



ADA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

**THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT**

**Disproportionate Representation of Rural School Graduates in Higher Education
Institutions in Azerbaijan**

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Baku, December 3, 2021



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Abstract

Disproportionate Representation of Rural School Graduates in Higher Education Institutions in
Azerbaijan

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MASTER OF ARTS THESIS 2021

In Azerbaijan, where this study was conducted, equal access to higher education for graduates from rural areas is a top objective for government authorities. This qualitative study aimed to investigate the experiences and perceptions that influence the disproportionate representation of rural school graduates in higher education institutions. The study addressed the problem of rural school graduates' perceptions of not pursuing higher education institutions and the perceived factors for rural school graduates that led to low admission scores in entrance exams. During the research, semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews were used as qualitative research methods to explore graduates, teachers, and principals' perceptions. Nine graduates from three rural schools and three school principals were individually interviewed. Also, five teachers participated in one focus group interview.

The study provided a better understanding of challenges and factors experienced by rural school graduates and led to the disproportionate representation of rural school graduates in higher education institutions. Despite the different perceptions revealed by graduates, teachers, and principals on the low admission scores in entrance exams and in not pursuing higher education institutions, the four main themes arose: 1) the essential skills for academic success 2)

low-income families and child labor 3) students with low educational attainment 4) long-distance commuting.

The findings of this study may assist in conducting future research on rural education in Azerbaijan and help organizations and governments enhance rural educational development initiatives.

Keywords: rural education, factors, higher education, graduates' perceptions, essential skills for learning, rural school graduates

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Vafa Yunusova, my research supervisor, for providing valuable and constructive feedback, for her patient guidance and advice during the development of this research work.

I am very thankful to Dr. Ulviyya Mikailova, the course instructor, for valuable research critiques, and committee members Dr. Samira Hajiyeva and Dr. Jeyran Aghayeva for their attentive review of the study, feedback provided, and timely advice. My thanks are also extended to Saida Nabiyeva, the program director, for believing in my capacity and giving me a second chance.

Finally, I want to thank my father, who helped me collect data from those villages, and I feel proud throughout the entire process.

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DISPROPORTIONATE REPRESENTATION OF RURAL SCHOOL GRADUATES IN
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Educating is about building and developing schools and cultivating children, not depending on their place. Education is fundamental to each individual and community; the challenges and difficulties such as poverty, technology illiteracy, teacher shortages that rural students, schools, and communities face are constantly growing. Although poverty has declined significantly in Azerbaijan, from 49 percent in 2004 to 4.9 percent in 2014, figures show significant disparities between rural and urban areas. Most of the poor live in rural areas, where social conditions continue to be a significant source of concern, and a large number of households remain vulnerable to poverty (International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2018). Establishing new schools, bringing innovative teaching methods, and promoting computer literacy can positively change rural areas. It is necessary to be aware of and understand these rural and rural educational institutions' problems to upgrade the rural education system. Only then we can develop programs and improve and rebuild education in rural areas (Green, 2016).

Problem Statement

In research from United Nations Development Program (2020) compared to 2005, Azerbaijan's Human Development Index value for 2019 is 0.756— which puts the country in the high human development category— positioning it at 88 out of 189 countries and territories. Along with these achievements, statistical analysis of leading international organizations such as the United Nations Population Division, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics, the World Bank shows the need to increase the international competitiveness in the education system of Azerbaijani and the ranking of higher education institutions located in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Furthermore, as stated in the

State Strategy for the Development of Education in the Republic of Azerbaijan (2013), the number of university students per 100,000 people in the Republic of Azerbaijan should be significantly increased, especially among the population of regions.

Administratively, Azerbaijan consists of one autonomous region – the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic - and 66 districts or rayons. Azerbaijan has 69 cities, the largest of Baku, the capital, 13 districts of cities, 240 settlements, and 4,279 rural settlements (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 2010). To ensure students' comfort and make rural school graduates' university admission process more accessible, school-leaving examinations were held in district centers and remote rural schools (The State Examination Center of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2015).

Additionally, for the first time since 2012, graduates and bachelors have had the opportunity to confirm their applications for the entrance exam via the Internet. As a result, they could verify their applications online without going to the Admissions Committees. The State Examination Center (SEC) organized entrance exams in 11 regional centers of the country (a few years ago, exams were held in only three cities of the country) (SEC, 2012). For the convenience of applicants and parents, the graduates were transported to the regional centers where the exams were held in the regions.

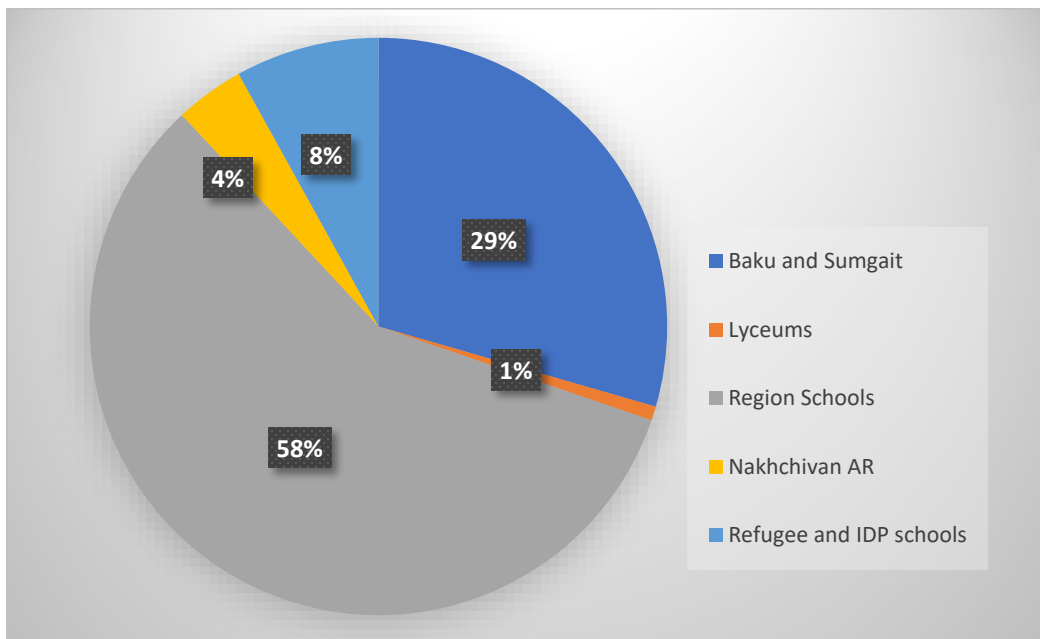
When I called back my memory, I remembered how my sister was preparing to apply for higher education. I recalled that it was difficult for our parents and us as well. As we were first-generation students in our family, my parents struggled to find high-school-level courses and tutors for us. The application process was especially a real challenge for all the family members. We did not have a computer, and no one knew how to use the technology and apply the required

documents in the application and admission process. Although our parents did not hold a college degree, they believed that getting a diploma was necessary for career attainment. Therefore, they provided positive support and encouragement, which inspired us to continue our education at a higher level.

Despite the facts mentioned above that SEC tries to ensure fair access to examination for rural school graduates, the lowest acceptance rates from rural schools to higher educational institutions can be defined as a significant issue to be addressed.

While analyzing five years' data, the first alarming issue that should be mentioned is the schools' list with the lowest results where the participants scored 0-100 points in university admission exams presented by the SEC (table 1).

Figure 1. *The percentage of schools where graduates scored 0-100 points in the admission exams in 2015-2019*



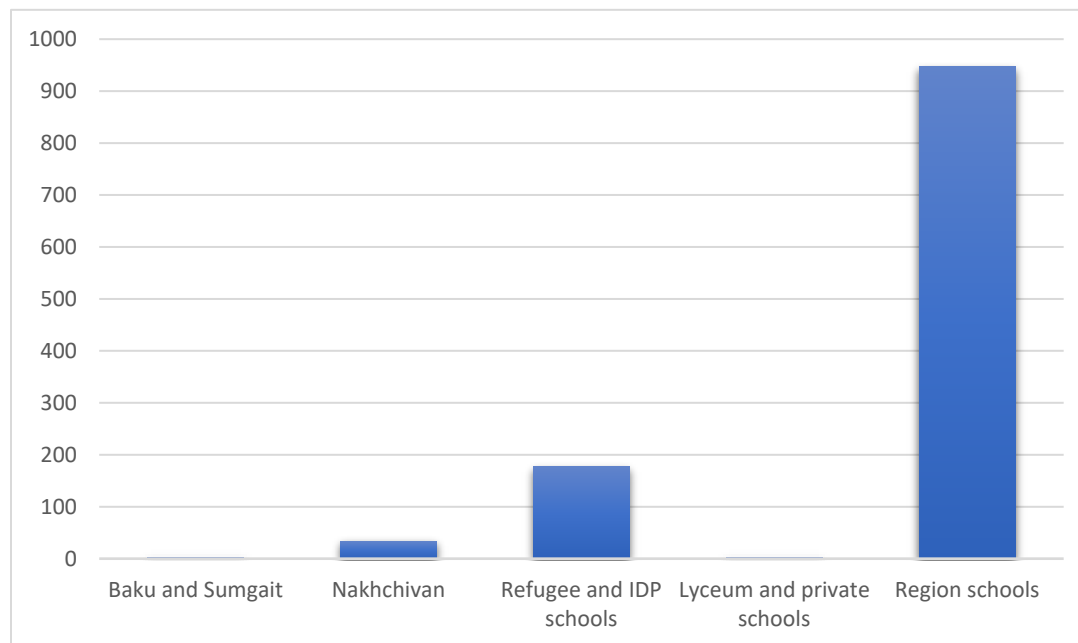
Note. The results were calculated based on the scores of the graduates who took part in the competition in the exams for groups I-IV. As the competition for group V was conducted based on the result of the school-leaving examinations, the entrants' outcomes were not included. Analysis based on the SEC's data and the numbers only represent new graduates and do not include the repeat applicants from previous years. Furthermore, the statistics do not explicitly depict the rural and city schools where graduates scored 0-100 points in the admission exams in 2015-2019. The reason is that the data published by SEC does not include the clear-cut division of rural and town performances. And also, several reasons prevent publications of all detailed information and statistics of schools that demonstrated low performance.

The data presented in the diagram above (see Figure 1) indicates the total percentage of eligible new graduates who entered the admission exams and scored below 100 points in the university admission exams in the last five years (2015-2019). As it is clear from the previous five years' analysis, 58% of the participants who scored less than 100 points in the last five years are from regional schools.

"Mənim Məktəbim" is a school portal presented by SEC in 2015. The portal gives detailed information about the schools' results and dynamics of the indicators of graduates in the admission exams to the universities for the period from 1995 to 2018 of all schools in the Republic of Azerbaijan. Furthermore, one can see how high the school results are compared to other schools in the country and how subject girls and boys show better results. After reading and analyzing this information, it is clear that almost all of these schools with unsatisfactory results in admission exams are rural schools, which makes this issue a problem that needs to be considered (Mənim Məktəbim, 2015).

