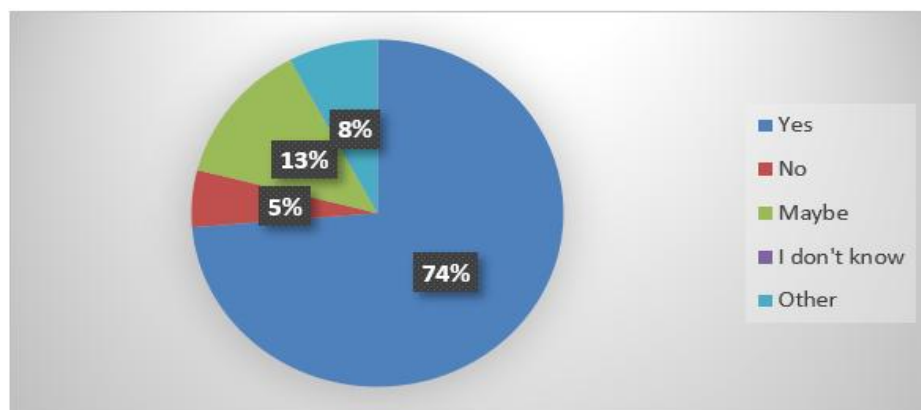
Right after, "If yes, what do you think caused that?" was asked as a continuation of the previous question. The content and thematic analysis methods were applied to sort and classify the replies, and the following list of causes of novice teachers' stress and anxiety was suggested.

1. Workload and time management

These included overloaded programmes, overwhelming loads of tasks, the paperwork and documents that need to be prepared, lesson planning, lack of time, work pressure and tension, lack of preparation, working far away from home and family, lack of sleep, and working in and out of school.

2. Classroom management and environment

These encompassed: overcrowded classrooms, undisciplined learners, the noise and lack of discipline in schools and classrooms, learners' misbehaviour and ill-manners, the needs and demands of kids and teenagers, the frustration of losing control over the classroom and other things, and the anxiety of having to have control over the classroom and other matters.

3. Evaluation and expectations

Participants identified evaluation and students' outcomes, high expectations of the teacher from everyone, and fear of failure.

4. Interpersonal and social factors

These included judgments from others, social anxiety, over-socialization (with students, parents, and colleagues), lack or absence of social life (with family and friends), the surrounding environment, and the inspectors and their visits.

5. Personal and psychological factors

We count overthinking, standing in front of an audience, self-reflection, the reality shock, disappointment with teaching, thinking about leaving the job and not having many alternatives, and the lifestyle change.

6. External challenges

These include difficulties, problems, and new responsibilities and commitments.

Figure 4 exhibits the data received for the coming question on the concept of identity: "Do you feel that your identity is changing due to teaching?".

Figure 4: Do You Feel that Your Identity Is Changing Due to Teaching?
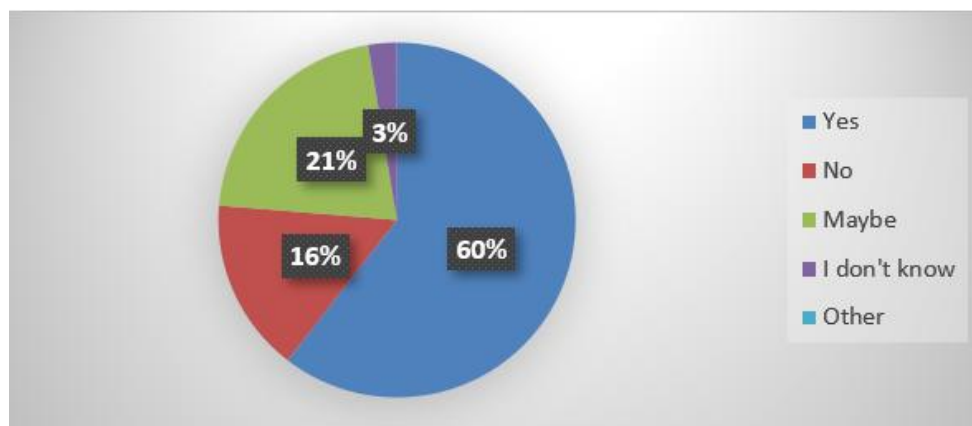
As Figure 4 shows, 60.5% said yes and 15.8% chose no. Meanwhile, 21.1% of the participants opted for "maybe", and only 1 respondent ticked "I do not know". As to this question: "Can you explain your answer to the previous question?", novices were expected to expound how teaching has been changing their identity if so, or why it has not been the case. The assembled information is arranged in major themes and sub-themes. Participants' responses indicate a wide range of perceptions on the impact of teaching on personal identity and behaviour falling into three major categories with subsequent sub-categories for each as outlined in what follows.