Along with the lowest results, we can find schools' names that participated in the competition based on the results of the school-leaving examinations, yet, any graduates of these schools have not got accepted into higher education institutions. Even though their scores were more than 100, it was still insufficient to meet the basic entry requirements to get into the higher educational institutions (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. *The indicators of schools where the graduates did not admit to any higher education institutions in 2015-2019*



Note. According to the statistics for 2018-2019 provided by the Ministry of Education (MoE), there are 4443 schools in Azerbaijan. Of these, 4418 are public, and 25 are private schools (MoE, 2018-2019). However, the numbers were repeated as the calculations covered five years. Totally 15,975 schools have participated in the competition in 2015-2019. The total number of schools where any graduates have not been admitted to higher education institutions was 1162. The 947 of those schools were regional schools, especially schools located in rural areas (villages). The

177 schools were refugee and IDP schools. The 34 schools represented Nakhchivan AR. Only two schools were Baku and Sumgait schools, among the schools where the graduates could not get accepted to any higher education institutions during the 2015-2019 years.

As it is clear from the table, the vast majority of these schools (947 schools) are rural schools that help understand the importance of the problem. The limitation was the impossibility of drawing a diagram to show the percentage rates of graduates who did not admit to any higher education institutions according to their school region as town or rural. The reason is that the published statistics by SEC did not include all the attended students with low grades.

Another issue that needs to be highlighted is the schools where the graduates have not applied to participate in higher education institutions' exams.

The SEC lists those schools as follows (see Figure 3):

Figure 3. *The number of schools where the graduates have not applied for admission to higher education institutions in rural areas in 2015-2019*

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
52	50	29	33	33

Figure 4. *The number of schools where the graduates have not applied for admission to higher education institutions in urban areas in 2015-2019*

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
1	0	1	1	0

As it is clear from the given table, during the 2015-2019 years, only three school graduates from urban areas (Baku and Sumgait) have not confirmed their applications for the entrance exam to higher education institutions, while this number was 197 for rural schools (SEC, 2015-2019).

While analyzing Figure 4, one point that caught my attention was that all urban schools were private schools or lyceums. On the contrary, according to the report of the SEC (2015-2019), the graduates of these schools are the ones who scored the highest scores in the school-leaving examinations. Based on the evidence, we can assume that there can be different reasons for the graduates living in the urban and rural areas not confirming the entrance exams' applications. In the case of rural schools, we can consider other factors as the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan (SCFWCA,2010) indicates, “On the study of early marriage of girls and births from formal and common-law marriages” provided in 2010 by State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Representation of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Azerbaijan and SCFWCA, 38.9% of women entering into early marriage before the age of 18 were registered in urban areas and 61.1% in rural areas. Statistical indicators also show that early marriages in rural areas and most women who give birth at an early age are in rural areas. Given the statistical data, we can suppose that the rural school graduates who had not applied to higher educational institutions were the women who entered or were forced to enter into early marriage.

Purpose of the Study

The overarching aim of this study was to explore the rationale of the disproportionate representation of rural school graduates in higher education institutions. The explicit purpose of this exploratory qualitative research was to raise the awareness of school principals and teachers about the challenges their graduates encounter during the university preparation period and to identify the factors that lead to low admission scores in entrance exams.

Research findings can be helpful for students who live and study in rural areas, their families, educational institutions, education researchers, policymakers, the Ministry of Education, and anyone interested in education equality. Findings may assist executive authorities in developing strategies, plans, and programs that may reduce the disproportionate representation of rural school graduates in higher education in the nearest future and contribute to promoting equality in higher education in Azerbaijan.

Research Questions:

1. What are the perceptions of rural school graduates in not pursuing higher education in Azerbaijan?
2. What are the perceived challenges rural school graduates encounter and factors contributing to low admission scores in the entrance exams to higher education institutions?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

What is rural? What does it mean?

Haas (1991) and Stern (1994) state that one of the barriers educational researchers face is the lack of a clear understanding of 'rural.' "Rural" is often defined from an outsider, urban perspective in much the same way that the dominant culture has traditionally spoken for minority groups" (Herzog & Pittman, 1995, p.4). Another term for rural areas is nonmetropolitan, which means a place without skyscrapers and interstate highway systems. Sometimes, rural areas are defined as communities with less than 2,500 inhabitants or less than 1000 inhabitants per square mile (Herzog & Pittman, 1995).

In the Azerbaijani context, a village is a territorial unit, where most of the population goes in for agricultural industry. The status of cities, settlements, and villages in territorial units depends on the number of permanent residents in their territory or the type of activity in which the majority is engaged, the level of socio-economic development of the area, specialization of production, or socio-cultural infrastructure and state functions (*LAW OF THE AZERBAIJAN REPUBLIC. About the Territorial Device and Administrative-Territorial Division*, 2000).

As Coladarci (2007) states, there is no single definition of rural for the readers of rural education research and those who learn this area. Although there are some formal classification schemes, these classification schemes vary widely. Some of them, like rural-urban continuum codes, focus on counties. On the other hand, the others classify places according to economic activity.

Despite all these differences, one of the precise definitions of the rural area is about the size of the population, which is considered fewer than 2,500 (Coladarci, 2007).

Furthermore, Coladarci (2007) claims that the only problem is not about the precise definition of rural. He thinks that the main problem is about education researchers, who fail to introduce their research's clear and detailed context in their reports and publications. Clear descriptions in this regard will also help those who synthesize and investigate research. In this case and the field of rural education researchers, the readers can also benefit.

Adding the most important details to the research context such as community size, population density, distance to urban areas, economic factors, median household income, commuting patterns, and community's degree of physical or virtual isolation would be a great beginning and helpful to rural education researchers (Coladarci, 2007).

After analyzing different definitions by various researchers, I decided to explain "rural," considering both population size (approximately 2500) and adding the distance to the nearest metropolitan area. I think these are the main features that define rural areas.

Rural education

“Rural education research is a considerably smaller enterprise than many other branches of educational research. While surprisingly, we consider roughly one in five public school students attends a rural school, and almost one-third of all public schools are located in rural areas” (Johnson & Strange, 2005, p. 3).

According to Arnold, Newman, Gaddy, and Dean (2005), along with different issues, rural education research is restrained and limited depending on inconsistent and unclear definitions of “rural.”

It should be considered a problem since the current definitions and descriptions of context in rural education make it impractical to get clear and comprehensive results from the study and, most importantly, the collection of reliable and valid knowledge about rural education (Stelmach, 2011).

These findings may not be only valid for our country but also for the other rural schools that are located in different countries.

According to the results, McGranahan (1994) presents, we can notice how the gap in the increasing rate differences of higher education institutions admissions between the two populations. Only 3.4% more of the metropolitan population than the rural population had completed college in 1960, while this discrepancy was 9.5% in 1990.

Stern (1994) notes that there are still issues that remain much undocumented for lack of data. One of them is the availability of information on how rural school graduates who do not go to college deal with the unstable rural economy and cover living expenses. Furthermore, there is a lack of statistics of graduates who enter early marriages and stop continuing their education after marriage. All these omissions and lack of data need more things to expand an understanding of rural education complexities that will incentivize suitable policies (Stern, 1994).

"Education is one of the basic needs for human development and to escape from poverty" (Sivakumar & Sarvalingam, 2010, p. 20). Higher education institutions (HEIs) are the bridge to build a better future for students in increasing one's knowledge, gaining independence and responsibility. HEIs prepare the graduates for self-actualization, provides prosperous and

provoking conditions for the individual to investigate their way, and develop specialized skills crucial for their future career (Sovanak, Vouchsieng, & Navy 2017).

Primarily, we cannot deny the significant barriers the rural students face in applying to, entering, and completing higher education (Byun, Meece, & Irvin, 2012; Guiffrida, 2008; Maltzan, 2006).

Some recent educational research has examined several factors that rural students often face.

Having limited resources, including insufficient high school-level courses, tutors, lack of technology, and poverty are the most common barriers for rural graduates in continuing their higher education (Zuckerbrod, 2007; Elkin, 2014).

If we consider the cases experienced by rural Kyrgyz and Tajik residents, mainly four challenges are underlined: (a) academic barriers, (b) information and communication barriers, (c) support, and (d) material and nonmaterial sacrifices (Hughes, 2018).

Furthermore, Zuckerbrod (2007) states that the parents' academic, cultural, and social backgrounds also influence that process. The parents play an essential role in the students' preparedness for higher educational institutions.

Supporting this idea, we can contemplate the interview results of Nelson (2016). As a result of interviewing 30 students from rural communities, he confirmed that most students desired their parents' assistance and support after graduation. Considering the results, only half of the parents were collaborative and supportive about higher education pursuits. In contrast, the remaining half was not involved, whether through a lack of knowledge or interest in any form of higher education institutions. Parental support was defined as an essential social factor in helping rural

students feel motivated to apply for higher educational institutions (Nelson, 2016; Schultz, 2004).

In our country's case, we can also observe the high percentage of women (38.9%) entering into early marriage before the age of 18 were registered in urban areas and 61.1% in rural areas.

Table 1. *The statistics of girls entered into an early marriage in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1999-2011*

Years	The total number of women entered into a marriage	The number of married girls under the age of 18	The percentage compared to the total number of women entering into marriage
1999	37382	2649	7,1
2000	39611	2473	6,2
2001	41861	2348	5,6
2002	41661	2140	5,1
2003	59091	2556	4,6
2004	62177	3214	5,2
2005	71643	4016	5,6
2006	79443	4607	5,8
2007	81758	5023	6,1
2008	79964	5544	6,9
2009	78072	5380	6,9
2010	79172	4883	6,17

2011	88145	5138	6,17
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Statistical indicators also show that early marriages in rural areas and the majority of women who give birth at an early age are in rural areas (SCFWCA, 2010).

Table 2. *The statistic indicators of babies were born to women aged 15–17 years*

Years	Babies were born to women aged 15–17 years	In urban areas	In rural areas
2009	3538	1110	2428
2010	4103	1463	2640
2011	4392	1450	2942

However, according to the recent research from SCFWCA, the number of registered brides under the age of 18 decreased to 366, and the number of grooms was one in 2019. Simultaneously, the number of children born to women aged 15-17 was 4,392 in 2011, and the number decreased to 2,320 in 2019 girls (SCFWCA, 2021).

According to the statistics, 37.4% of women entered into early marriage voluntarily, 25.9% were under pressure from their parents, 10.7% due to difficult financial situation in the family, 7.9% because their husband is financially wealthy, 6.4% were married because they were abducted and 1.6% were pregnant. As it is clear from these indicators, most students were forced into early marriages by their families, parents, or relatives. Referring to these statistics, we can assume that uneducated families and lack of education are reasons for early marriages, making completing

education almost impossible for girls in rural areas (SCFWCA, 2010). Since positive changes are observed, early marriages remain one of the severe issues considered in this field.

While analyzing the literature, the researcher noticed an increased focus on the definition of "rural" and sought the proper explanation to define the term "rural." Additionally, most researchers presented external factors such as poverty, lack of technology, poor internet connection, and parental pressure as the main bounds to higher education. In my study, I planned to focus on internal factors like unreasonable expectations, emotional problems, learning difficulties of a person, and external factors. I suppose internal factors like influencing behavior, decision-making, attitude, motivation, and essential skills for learning also need to be addressed. In the interviews, the researcher explored the environment and the conditions that influenced rural graduates' decisions to continue their education.

Chapter 3

Methodology

While reviewing the literature, I have found that the recent studies on that topic were qualitative and mainly had a case study design. I have also chosen qualitative research because it was defined as interpretative research that addressed how things worked from the participants' perspectives (Knapp, 2017).

Research Design

The nature of the study was qualitative, which addressed how things worked from the participants' perspective (Knapp, 2016). The exploratory research design was conducted to understand the existing problem better. Exploratory research was also necessary because of the lack of existing research on the study that would be investigated (Mainardes, Alves, & Raposo, 2010).

Data Collection

Considering the geographical proximity factor, I chose the population from the villages of Siyazan rayon in Azerbaijan. The population was over 16 years old school graduates, teachers, and school principals from 25 schools in that rural area. Out of 25 schools, three were chosen from remote villages of Siyazan rayon, located at the closest distance from Baku, with the lowest results in entrance exams (SEC, 2015). The target population was 37 graduates of three schools who participated in university entrance exams during 2015-2020.

Sampling

I have applied convenience sampling, considering not to find all those graduates in the remote villages for different reasons (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Using this sampling, I could recruit the participants who met specific practical criteria, such as having easy accessibility, physical and geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate in the study. Therefore, I selected nine graduates from three remote schools suitable to be interviewed (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

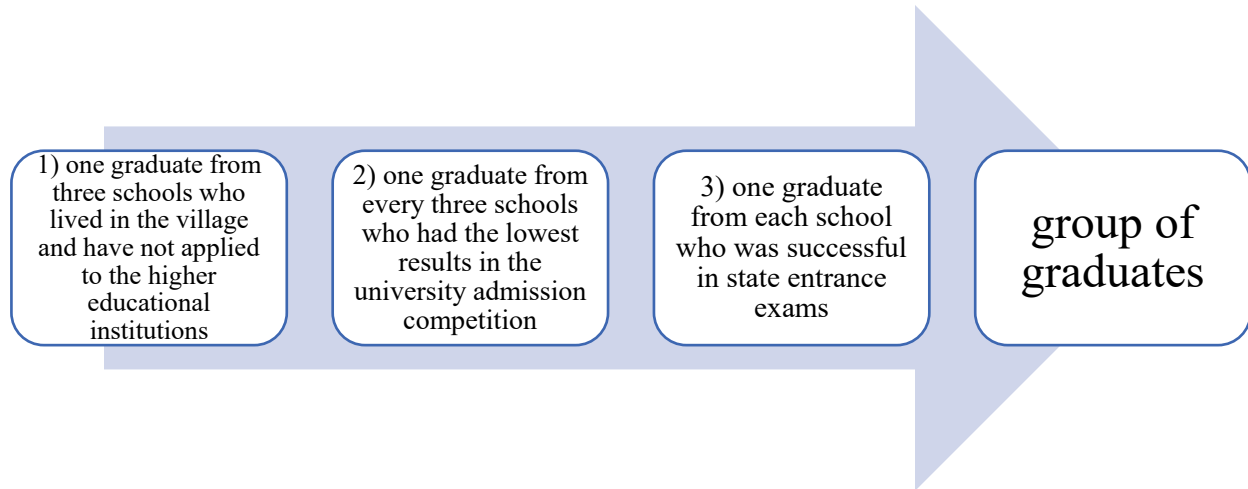
A group of teachers was selected through convenience sampling as well. I chose teachers based on the criteria that they had something to share on the topic. All teachers had similar socio-characteristics and were comfortable talking to the interviewer and one another (Rabiee, 2004).

Relying on my judgment, I selected the principals of three schools as I had a limited number of people who could serve as a primary data source due to my study's research design, aims, and objectives (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

Interviews

The first research tool was a semi-structured interview with open and close-ended questions. The discussion aimed to release the factors contributing to the rural graduates' perceptions of not pursuing and getting low admission scores in the entrance exams to higher education institutions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I interviewed the following groups of graduates of three schools: 1) one graduate from three schools who lived in the village and have not applied to the higher educational institutions 2) one graduate from every three schools who had the lowest results in the university admission competition 3) one graduate from each school who was successful in state entrance exams.

Figure 5. *The group of graduates was interviewed*



The intended time for these interviews was 30 minutes. After getting the interviewees' permission, the interviews were recorded. The conducted interviews were in Azerbaijani, and the interview protocol consisted of 10 open and closed-ended questions.

The open questions assisted in getting direct quotations from graduates about their experiences, opinions, feelings, emotions, and basic perceptions, while close-ended questions aimed to confirm my assumptions (Labuschagne, 2003).

The individual interviews with students who already enrolled in higher education institutions sought to reveal the responses to the same problem, compared to the graduates who had not continued their higher education, and investigated how the barriers differed or matched for both groups of graduates from rural areas.

Likewise, three school principals, one principal from each village, were interviewed. The intended time for those interviews was 30-40 minutes. The conducted interview was in Azerbaijani, and the interview protocol consisted of 10 questions. Three interviews were recorded based on the interviewees' permission. I intended to obtain in-depth information based

on school principals' opinions and thoughts to respond to the disproportionate representation of rural school graduates in higher education institutions (Briggs, 2002; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005).

Focus group interviews

I selected the second tool, the focus group interview method, to interview teachers as a qualitative approach to understand the experiences and perceptions that influence the disproportionate representation of rural school graduates in higher education institutions from educators' perspectives (Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick, & Mukherjee, 2018).

One focus group interview with the teachers of the graduates was held in the data collection process. As focus groups generally utilize convenience sampling, they enabled me to capture deeper information more economically than individual interviews. Utilizing convenience sampling assisted in selecting individuals with characteristics of the overall population, who contributed to gaining a greater understanding of the disproportionate representation of rural school graduates in higher education institutions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Five teachers participated in those discussions, although I selected to interview six teachers. One of the teachers refused to participate at the last moment because of an unexpected family affair. By choosing these graduates' teachers, I strived to understand how differently or similarly they approached the problem. I explored whether the barriers or factors contributing to rural school graduates' disproportionate representation in higher education institutions aligned with the teachers' and graduates' perspectives. Furthermore, investigating different views and reasons on this problem depending on the various social groups was one of the points of the study.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the collected data started with the transcription of recorded individual and focus group interviews. While analyzing the barriers that limited entering higher education institutions for students from rural areas, I applied the elemental coding method with the combination of *in vivo*, verbatim, and initial coding techniques. As the study was *grounded* in the participants' words, experiences, and thoughts, I used multiple stages of analysis to understand the data (Charmaz, 2006). These included the steps of coding, categorizing the codes, finding interrelationships within the data, and creating themes based on patterns in the analyzed data (Goldman, 2019). I utilized the member checking technique to guarantee the validity and credibility of the study's results (Hughes, 2018).

I chose a thematic analysis technique to explore the similarities and relationships between different chunks of the data to study the focus group discussions (Bryman, 2016; Krippendorff, 2004). First, I read the transcripts very carefully, line by line, and took notes when necessary. Second, I labeled relevant pieces, words, phrases, sentences, and sections. The labels were applied to actions, activities, concepts, differences, opinions, processes, or whatever I thought was relevant. I decided to label what was appropriate and when it was repeated in several places. Third, I decided to choose the most important codes and created categories by combining several codes. I also labeled the categories by dividing them into sub-categories later to conceptualize the findings (Bryman, 2016). The final step was to draw a figure to summarize the results and describe the categories and how they were connected (Lofgren, 2013).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical protection of the participants was a prior condition for this study. The research principle was voluntary participation, and the participants' personal information was protected by assuring the confidentiality and anonymity of the interviewees. I reminded participants of the study's aims, procedures, expected benefits, and the protection of confidentiality to establish rapport and gain their trust (Patton, 1987). All the personal information and recordings of the participants were stored in password-protected files on my computer. Informed consent letters were sent before the interviews, and the research participants returned them signed. The assigned participant numbers concealed their personal identifying information, and their real names were not introduced in the documents and consent forms (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

To establish the credibility of the research data, a member checking method was applied, and I contacted study participants to comment on the interview transcripts to clarify their intentions, prevent misunderstanding and misinterpretations, and provide additional information if necessary (Doyle, 2007).

Similarly, triangulation helped establish credibility and contribute to trustworthiness. As I asked the same research questions of different study participants and collected data from individual and focus group interviews, trustworthiness was manifested (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Chapter 4

Findings

Major Findings

This chapter presents the research study's findings to reveal the challenges rural school graduates encounter and explore the factors that lead to low admission scores in entrance exams. The research examined the perception of rural graduates under the following research questions:

1. What are rural school graduates' perceptions of not pursuing higher education in Azerbaijan?
2. What are the perceived challenges rural school graduates encounter and factors contributing to low admission scores in entrance exams?

The aim was to explore the rationale for the disproportionate representation of rural school graduates in higher education institutions and learn the graduates' perceptions. Given the study's objective, the collected data and each set of findings have been presented in detail.

This research collected significant findings based on the semi-structured interviews with three key informants: principals, teachers, and graduates of School A, School B, and School C in the Siyazan district.

Understanding graduates' perceptions of university education

Before starting the research, I held certain assumptions that the research participants might not have been acknowledged the meaning and importance of the concept of the university. Yet, it turned out that they could define it and also consider university as one of the few roads to success.

My interviewees contemplated a university as a path to a bright future and successful career life. They believe in the power of education to transform lives. One of the school graduates emphasized:

Mənim üçün ali təhsil bir çox insanın burada tapa bilmədiyi seçimlər və imkanlardır. Ümid edirəm ki, ali təhsil mənim üçün uğurlu gələcəyi təmin etmək üçün bir cığır açacaq.

[For me, university means choices and options that many people don't have there. I hope my university degree will be a path to me to guarantee a successful life.]

The researcher found that the interviewed graduates consider the high education level as the only way to discard the difficulties they face in rural areas.

Family support and educational background of parents

All the interviewed graduates, teachers, and principals were inclined to think the educational background of their families impacted their academic life. They all believed that the positive effect of the support that they received from their parents had an essential role in their academic life. Concerning the point, one of the school graduates commented:

Əlbəttə, valideynlərimin dəstəyi olmasa, mənə çox çətin olardı. Onların məni dəstəkləməsi və inanması mənə güc verirdi.

[Of course, it would be very difficult for me without the support of my parents. Their support and trust gave me strength.]