1. Themes from participants believing teaching has changed them

These participants have a high sense of self and behavioural changes according to the following sub-categories.

a. An increased sense of responsibility and self-awareness

Several participants shared a heightened sense of responsibility and self-awareness, becoming more responsible after teaching as they used to be reliant. Other participants highlighted the necessity to be responsible, patient, and up-to-date because of the job demands.

b. Shifts in behaviour and personality

Some participants reported significant behavioural changes related to becoming more mature and responsible. One participant, for example, commented on becoming firmer in dealing with people in general, while others noted changes in temperament and increased stress levels. Teaching forced adaptability, compelling some to put on the "teacher stereotype" facade, meeting

the expectations of being serious, responsible, a perfect role model, and being appropriately dressed.

c. Changes in self-perceptions and self-identity

Teaching reshaped participants' self-perception. Through regular interactions with colleagues and students, their self-view and future aspirations were constantly renegotiated. A few of them though mentioned the erosion of personal interests and the imposition of a teacher's identity over their true selves, losing their voices, and feeling compelled to act contrary to their nature.

2. Themes from participants believing teaching is not changing them

Some participants reported that teaching did not change them. Their sense of identity and personality was not altered at all. In this respect, two major sub-categories emerged.

a. Stability in personal identity

Some participants felt their personal identity did not change. They mentioned that teaching did not alter their sense of who they are, nor their core values of personality traits. They remained faithful to who they were before. Other participants highlighted their ability to keep clear-cut boundaries, or even *"a wall"* as mentioned by one participant, between their personal and professional lives preventing thus their identities from changing.

b. Consistency in beliefs

There were mentions of participants whose ethical and moral beliefs did not change, they remained the same. As one participant highlighted, what was right/wrong before becoming a teacher still holds true. One participant maintained that no significant change happened in their personality as they were not obliged to; on the contrary, they were able to impose their true selves.

3. Themes from participants who are unsure or ambivalent

Very few participants were unsure whether teaching has changed their sense of personality because of encounters limited in time and space. Hence, they were having:

a. Mixed feelings and uncertainty

Responses from these participants indicated that they were unsure whether teaching changed them. One participant, for instance, was unsure whether imposing themselves in this new context could be counted as a change in personality. Others had mixed feelings and were ambivalent regarding whether teaching has changed them to the extent of losing their sense of identity and suppressing their voices in this new professional setting and roles.

b. Stress and emotional strain

Many of the participants who had ambivalent views mentioned experiencing a lot of stress and being emotionally strained. Yet, they were not sure if these could be counted as changes in personality traits especially since this impacted their personal lives. Teaching made them more stressed. Various participants identified stress and emotional strain as key aspects of their teaching experience, affecting their personal lives and actions. One stated that teaching has not changed who they are but has made them more stressed.

"What help(s) you cope with the (emotional) requirements of teaching?" is the last close-ended question in the survey. This multiple-choice question has 10 options, "other" included. As Figure 5 exposes, 21 teachers (55.3%) rely on "family's support" to cope with the emotional demands of their profession, 19 (50%) use "friends' support", 17 (44.7%) find benefit in both "reflection" and "students' support", and 13 (34.2%) go for exercise to alleviate the stress and overwhelm. "Colleagues' help" assists 23.7% of teachers, while 18.4% operate on "readings and research". 3 respondents (7.9%) chose "schools' assistance", whereas 4 of them (10.5%) went for "I do not know". 11 members of the sample introduced their options which are: *"Meditation"*, *"Watching funny videos"*, *"Going out"*, *"Books, movies, football matches, documentaries, and mostly prayers"*, *"Solitude"*, *"Break periods"*, *"My hobby"*, *"My love for the language and*

teaching", "Treating and prioritizing myself, and dedicating time for my happiness", "Loving the job", and "Alone time".