According to graduates who passed the exams successfully from schools A, B, and C, their parents possessed an undergraduate academic degree. In contrast, only one parent of one of the graduates who passed the exams successfully had graduated from university. Nevertheless, the third interviewer from School C also admitted the existence of support and motivation from her parents while preparing for university entrance exams. Figure 6 and Figure 7 below presents the distribution of parental educational background for the admitted graduates:

Figure 6. *The distribution of parental educational background for the admitted graduates*

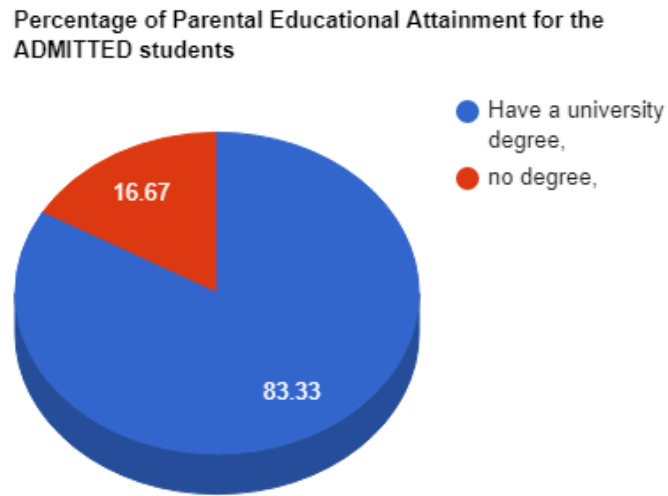
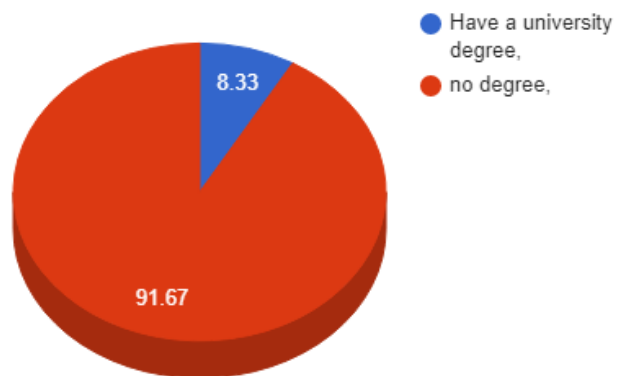


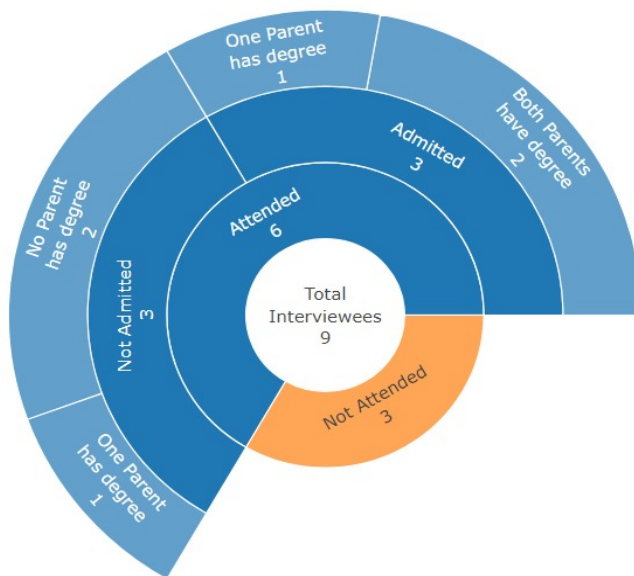
Figure 7. *The distribution of parental educational background for the graduates with low entrance exam results and who have not applied for admission to higher education institutions*

Percentage of Parental Educational Attainment for the Not ADMITTED students



As opposed to, only one parent out of six graduates who got poor results in the entrance exams or did not apply to any educational institutions had higher education background. Consequently, she was the only participant who aimed to be admitted to the university and was preparing to apply for the university for the second time.

Figure 8. *The distribution of parental educational background for the rural graduates*



Additionally, I explored the educational background of the principals and teachers of those schools in focus group discussions. All the principals and teachers graduated from different local public universities. Besides, all three school principals had more than 25 years of experience in teaching and school administration.

The role of school in graduates' performance

The role
of
schools

- Assistance in documentation and guidance in career choice
- Free lessons by school teachers
- Info sessions and consultations with graduates and parents about the importance of higher education

Both the graduates and principals agreed that the school administration supported them morally and emotionally and highlighted the importance of higher education, creating a positive atmosphere in the preparation period for university. Furthermore, one of the graduates from School B admitted the role of the teacher in her future educational career as she got extra learning support, free lessons from her teacher:

Ailəmizin maddi imkanı olmadığından bir neçə fəndən hazırlığa gedə bilmirdim. Bu zaman, sinif müəlliməm məni dərstdən sonra saxladı və təmännəsiz əlavə dərslər keçdi ki geri qalmayım.

[Due to my family's financial situation, I could not afford private tuition for all necessary subjects. While, at that time, my teacher supported me in that difficult time and gave me extra lessons so that I would not be left behind.]

The other graduate from School C who could not pass the exams and could not afford private tuition noted that the free tuition provided by her teacher helped her through a difficult time.

Besides, the school administration also asserted that the school had completed its mission in this process. Also, one of the teachers of School A claimed that the School supported their graduates during the preparation period by teaching them extra hours or doing mock exam tests in their lessons.

Bizim köməyimiz o idi ki, dərstdən sonra hazırlığa getməyə imkanı çatmayan şagirdlərlə əlavə məşğul olur və onlara sınaq testləri işlədirdik ki nümunə suallarla tanış olsunlar.

[Our support was to deliver after-school free lessons to the graduates who did not have the opportunity to receive private tuition and introduce mock tests for them to be exposed to sample questions.]

Likewise, the teacher from School B asserted that their School assisted graduates in choosing a career after school-leaving state entrance exams. Teachers advised their graduates to select suitable professions considering their average score, capability, and interests. They even sometimes assisted them in the documentation and application process.

That said, School A principal emphasized the importance of info sessions and discussions with parents as an example of their School' s support.

Təhsil Nazirliyinin qərarına əsasən dərstdən kənar məşğələlər dərş saatları bitdikdən sonra təşkil olunur və dəqiq bir vaxta təyin olunmayıb. Məzunlarımızın tələblərini nəzərə alaraq, məktəbimiz həmin bu dərşdəkənar məşğələləri imtahana salınmış əsas fənlərlə əvəz etmişdir.

[According to the decision of the Ministry of Education, extracurricular activity clubs are taught after School and are not scheduled. Considering our graduates' needs, the School replaced the extracurricular activities and introduced the main subjects in those after-school clubs.]

She added that in previous years, as a result of cooperation with parents, they could obtain one of the parents' permission, and one graduate could proceed with education.

Similarly, the principal of School B explained the school assistance and support in delivering extra after-school lessons that could contribute to proceeding to tertiary education.

Difficulties and barriers

Students with low educational attainment

One of the factors revealed during interviews was the students with learning difficulties. Both sides, graduates who scored low in the entrance examination, and those who did not apply to any universities, accepted some challenges in certain subjects, such as Math, English, and Physics.

One of the graduates who failed from entrance exams admitted:

Mən məktəb vaxtından riyaziyyat fənnindən çətinlik çəkirdim. Heç vaxt yaxşı nəticəm olmurdu. Qəbul imtahanında da riyaziyyatdan az yazdığuma görə imtahandan keçə bilmədim.

[I have been struggling with math since school. I never had good results. I could not pass the entrance exam because I did not the have minimum correct answers.]

Likewise, the graduate planning to apply for the second year accepted that due to the gaps in Math, she could not answer several questions, which led to her failure in the first year. Another two graduates who did not apply to higher education institutions stated that they struggled academically or performed below proficiency during school years. For obvious reasons mentioned above, schools and families of those students could not afford any educational support programs for their children and mandate specific goals that students should attain before moving on to the next grade. Therefore, it was challenging for them to meet particular learning standards and prepare for high education institutions with learning gaps that they could not fill in a short preparation period.

Besides, principals and teachers noted that accepted the students with learning difficulties were the ones who struggled the most in the preparation stage for higher education.

Shortage of qualified teachers

Another significant finding was the shortage of qualified teachers. One of the factors contributing to this issue was the poor transportation structure in the region. After data analysis, it was clear that the poor transportation and teacher shortage problems were somehow interconnected. While discussing the reasons for leaving the village for tuition services, it became clear that the graduates tended to find highly qualified tutoring services in rayon centers, no matter the distance.

Məktəbdəki müəllimlərimiz artıq bizə dərs deyirlər və onların necə dərs keçdiklərindən xəbərdarıq. Bu səbəbdən, daha yeni biliklər öyrənmək üçün zaman və maddi çətinlikləri gözə alıb rayon mərkəzinə gedirik.

[The teachers from our village teach us at school; therefore, we know their ability and teaching skills. In the hope of finding the best teaching services, we leave for rayon centers considering all the difficulties like time and financial issues.]

As far as I understood from the participants' responses, only the graduates from low-income families chose teachers from their village or school because they could not afford tuition and transport.

On the other hand, the principals from School A claimed that all the teachers were experienced and had a higher education degree following their specialty. They contended that the recruitment of teachers to public education institutions was held by the MoE via competitive centralized exams starting from the 2010-2011 academic year. As a result of this decision, several teachers had successfully passed the teacher recruitment exams and were appointed to the remote schools in Siyazan.

The principal of School B stated that 28 teachers were working under him. According to his answer, only five of those teachers were born and living in those villages, while the others were from the rayon center - Siyazan, Sumgait, and Baku cities. Those teachers were commuting such a long distance to reach the schools.

The essential skills for academic success

All the participants recognized the absence of essential skills such as time management and self-motivation for academic success as critical factors contributing to graduates' lower results in state entrance exams. They all accepted that half of the success depended on the level of graduates' preparation and study. The other half depended on how they felt ready to overcome difficulties and reach their goals.

Əsas məsələ odur ki qarşıya məqsəd qoyasan və o məqsədə çatmaq üçün əlindən gələni edəsən. Əlbəttə, heç kim demir ki bu asan prosesdir, lakin sonda məqsədini çatacağımı düşünmək mənə güc verirdi.

[The key is to set goals and do your best to reach them. Of course, no one says it's an easy process, but it gave me the strength to think that I would get my goal in the end.]

Since they all struggled with different difficulties, those students set attainable goals for themselves, which is considered one of the essential skills for academic success and had only one aim to enter the university.

Furthermore, one of the interviewed graduates from School B developed a timeline for reaching her destination and tracking her progress:

Bəli, ilk aylarda yol probleminə görə vaxtı idarə etmək çox çətin idi. Lakin, müəllimlərim mənə vaxtın düzgün bölüşdürülməsi ilə bağlı bəzi üsulları öyrətdilər ki, çox faydalı oldu. Bundan sonra, özüm üçün cədvəl qurdum və hansı dərsi hansı saatda oxuyacağım ilə bağlı qeydlər apardım. Çalışırdım ki, vaxtımı düzgün idarə edim və bu cədvələ ciddi riayət edim.

[Yes, it was challenging to manage time in the first months due to long-distance commuting. However, my teachers taught me some time management techniques that were very helpful. After that, I made a schedule for myself and made notes about which lesson I would study at what time. I tried to manage my time correctly and strictly follow that schedule.]

The student from School B explained that time management skills helped her keep motivated and work harder despite the long commutes. She also added that good time management empowered her to accomplish good results in a short period of time with less stress and more time freedom.

Another point highlighted by the interviewees was the importance of study skills, such as note-taking, pacing yourself, and paying attention to key concepts. The graduate from School C noted:

Əgər testlər üzərində işləyəndə qeydlər aparamasa idim, sonra həmin səhvləri xatırlamaq daha çətin olardı. Buna görə həmişə testləri yoxlayanda müəllimin qeydlərini cəld bir kənara yazırdım. Evdə isə həmin qeydləri yenidən nəzərdə keçirir və qayda kimi dəftərə yazırdım. Bu qeydləri nəinki öz səhvlərim başqalarının səhvlərini müzakirə edərkən də götürürdüm. Beləliklə, başqalarının səhvlərindən də yeni nəşə öyrənirdim.

[If I hadn't taken notes while working on the tests, it would have been harder to remember those mistakes. Therefore, I would quickly write down the teacher's notes whenever we checked the tests. At home, I re-examined those notes and as a rule, wrote them in a notebook. I took these notes not only when discussing my own mistakes but also the mistakes of others. So, I learned something new from the mistakes of others.]

School C graduate's comment revealed that taking notes and summarizing the teacher's speech during class helped her focus on main concepts and better understand them. Additionally, this

study skill assisted her in actively engaging with the topic as she had to listen attentively to write and remember the information later.