Figure 5: What Help(s) You Cope with the Emotional Requirements of Teaching?
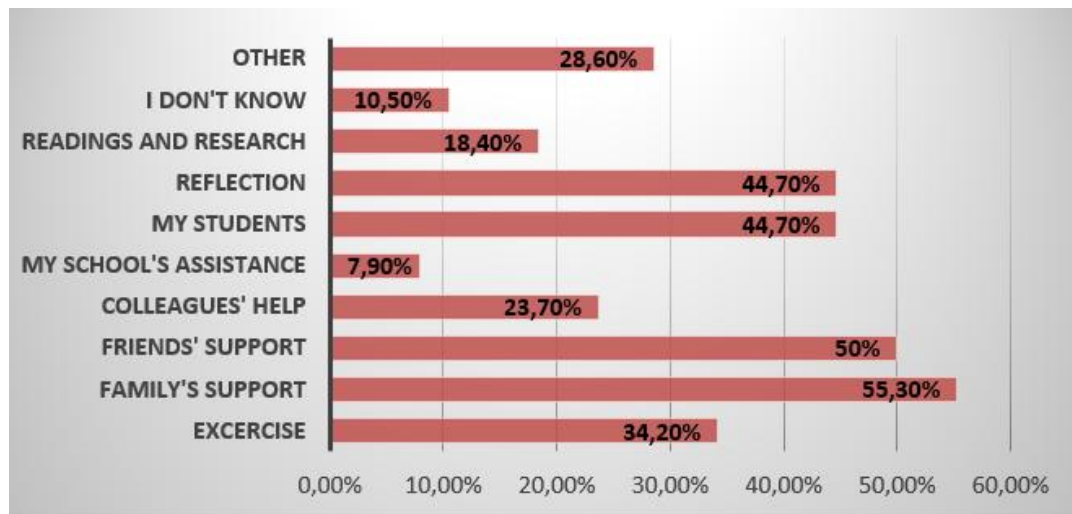
The last open-ended question is: "Can you elaborate on your answer to the previous question?". After analysing the data qualitatively, the main themes that appeared show that novice teachers rely on several resources to cope with the emotional requirements of teaching. Teachers mainly referred to and focused on support and encouragement from families, friends, colleagues, and students, exercise to reduce stress, friend talk, self-care, disconnecting from work by practicing activities and hobbies that are not related to teaching, spending time away from teaching, alone time, staying focused on objectives and goals, not overthinking, finding ways to cope with the depression caused by teaching like talking to friends about it, self-knowledge, knowing personal strengths and weaknesses, reflective practice that leads to self-understanding and embracing the alterations, asking for help when needed, investing in human resources by building good relationships with students and colleagues, building a web of teacher friends to share and cooperate, school's assistance, students' motivation and appreciation, stress management, self-regulation, and loving the job.

3.2 Discussion of findings

To answer RQ1, "Does teaching have an impact on novice teachers' feelings, identities, and wellbeing?", the findings confirm that teaching has a crystal-clear impact on novices' feelings, identities, and wellbeing. The majority of participants find teaching overwhelming. Some of them start their careers feeling passionate and motivated, but end up losing their passion and motivation for teaching. Here are some quotes from different participants expressing how teaching makes them feel: *"I feel overwhelmed with all what I am expected to do as a teacher"*, *"I have to live up to many expectations, including my own"*, and *"There are many things a teacher must do, not even a checklist can help. It is tiring!"*. Moreover, the teachers mentioned that teaching added stress, anxiety, and overthinking to their lives. Their lifestyle changed after they began teaching, so they ended up sleeping less, working more, stressing more, and becoming more anxious. Most participants admitted that a lot has altered after teaching like their stress levels, health quality, patience level, memory, and concentration. They started having less free time which impacted their relationships. All these reduced their wellbeing and increased their frustration. One teacher participant wrote: *"It is the whole process of teaching that causes stress and anxiety"*. Another one phrased: *"I find teaching taking most of my time. I cannot enjoy my*

life so much so that I start thinking to quit". As to what causes novices stress and anxiety, the respondents delineated several factors such as overworking, the overwhelming responsibilities, the reality shock, and overall, the whole process of teaching. A participant illustrated: *"Too much work, not so much time. Being judged by everyone. So much energy wasted, no social life. And the shocking reality"*.