Along with the noted point, the other participant from School B highlighted the importance of self-efficacy as one of the factors to success:

Əslində, mən bir az paxıl insanam. Başqalarının qəbul olduğu halda özümün imtahandan kəsilməsini qəbul edə bilməzdim. Ona görə var gücümlə çalışdım ki, heç kimdən geri qalmayım.

[In fact, I'm a little jealous. I could not accept my exclusion from the exam if others were admitted. That's why I tried my best not to be left behind.]

She explained that while preparing for the entrance exams, she acknowledged the trust she was granted and her family's perspectives about her, and she felt self-sufficient to work hard and be in a better place.

Low-income families and child labor as a free workforce

The low financial status of the families is recognized as one of the main factors that may have influenced the lower results of graduates and not applying to higher educational institutions.

According to the responses of school principals and teachers, most of the students who scored low results could not get enough tuition services due to their families' low income. They assumed that extra after-school lessons of the main subjects during the preparation period may have caused low results. The parents who could not afford private tuition in all subjects allocated some of their family budgets to one or two main subjects. One of the school principals asserted:

Burada vəziyyət elədir ki, hər ailənin övladını bütün fənlərdən hazırlığa qoymağa maddi imkanı çatmır. Ona görə də, çox vaxt bir və ya iki əsas fəndən müəllim tuturlar. Bu da əlbəttə, sonda nəticəyə təsir edir.

[The situation here is that not every family has the financial opportunity to provide their children with paid tuition services from all subjects. Therefore, they often hire teachers for one or two core subjects. This, of course, ultimately affects the outcome.]

According to teachers' and principals' responses, one also could observe the effect of the financial issues in the case of graduates who didn't apply to higher educational institutions after graduation. These graduates were usually from low-income families. As those school graduates were engaged in their families' animal husbandry and farming, parents favored their children staying in the village to help them with household chores and earning money at the same time, rather than continuing their education. The principal from School B confessed:

Düzünü desəm, həmin ailələr üçün o uşaqların kənddə qalıb işləməsi daha sərfəlidir, nəinki oxuması. Çünki, həm təsərrüfat işlərində evə kömək edirlər, həm də ailəyə maddi dəstək olurlar. Bu halda isə təbii ki, ailə övladının onlardan ayrılıb gedib oxumasını istəmir.

[To be honest, it is more profitable for those kids from those families to stay and work in the village than to study. Because they help with household chores and provide financial support to the family, in this case, of course, the family does not want his child to leave them and continue or his education away from family.]

The interviewees emphasized the low financial status of the families in the remote villages in Siyazan as one of the main factors that may have influenced the lower results of graduates and not applying to higher educational institutions.

Besides, two teachers from School B and a principal from School A indicated that some school graduates could not afford private tuition since they still worked hard and achieved their goals.

Neçə şagird tanıyırdıq ki, maddi imkansızlıqdan heç hazırlığa da gedə bilmədi. Lakin, özü oxudu, hazırlaşdı və sonda universitetə qəbul oldu.

[We know some students who could not afford to pay for private tuition due to financial difficulties. However, they studied, prepared, and were eventually admitted to college.]

In the cases mentioned above, both teachers and principals believed that success depended on students and how they were responsible, motivated, and resilient.

Long-distance commuting

All interviewed study participants concluded that school graduates had to commute long distances to have extra after-school classes for free or for some fee. They had to spend most of their time on the roads and the buses. Although there was a bus service from the village to the rayon center, it took more time and money to meet those needs. Only the graduates whose family-owned private cars were available could attend those classes regardless of the distance.

One of the graduates from School A shared her concerns related to the issue:

Vaxtın çoxu demək olar ki, yolda itir. Dərsdən sonra hazırlığa gedib qayıdanda artıq çox gec olur və çox yoruluruq. Düzdür, rayon mərkəzinə avtobuslar işləyir, amma yenə də şəxsi maşınla gedəndə vaxta daha qənaət edirsən.

When we go to tutors after school, it is too late, and we are exhausted. [Most of the time is almost lost on the road. There are indeed buses to the district center, but you still save time traveling by car.]

The shared concerns related to long distances when getting extra after-school classes contributed to school graduates' low achievements during the university entrance exams and not applying for college.

Psychological support

Another crucial factor that affected the results of rural school graduates was their psychological well-being. Although the participant from School A entered the university and scored the necessary points, she thought that her results would be much better if she could deal with anxiety and stress during the exam. Although she admitted that teachers motivated them during that difficult period, it was not enough for her, and she needed professional psychological support. Additionally, my interviewee also underlined the existence of self-confidence in that process.

While discussing the factors contributing to rural graduates' low results, she emphasized the self-esteem problems that significantly impacted the outcomes. She highlighted the rural school

graduates' distrust towards their capacity and strengths. The graduate also emphasized the rural school graduates' doubt about their power and stability. She explained her answer in a way that most rural graduates and students usually don't believe in their capability and strengths. The participant assumed that school graduates could not cease to apply for higher education for the same reason.

Secondary Findings

The lack of proper communication between school administration and parents

I called them secondary findings because not all the interviewees mentioned and labeled them as the main factors that led to the disproportionate representation of rural school graduates in higher education institutions. Under this heading, I have listed interesting thoughts and perceptions of my interviewees related to the disproportionate representation of rural school graduates in higher education institutions and that I considered essential to share.

Except for the similar responses I received from the rural school graduates and teachers, one of the principals emphasized one issue that caught my attention. According to the School C principal's answer, although family financial conditions played a crucial role in the low representation of rural school graduates in higher education institutions, one issue should not be overlooked.

Bilirsiniz, digər bir məsələ də odur ki, biz vaxtında valideynlə əlaqə saxlaya bilmirik. Valideyn məktəbə gəlmək istəmir. Valideynləri övladlarının cari vəziyyətini müzakirə etməyə dəvət edəndə bundan imtina edir və ya gəlmirlər.

[You know, another problem is that cannot communicate with parents in time. The parent does not want to come to school. When parents are invited to discuss children's current situation, they refuse or do not come.]

Furthermore, the School C principal explained this problem as a lack of communication between the school and parents. He stated that usually, it was complicated for them to contact the parents

of graduates or pupils who had academic or behavioral problems, and parents usually avoided visiting a school. Then I asked for the reason for such behavior, and he stated that traditionally parents assumed that if the school invited them, there were some other reasons, and they would not like to cooperate with it. Additionally, he mentioned the prejudiced and judgemental thoughts towards schooling that were still prevalent in the minds of the parents in their village and shared the following insight:

Baxmayaraq ki, bizim kənddə qızların ali təhsil alması birmənalı qarşılanmır, lakin bununla belə burada erkək nığah hallarına rast gəlinmir. Adətən, qızlar 18-20 yaşda ailə qururlar.

[Nevertheless, although they do not welcome girls to pursue higher education, one cannot observe the cases of early marriage in our village. Girls usually get married here at the age of 19 -20.]

School C's principle was specific that remote village residents did not want their girls to pursue higher education and move to Baku, the capital city of Azerbaijan.

Lack of a competitive environment in education

While investigating the causes of low results during the interview, one of the graduates from School C highlighted the lack of a competitive environment in their school. She thought that the graduates from rural schools did not acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses as rural education did not provide opportunities to explore cases and possible gaps.

Biz şəhərdəki şagirdlərlə müqayisədə hansı səviyyədə olduğumuzu yalnız sınaq imtahanlarının nəticələrinə əsasən bilirik. Kənddə dost-tanış çevrəmiz elə böyük olmadığından baş verən yeniliklərdən xəbərdar olmaq çətinləşir.

[We only know what level we are at compared to the students in the urban areas based on the results of the mock test exams. Since our circle of friends and acquaintances in the village are not so large, it is challenging to keep abreast of the latest developments.]

Referring to the participant's insights, the only way to check one's capacity was to take mock exams. Hence, the student also emphasized that rural school graduates, because of poor transportation and high prices of the exam tickets, could not commute to the rayon center every time the exams were administered.

Consequently, those who could not afford transportation and mock exams tickets missed their chance to get used to exam content procedures and scored low. Also, teachers did not provide adequate feedback on their performance or the updated information they needed. Remote school graduates could only request their close circle of friends to obtain updated information from their schools in the rayon center or other urban schools and share it with them.

Planning for future life and career

According to the results of interviews, all graduates who won student titles were planning to continue their education, apply for a master's degree, and stay in Baku to get better job opportunities and living conditions.

On the other hand, four of the graduates who could not pass university exams did not plan to continue their education. One of them was engaged and was sure that she would not have such an opportunity. Furthermore, the other four graduates assumed that it would be better to continue to help their parents in farm work and meet the financial needs of their families.

Nevertheless, it was very gratifying that two of the graduates still aimed to fight for their goals.

One of the graduates from previous years was planning to take an exam for the second time. The other student who did not apply for the university also intended to apply for vocational school after returning from military service.

Figure 9. *The perceptions of graduates about the low admission scores in entrance exams and in not pursuing higher education institutions*

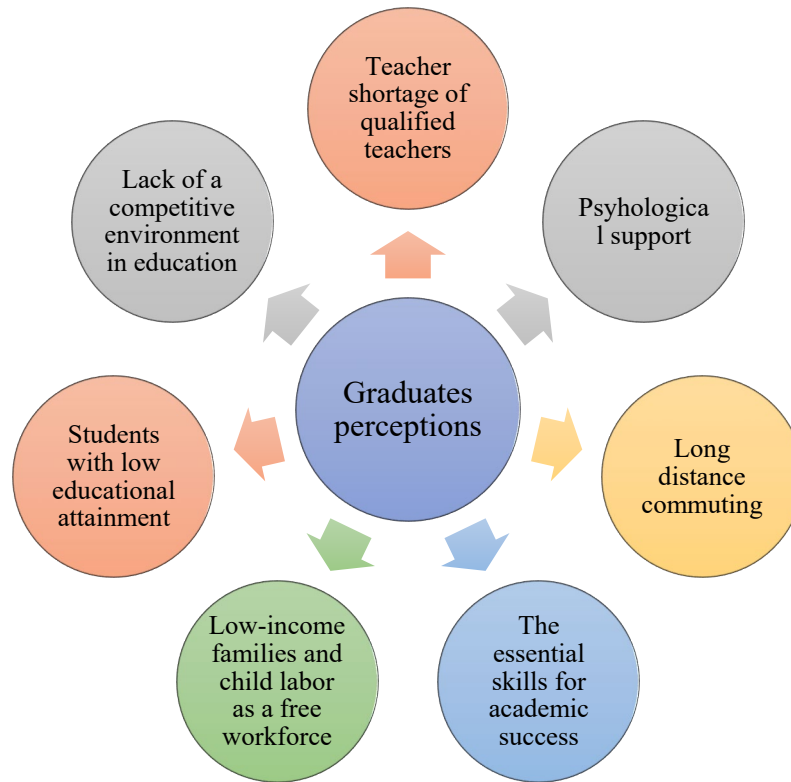


Figure 10. *The perceptions of teachers and principals about the low admission scores in entrance exams and in not pursuing higher education institutions*

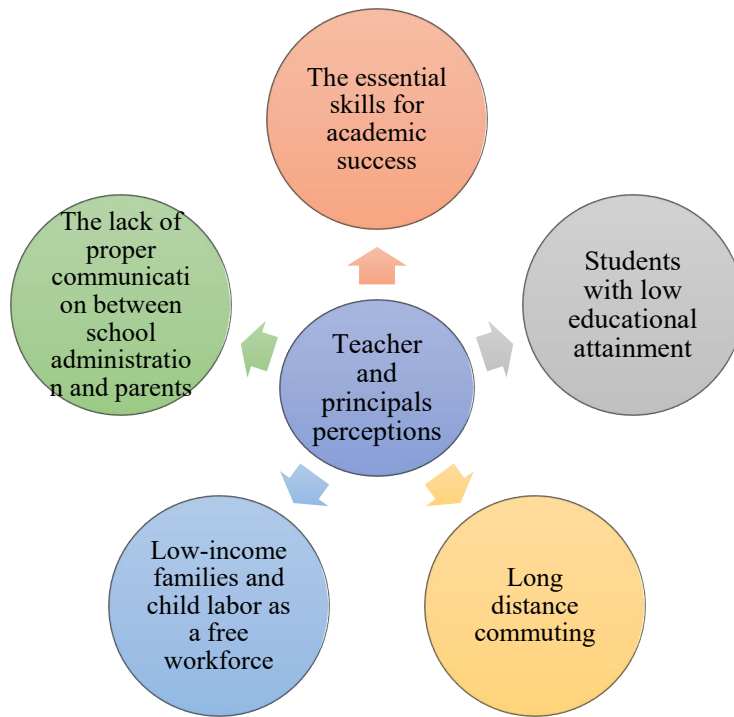


Table 3. *The perceptions of graduates, teachers, and principals about the low admission scores in entrance exams and in not pursuing higher education institutions*

Graduates perceptions	Common perceptions	Teacher and principals perceptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortage of qualified teachers • Psychological support • The essential skills for academic success • Low-income families and child labor • Students with low educational attainment • Lack of competitive environment in education • Long distance commuting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The essential skills for academic success • Low-income families and child labor • Students with low educational attainment • Long distance commuting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The essential skills for academic success • The lack of proper communication between school administration and parents • Low-income families and child labor • Students with low educational attainment • Long distance commuting

Summary of major findings

In summary, the findings of this study have shown that both graduates, teachers, and principals admitted the presence of several factors that led to the disproportionate representation of rural school graduates in higher education institutions. The perceptions of graduates, teachers, and principals about the low admission scores in entrance exams and not pursuing higher education institutions differed. Hence, the findings based on the shared perceptions of the study participants were essential skills for academic success, low-income families, child labor, students with low educational attainment, and long-distance commuting.

Chapter 5

Discussions

The reviewed literature suggested education as one of the basic needs for human development and a chance to escape from poverty (Sivakumar & Sarvalingam, 2010). Not surprisingly, all the school graduates recognized a university as a bridge to build a successful career life, transform lives, and discard the difficulties they face in rural areas.

Having limited resources, lack of technology and poverty were summarized in the prior research as the most common factors and barriers for rural graduates in applying and continuing their higher education (Zuckerbrod, 2007; Elkin, 2014). Along with all these factors, Zuckerbrod (2007) emphasized the parent's academic, cultural, and social background as one of the essential factors that influenced the graduates' future academic career. Supporting this idea is consistent with what has been found in this study's findings. According to the students who passed the entrance exams successfully, all their parents had completed higher education institutions. In contrast, only one parent of the graduates got low admission scores in entrance exams, did not apply to any higher educational institutions, and did not have a university degree.

Furthermore, all the students confirmed that their parents collaborated and motivated them in higher education pursuits. In this sense, the findings of this study confirm the results of Nelson (2016), who interviewed rural graduates to seek their parents' assistance and support after graduation and found the lack of knowledge or interest in any form of higher education institutions as a reason for parents not supporting their children in that process. It is no coincidence that the supportive home environment for learning, especially the role of mothers and the maternal educational expectations, may affect children's future academic educational careers depending socio-economic status of the families (Zhang, Kao & Hannum 2007). Hannum

and Park's (2007) study also proves the positive influence of home support and how the mother's education, parents' educational expectations, and mother's aspirations confederate with a better student performance at school.

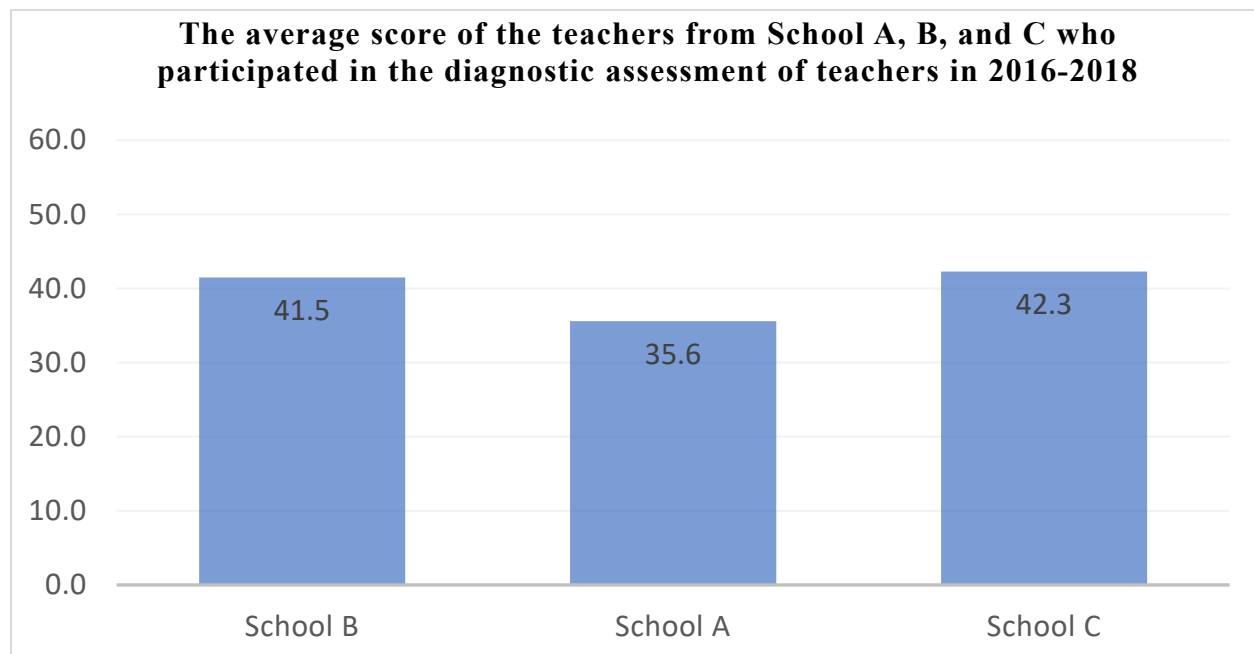
One of the factors emphasized in literature was the statistics of girls entering into an early marriage in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1999-2011. According to the statistics, 61.1% of women under 18 who entered into early marriage were registered in rural areas (The State Committee for Family, Women, and Children Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2010). I assume the State Committee for Family, Women, and Children Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2010) considers early marriages severe barriers that blockade education for girls in rural areas. However, the findings of this study may contradict the statistics as any early marriage case among interviewed school graduates from Siyazan has not been observed. Only one graduate from School C, who was unsuccessful in entrance exams, was engaged at 18 and did not plan to continue her education due to marital status.

Regarding the qualification of teachers, I received the results of teachers of Siyazan rayon, who participated in the diagnostic assessment of teachers in 2016-2018. The diagnostic assessment began in Baku in 2014, gradually covered other cities and regions under the State Strategy for the Development of Education in the Republic of Azerbaijan (2013). The primary purpose of diagnostic assessment is to test teachers' knowledge and skills, identify and optimize the weekly workload of teachers, increase their monthly salaries and ensure the improvement of material well-being. In addition, depending on the results, teachers will be involved in professional development training (MoE, 2015). According to this information, the average score of the teachers of Siyazan rayon participating in the diagnostic assessment in 2016-2018 was 39.4 points for the region.

Correspondingly, the average score of teachers of School A was 35.6 points, School B was 41.5 points, and School C was 42.3 points (Institute of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan,2020).

In general, the maximum result in the competition was set at 60 points.

Figure 11. *The average score of the teachers from School A, B, and C who participated in the diagnostic assessment of teachers in 2016-2018*



Research results confirmed that all study participants experienced academic, information, and financial barriers while gaining higher education, which they believed were predetermined by their rural origin.

Thoroughly, the study's findings emphasized several points, such as poverty and economic barriers. As expected, most low-income families could not afford and sometimes were less willing to pay fees for private tuition, transport services, and other potential costs for children as they considered education a priority for their children (Hannum & Adams, 2009). This finding is significant in the case of students' performance and engagement in school. It can be an impulsive

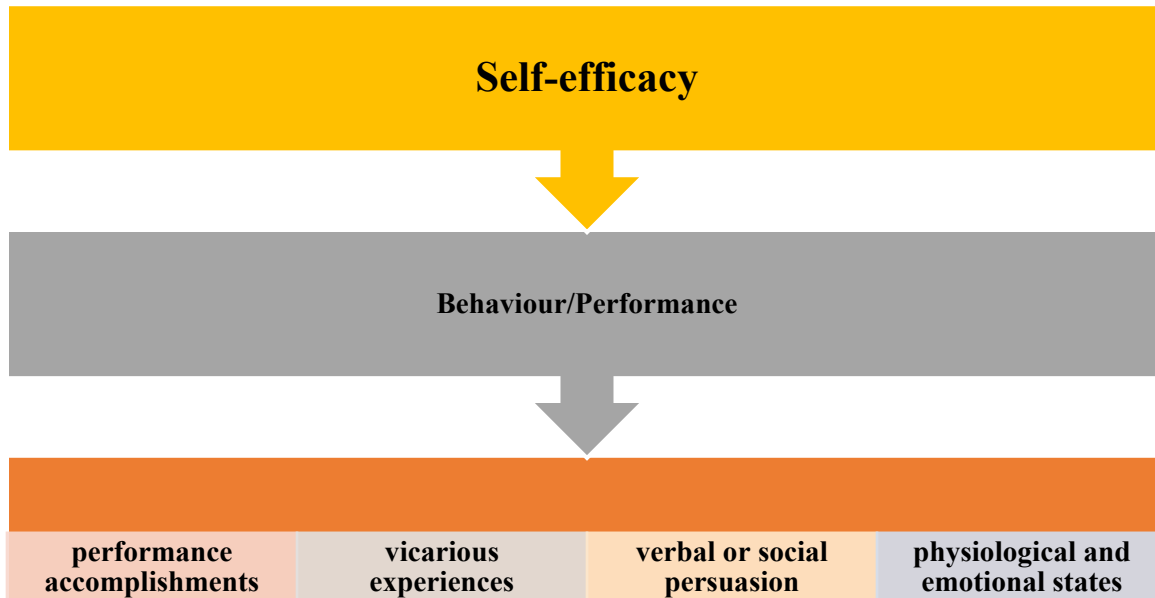
force for the students from low-income families to stay in school and their parents' willingness to invest in their education. I assume it may be connected with the lack of communication between school and parents and the students with learning difficulties findings during the interviews. As the principal of School C introduced it, their school struggled to contact the parents of graduates or pupils who had academic or behavioral problems. Usually, parents avoided visiting the school. In this sense, I may reckon the persistence of school administration to find the solution to this problem and establishing the engagement of parents in the school community can be a great opportunity in ensuring all-inclusive access to education for graduates from rural areas.

As I mentioned in the literature review, despite all presented factors, there is one underrated issue. Being one of the most important motivational factors, self-efficacy determines the goals school graduates set for themselves; how much effort they make; how long they persevere when encountering difficulties; and how resilient they are when facing failures. In this sense, Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory has a crucial function to humans to increase a propulsive force for individuals in their development.