RQ2, "How does coming into teaching transform new teachers' feelings and identities?", is closely related to the aforementioned causes. Teaching transforms beginners' feelings and identities through its daily process, routines, commitments, and requirements. A classic in any transformation process is building new habits, which coming into teaching is full of, or as they are described by one participant: *"the unbelievable amount of tasks to do in a frighteningly short amount of time"*. The daily tasks become rapidly part of the teacher's daily routine and habits, and hence, part of who they are. Teachers' identity impacts both what they teach and how they teach it (Marco-Bujosa et al., 2020); this may find a hint in this participant's statement: *"I am an anxious person who needs to have control over any situation, but teaching makes you flexible; you cannot control everything"*. It is not strange that most respondents reckon that teaching is redefining who they are. For some, it makes them more patient, responsible, and mature; meanwhile, it renders others more anxious, stressed, and nervous. What is more, teaching can transform one's self-perception and perspectives as they get affected by those of others through interaction with students, parents, and colleagues.

As a teacher, one has to conform to a multitude of conditions. For instance, a teacher is compelled to show respect for rules and values. Second, the teacher is a role model; people see the teacher as a respectable person in a respectable position. Third, teachers have to socialise even when they cannot or do not want to. They have to dress properly and talk adequately. These and more are probably what made one teacher unveil: *"I am a full-time actor when I teach"*. The profession has many burdens and is full of judgments toward teachers as can be inferred from this novice's testimony: *"I am always thinking about work, or judging myself for my choices. I am constantly thinking about what to do. I am also being judged by others"*. In a nutshell, there is so much on teachers' plates that it nurtures overthinking and transforms who they are, how they think, and how they feel.

For RQ3, "What help(s) teachers in coping with the adversities and hardships of teaching?", there are some momentous constituents that every teacher can add to their support system like the support of family, friends, colleagues, administrators, and students. The help of colleagues, appreciation of students, and the assistance of administrators are instrumental for teachers as they handle the contextual and emotional challenges of teaching, besides the personal issues. Furthermore, keeping a balanced lifestyle that includes good food, sleep, and exercise can help teachers sustain and maintain their wellness. Reflective practices, research, and readings could also play a hand in teachers' sustainability and wellbeing. It is also essential to take breaks to spend time alone, on a hobby, or with a dear person to manage and alleviate the emotional and social requirements of the profession. On another note, preserving one's passion for teaching can aid novices to persist in their teaching careers.

Researchers have previously raised these points and topics. Saidin et al. (2020) found that novice teachers struggle with intense work and scarcity of support. Stewart and Jansky (2022) enumerated restrictions related to standardization, pace, programmes, and engineering relationships, especially with colleagues. Relationships are vital as they are underscored in every support system. The latter, professional and personal, intertwine and interfere in teacher identity formation. Nguyen and Yang (2018) deem the construction of identity an ongoing process that is the consequence of combined effort, labour, and interaction with fellow teachers, mentors, and

learners. The same authors illuminate that the support that is offered to beginner and pre-service teachers as well as their attempts to seek it are both agents in their teacher identity construction. In the same vein, some of the strategies employed by teachers in facing difficulties are trying to obtain help, guidance, and mentorship from colleagues and administrators besides research and learning (Saidin et al., 2020). Additionally, dialogue and reflection are proposed as solutions along with the revision of teacher training programmes (Stewart & Jansky, 2022). Incontestably, fathoming novice teachers' challenges and redesigning training programmes and continuous professional development (CPD) agendas accordingly can be of considerable help to all teachers.

4. Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations

Working from all that preceded, there is a spectrum of implications and recommendations that can be drawn. To start with, it is pivotal to ascribe special care to initial teacher education and continuous professional development. Preparing teachers well is central to ensuring that beginners come into teaching with the mental readiness and competence to deal with the distress and disappointment that teaching may afflict. Continuous professional development, for its part, will aid teachers to carry on, share experiences, recognise that they are not alone, develop their skills, and learn new techniques to navigate through teaching. Mentoring is also fundamental for novices (Awang & Shaari, 2021), besides the support of schools, the help of colleagues, and getting knowledge about teaching-learning practices. Concerning school support, it has been recorded that it can make up for the deficits in teacher training (Warsame, 2011). Providing support from the whole school staff for first-year teachers cannot be stressed enough. Warsame (2011) propounds following new teachers for a long time to pinpoint, comprehend, and find solutions to the obstacles and challenges that they encounter as they grow in their teaching experience. Further, it is recommended to set weekly collaboration time for beginners with veteran teachers and establish healthy interaction between novices and administrators (Michel, 2013). Adarkwah et al. (2022) perceive that decreasing students' numbers per class (class size), especially for new teachers, could be very convenient as it facilitates classroom management for them. These recommendations can heighten teachers' feelings of effectiveness and efficacy which potentially reduces teacher attrition.

School leadership should be concerned with teachers' complaints and push factors such as the workload, the lack of time for preparation and paperwork, classroom management issues, lack of collaboration and cooperation, as well as the scarcity of support and mentorship (Admiraal, 2023). Admiraal invites for an open-door strategy to allow fellow teachers to observe one another in practice and support each other. The author also advises the application of *COPing*, a group of emotional regulation mechanisms and coping strategies, to boost teachers' resilience and mental immunity as they aid teachers handle pedagogical, contextual, and personal barriers and stressors. Supplying teachers with enablers and techniques to teach well, scaffold learners effectively, maintain their wellbeing, stay in teaching, and transform positively is strongly advocated.

There is an urge to repaint the image of teaching from a profession that "eats its young" into one that nurtures and supports them in growth (Admiraal, 2023, p. 64). Promoting the profession will not only attract excellent candidates, but it will also help teachers feel better and last in the job. Feeding teachers' sense of self-efficacy and teacher effectiveness through support, interaction, and trust is paramount. Essentially, ameliorating the teaching context and environment can make teachers feel better, transform healthily, and maintain their wellbeing. Michel (2013) assumes that it can even augment teachers' commitment to the profession and that giving teachers good status and support within the first five years can help them stay in their jobs.

Teacher retention and satisfaction can be a direct outcome of treating them as professionals. A professional is:

> "[S]omeone trusted and respected, an individual given class status, autonomy, social elevation, in return for safeguarding our wellbeing and applying their professional judgment on the basis of a benign moral or cultural code." (Dent & Whitehead, 2002, p. 1).

The nuances in this definition invoke the noble and valuable nature of teaching, uncovering that teachers today need to be attributed the social and cultural weight and esteem that they enjoyed in the not far ago years.

Conclusion

Being identified as a pressuring and tough profession, it is necessary to understand teaching and what being and becoming a teacher signify. This quest is continuing because the transformations that teaching can breed are intricate and multifaceted, not fully comprehended yet. This study attempted to go through some of them, primarily at the level of feelings, identities, and wellbeing. Nonetheless, this pursuit is not complete nor can it be generalised. There is more digging to be done to get to the bottom of the alterations kindled by teaching. One of the most relevant considerations for the benefit of teachers in general and novices in particular is the provision of all sorts of support from the surrounding community (professional and personal) through collaboration, tolerance, interaction, reflection, and sharing. Learning and improving one's resilience, or what is called teacher resilience, is unquestionably priceless. It allows the practitioner to rebound, resist, and recover from professional hassles and trials (Admiraal, 2023). For further research, the topic of teacher resilience, immunity, and coping would be quite interesting to probe in connection with critical up-to-date variables like today's teacher status and online teaching. Last but not least, examining teachers' professional and social status and its repercussions on teachers' effectiveness and wellbeing is recommended.

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