Self-efficacy is influenced by several factors (Zimmerman, 1995). The first factor is a person's performance accomplishments, also called mastery experiences. Performance accomplishments explain how successful one has been with a particular task in the past. In this sense, the graduates with low educational attainment and learning difficulties can be an excellent example of the first factor. According to a person's performance accomplishments factor, it can be explained that the learner will put a strong effort into a new task if they believe they have the attitude to learn new things (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2003). From this point of view, the graduates who worked hard and were successful through the history of education at school, their self-efficacy in the university preparation period was high. They made a great effort again in being successful in

entrance exams. See Figure 12 below for the relation between the factors influencing self-efficacy and study findings.

Figure 12. *Bandura's Self-efficacy theory and four factors influence self-efficacy*



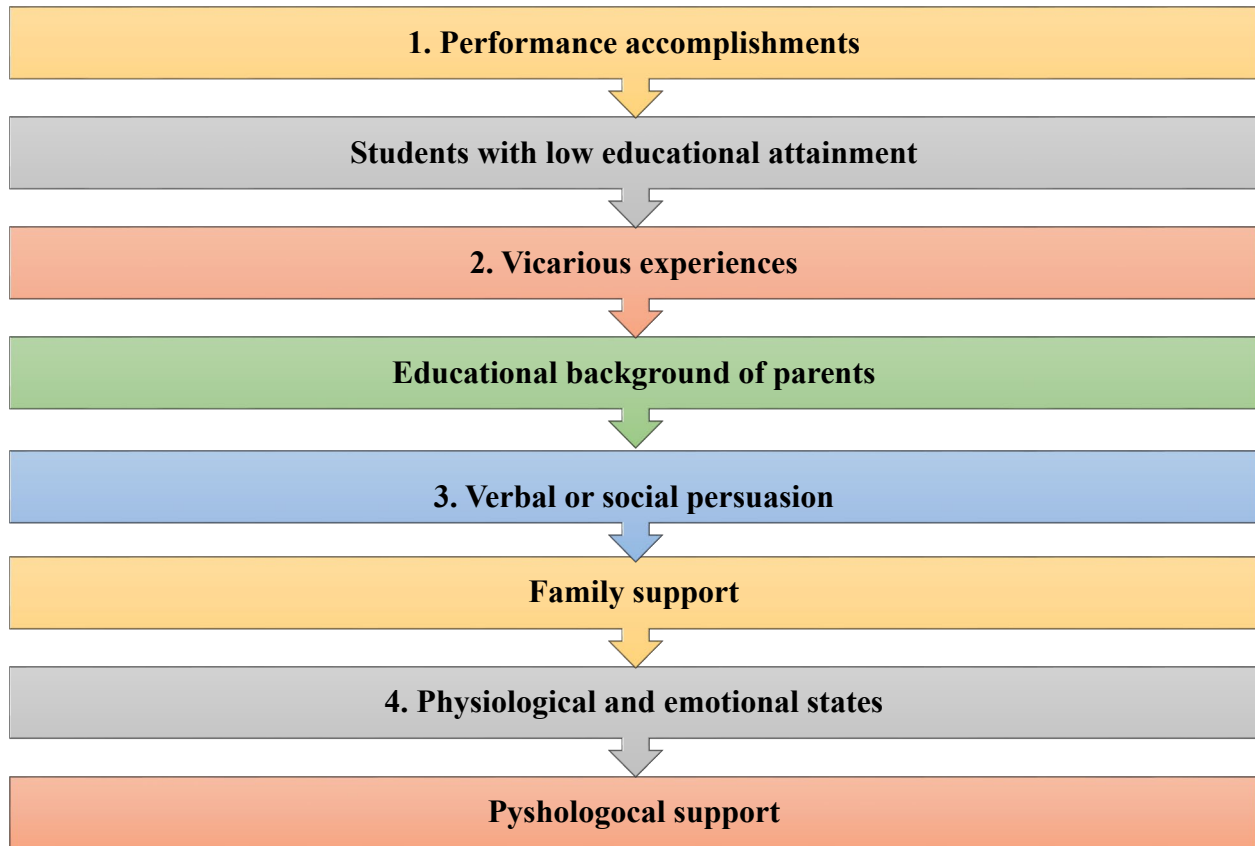
On the other hand, the students with low educational attainment who struggled in specific or all subjects had low self-efficacy for this type of task. They resisted less as they decided they were incapable of learning those subjects, and the lack of effort resulted in low scores in entrance exams.

The second factor is vicarious experiences when the learners observe other people's experiences with the task. According to vicarious experiences, if someone follows their peer to accomplish the job, they will have a higher self-efficacy regarding this task. Similarly, if the person observes their peers struggling and failing at the task, their self-efficacy will be lower as they will judge their abilities based on what they keep (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2003). In this sense, parents' educational background can be a suitable example of this issue. As transparent from the findings,

the results of graduates with solid academic backgrounded parents were higher than the graduates with parents without a higher educational background.

The third factor is verbal or social persuasion, which impacts learner's expectations. These expectations must be expressed verbally and contain some helpful tips where self-efficacy goes up. Additionally, verbal influence can also be harmful, telling the learner they are incapable of the task, which will cause doubt in the learner and lower self-efficacy (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2003). In this sense, parents' moral and emotional support from the research findings can be a good example. It is no coincidence that all the successful graduates confirmed their parents' financial and moral support during the university preparation period.

The last factor is physiological and emotional states which is the emotional reaction a learner experiences and how they identify this arousal. Usually, high arousal impairs performance, and people face failure if they are tense or anxious (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2003). Accordingly, one cannot underrate the importance of psychological support from the school administration during the university preparation period. With the help of psychological support, the graduates may label the excitement or anticipation rather than anxiety which the learners may associate with achievement.

Table 4. *The relation between the factors that influence self-efficacy and study findings*

Overall, person self-efficacy impacts the level of goals and challenges they set for themselves, the amount of effort they put in, and their persistence in the face of difficulties. Considering the importance of the availability of essential skills for educational success, those skills may contribute to school graduates' task completion and goal achievement (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2003). As it was clear from the findings, most of the graduates who failed in the entrance exams accepted avoiding difficulties they faced in specific subjects and had low aspirations and weak commitment to the goals they chose to pursue. On the other hand, the graduates who were successful in entrance exams accepted to approach complex tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than threats to be avoided. They set themselves challenging goals by maintaining strong commitment with high effort.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Summary and Recommendations

This study is timely and essential research in the Azerbaijani rural education context. The study's primary purpose was to investigate rural school graduates' perceptions of not pursuing higher education institutions and explore the perceived challenges and factors for rural school graduates that lead to low admission scores in entrance exams. The attention and care paid to the development of education confirm that this important factor has recently been included in the critical principles of public policy. Given that this process is not limited to the rural areas and covers the regions, the research on this topic will help understand different perceptions in rural areas of our country. The results of this study will be helpful to contribute to promoting equality in higher education in Azerbaijan and assist in developing strategies, plans, and programs that may reduce the disproportionate representation of rural school graduates in higher education in the nearest future.

This study attempted to voice graduates who study in rural areas by conducting semi-structured interviews. Whether successful or unsuccessful in state entrance exams, both groups of graduates expressed different barriers and factors that led to rural graduates' low admission scores in state entrance exams. Furthermore, focus group interviews with teachers and semi-structured interviews with school principals helped understand their perspectives.

Limitations

The limitation of the study was a small sample size. The researcher could interview only five teachers, three principals, and nine graduates. The small size could lead to cases of bias that is a non-responsive participant did not have the opportunity to participate in the study. Besides, voluntary response bias could occur that is non-responsive subjects could have the opportunity to participate in the study as they were not the only ones who were information-rich individuals (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbin, 2015). The scope of the study could be wider to deeply explore the factors and barriers that lead to the disproportionate representation of rural school graduates in higher education institutions. In addition, the study was gender-biased as seven of the graduates were female out of nine, which did not allow me to compile a demographically representative sample and explore in detail the male perceptions on the disproportionate representation of rural school graduates in higher education institutions. Additionally, there were some difficulties in conducting interviews, such as long commuting and the absence of teachers. Furthermore, according to the topic's sensitivity, some research participants did not share all details and covered up the questions by avoiding the main issues.

Recommendations

Educational administrations should acknowledge that rural school graduates encounter challenges and the factors that lead to low admission scores in entrance exams. Although reforms related to the development of education in rural schools continue, barriers and several difficulties exist in the concept of Azerbaijan rural schools. It has adverse effects on graduates' results and their academic lives. Consequently, the extension of the research in Siyazan and other regions of Azerbaijan may serve to learn the rural school graduates' and educators' perceptions and take further steps regarding the solution to the stated problem.

Developing a collaborative and significant school community may be a successful start of good public schools that can meet the challenges facing rural communities and their students in the 21st century. Furthermore, to be thriving, rural communities and schools may share roles and responsibilities to promote community and enhance positive outcomes for all learners, where community social capital serves the school, while the school stimulates a sense of place among students, regardless of where they choose to dwell at the end (Harmon & Schafft, 2009).

Moreover, this study revealed that the psychological well-being of rural school graduates and self-esteem problems significantly impacted the outcomes and was perceived by rural school graduates to be factors that contributed to scoring low in entrance exams. I assume that it would also be one of the initiatives to organize sessions with school counselors to address rural school graduates' emotional and psychological concerns. Additionally, meetings with the rural school graduates admitted to higher education institutions can motivate those who failed or scored low in entrance exams to overcome the barriers they encounter during the university preparation period and build their self-confidence.

I suppose one of the ways to solve the problem is to mobilize forces. In this sense, we cannot deny the importance of social work in rural areas (Locke & Potter, 2004). Suppose the executive authorities, municipalities, and non-governmental organizations make a joint effort, organize regular meetings with graduates from rural areas and their families. Consequently, taking measures and setting special regulations for truant students can also increase education sustainability in rural areas.

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Appendix A

Interview Consent Form

The researcher's name: Tamella Abdiyeva

Title of the study: Disproportionate representation of rural school graduates in higher education institutions in Azerbaijan

The purpose of the study: To explore the rationale of the disproportionate representation of rural school graduates in higher education institutions and to identify the challenges rural school graduates encounter and factors that lead to low admission scores in entrance exams.

The interview will take approximately one hour. It will be a face-to-face interview and will take place in the selected village. Ethical protection of the participants will be a prior condition for this study. The research principle will be voluntary participation, and the participants' personal information will be protected. The assigned participant numbers would conceal their personal identifying information, and their real names will not be introduced in the documents and consent forms.

By signing this form,

- ✓ I confirm that I have read and understood the information about the study provided by the researcher.
- ✓ I understand that my participation is voluntary and I may refuse to participate or discontinue my participation at any time without penalty.
- ✓ I do not expect to receive any benefit or payment for my participation. I understand that I hold the right to not answer any interview question in case I feel uncomfortable.

- ✓ I understand that any information recorded in the investigation will remain confidential and no information that identifies me will be made publicly available.
- ✓ I have been able to ask any questions I might have, and I understand that I am free to contact the researcher with any questions I may have in the future.
- ✓ I consent to the use of the data in research, publications, sharing, and archiving as explained by the researcher.
- ✓ I consent the interview to be recorded and/or videotapes as part of the study.

This research has been reviewed and approved by ADA University. If you have any further questions or concerns about this study, please contact:

Researcher's name: Tamella Abdiyeva

Address: Ahmadbey Aghaoglu str. 61 Baku, 1008

Tel: +994554750234

E-mail: tamellaabdiyeva@gmail.com

You can also contact the supervisor

Supervisor's name: Dr. Vafa Yunusova

Address: Ahmadbey Aghaoglu str. 61 Baku, 1008

Tel: +99412 437 32 35 ext. 476

E-mail: vyunusova@ada.edu.az

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the above-mentioned research program.

This consent form is necessary for us to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation.

Participant name:

Signature:

Date

Researcher name:

Signature:

Date

Appendix B

School Principal Interview Protocol

The researcher's name: Tamella Abdiyeva

Title of the study: Disproportionate representation of rural school graduates in higher education institutions in Azerbaijan

The purpose of the study: To explore the rationale of the disproportionate representation of rural school graduates in higher education institutions and to identify the challenges rural school graduates encounter and factors that lead to low admission scores in entrance exams.

The interview begins with questions about basic statistics and participants' experience and background. Following are the examples of the questions that will be asked:

- Can you tell me about yourself?
- Which university have you graduated from? What position do you hold, and how many years have you been in this position? Have you been appointed to this position? If yes, how?
- How do you describe your job and responsibilities as a school principal?
- How about your background? Were you a first-generation university student?
- What was your family's role in pursuing higher education?
- What external supports did you get to overcome difficulties and potential barriers (if there were any) in pursuing higher education?
- What is the size of student admission in higher education institutions in your school for this year?

- What are the factors behind the low results of your school's graduates in university entrance exams? Be specific and name at least three factors.
- What are the challenges or barriers for rural school graduates in not pursuing higher education institutions? Be specific and name three of them.
- What is your role as a school principal in preparing your graduates for university admission? How do you motivate your school graduates to pursue higher education?
- Do you support your school graduates who do not want to pursue higher education? If yes, name three types of support that could contribute to their success in pursuing higher education.
- What is the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on rural school graduate admission results?
- What should teachers do to better teach and assist this population?

Müsahibə protokolu

Tədqiqatçının adı: Abdıyeva Tamella

Tədqiqatın adı: Kənd məktəblərindən olan məzunların ali təhsil müəssisələrində qeyri-bərabər təmsil olunması

Tədqiqatın məqsədi: Kənd məktəblərindən olan məzunların ali təhsil müəssisələrində qeyri-bərabər təmsil olunmasının arxasında duran səbəbləri tapmaq və həmin məzunların qəbul imtahanı zamanı üzləşdikləri çətinlikləri və imtahanda aşağı nəticə göstərməsinə təsir edən amilləri müəyyənləşdirmək.

Müsahibə ümumi məlumat və iştirakçılar haqqında ümumi məlumat və onların təcrübə və təhsilini əhatə edəcək suallarla başlayacaq. Müsahibə zamanı aşağıdakı suallar səslənəcək:

- Özünüz haqqında qısa məlumat verərdiniz, zəhmət olmasa.
- Hansı universiteti bitirmisiniz? Neçə müddətdir idarəetmə fəaliyyəti ilə məşğulsunuz?
Bu vəzifəyə necə təyinat almısınız?
- Direktor kimi iş və vəzifələriniz nədən ibarətdir?
- Hansı ali təhsil müəssisəsini bitirmisiniz?
- Ailədə ali təhsili olan neçənci şəxsiniz?
- Təhsilinizi davam etdirməkdə ailəniz rolunu nədən ibarət olub?
- Ali təhsil alacağınıza qərar verərkən mövcud çətinliklər zamanı (əgər var idisə) hər hansı bir dəstək aldınızmı? Hansı formada oldu bu dəstək?
- Bu il neçə məktəbinizdən neçə məzun ali təhsil müəssisələrinə qəbul olub?
- Sizcə, sizin məktəblərdən məzun olmuş şagirdlərin qəbul imtahanlarında aşağı bal toplamasının əsas səbəbləri hansılardır? Üç əsas səbəb deyin.
- Sizcə, kənd məktəblərinin məzunları üçün ali məktəbə qəbul olmağa mane olan əsas çətinliklər nələrdir? Üç səbəb deyin.
- Şagirdləriniz qəbul imtahanlarına hazırlığında sizin rolunun nədən ibarətdir? Şagirdləri təhsillərini davam etdirmək üçün bir lider kimi necə həvəsləndirirsiniz?
- Ali təhsil müəssisələrinə müraciət etməyən şagirdlərə dəstək olursunuzmu? Bunu hansı formada edirsiniz.
- Covid-19 pandemiyasının kənd məktəblərinin qəbul nəticələrinə təsiri nə oldu?
- Sizcə, kənd yerlərində yerləşən məktəblər bu qrupa daxil olan şagirdlərə daha yaxşı təhsil vermək və dəstək olmaq üçün nə edə bilərlər?

Appendix C

School Teacher Interview Protocol

The researcher's name: Tamella Abdiyeva

Title of the study: Disproportionate representation of rural school graduates in higher education institutions in Azerbaijan

The purpose of the study: To explore the rationale of the disproportionate representation of rural school graduates in higher education institutions and to identify the challenges rural school graduates encounter and factors that lead to low admission scores in entrance exams.

The interview begins with questions about basic statistics and participants' experience and background. Following are the examples of the questions that will be asked:

- Can you tell me about yourself?
- Which university have you graduated from? How long have you been teaching? What subject are you teaching?
- How about your background? Were you a first-generation university student?
- What was your family's role in pursuing higher education?
- What external supports did you get to overcome difficulties and potential barriers (if there were any) in pursuing higher education?
- What is the size of student admission in higher education institutions in your school for this year?
- What are the factors behind the low results of your school's graduates in university entrance exams? Be specific and name at least three factors.

- What are the challenges or barriers for rural school graduates in not pursuing higher education institutions? Be specific and name three of them.
- What is your role as a school teacher in preparing your graduates for university admission? How do you motivate your school graduates to pursue higher education?
- Do you support your school graduates who do not want to pursue higher education? If yes, name three types of support that could contribute to their success in pursuing higher education.
- What is the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on rural school graduate admission results?
- What should teachers do to better teach and assist this population?

Müsahibə protokolu

Tədqiqatçının adı: Abdıyeva Tamella

Tədqiqatın adı: Kənd məktəblərindən olan məzunların ali təhsil müəssisələrində qeyri-bərabər təmsil olunması

Tədqiqatın məqsədi: Kənd məktəblərindən olan məzunların ali təhsil müəssisələrində qeyri-bərabər təmsil olunmasının arxasında duran səbəbləri tapmaq və həmin məzunların qəbul imtahanı zamanı üzləşdikləri çətinlikləri və imtahanda aşağı nəticə göstərməsinə təsir edən amilləri müəyyənləşdirmək.

Müsahibə ümumi məlumat və iştirakçılar haqqında ümumi məlumat və onların təcrübə və təhsilini əhatə edəcək suallarla başlayacaq. Müsahibə zamanı aşağıdakı suallar səslənəcək:

- Özünüz haqqında qısa məlumat verərdiniz, zəhmət olmasa.
- Hansı universiteti bitirmisiniz? Neçə müddətdir pedaqoji fəaliyyətlə məşğulsunuz?
Hansı fənni tədris edirsiniz?
- Hansı ali təhsil müəssisəsini bitirmisiniz?
- Ailədə ali təhsili olan neçənci şəxsiniz?
- Təhsilinizi davam etdirməkdə ailəniz rolunu nədən ibarət olub?
- Ali təhsil alacağınıza qərar verərkən mövcud çətinliklər zamanı (əgər var idisə) hər hansı bir dəstək aldınızmı? Hansı formada oldu bu dəstək?
- Bu il neçə məktəbinizdən neçə məzun ali təhsil müəssisələrinə qəbul olub?
- Sizcə, sizin məktəblərdən məzun olmuş şagirdlərin qəbul imtahanlarında aşağı bal toplamasının əsas səbəbləri hansılardır? Üç əsas səbəb deyin.
- Sizcə, kənd məktəblərinin məzunları üçün ali məktəbə qəbul olmağa mane olan əsas çətinliklər nələrdir? Üç səbəb deyin.
- Şagirdləriniz qəbul imtahanlarına hazırlığında sizin rolunun nədən ibarətdir? Şagirdləri təhsillərini davam etdirmək üçün bir müəllim kimi necə həvəsləndirirsiniz?
- Ali təhsil müəssisələrinə müraciət etməyən şagirdlərə dəstək olursunuzmu? Bunu hansı formada edirsiniz.
- Covid-19 pandemiyasının kənd məktəblərinin qəbul nəticələrinə təsiri nə oldu?
- Sizcə, müəllimlər bu qrupa daxil olan şagirdlərə daha yaxşı təhsil vermək və dəstək olmaq üçün nə edə bilərlər?

Appendix D

School Graduate Interview Protocol

The researcher's name: Tamella Abdiyeva

Title of the study: Disproportionate representation of rural school graduates in higher education institutions in Azerbaijan

The purpose of the study: To explore the rationale of the disproportionate representation of rural school graduates in higher education institutions and to identify the challenges rural school graduates encounter and factors that lead to low admission scores in entrance exams.

The interview begins with questions about basic statistics and the participant's experience and background. Following are the examples of the questions that will be asked:

- Can you tell me about yourself? Could you imagine yourself as a university student before the exams? Write down three words that come to mind when you think of university.
- How about your background? Are your family members educated?
- What was your family's role in pursuing higher education?
- What was the role of your school teachers in pursuing higher education?
- Which difficulties have you encountered in pursuing higher education? If yes, can you be more specific and name three of them?
- What was a potential barrier in pursuing higher education?
- What external supports did you get to overcome difficulties and potential barriers in pursuing higher education?

- What are the factors behind the low results of your school's graduates in university entrance exams? Be specific and name at least three factors.
- What are the challenges or barriers for rural school graduates in not pursuing higher education institutions? Be specific and name three of them.
- What personal qualities do you possess that you believe prevented your success?
- What would you advise a school graduate who is not thinking to continue his or her education? What three things would you tell them to do differently?
- What are your plans after graduating from university?

Müsahibə protokolu

Tədqiqatçının adı: Abdıyeva Tamella

Tədqiqatın adı: Kənd məktəblərindən olan məzunların ali təhsil müəssisələrində qeyri-bərabər təmsil olunması

Tədqiqatın məqsədi: Kənd məktəblərindən olan məzunların ali təhsil müəssisələrində qeyri-bərabər təmsil olunmasının arxasında duran səbəbləri tapmaq və həmin məzunların qəbul imtahanı zamanı üzləşdikləri çətinlikləri və imtahanda aşağı nəticə göstərməsinə təsir edən amilləri müəyyənləşdirmək.

Müsahibə ümumi məlumat və iştirakçılar haqqında ümumi məlumat və onların təcrübə və təhsilini əhatə edəcək suallarla başlayacaq. Müsahibə zamanı aşağıdakı suallar səslənəcək:

- Özünüz haqqında qısa məlumat verərdiniz, zəhmət olmasa. Qəbul imtahanlarından əvvəl özünüzü tələbə kimi təsəvvür edirdinizmi? Universitet deyərkən ağılınıza gələn üç şeyi deyin.
- Təhsilinizi davam etdirməyə sizi nə ruhlandırırdı? Bunlardan üçünün adını çəkin.
- Ailədə ali təhsili olan neçənci şəxsiniz?
- Təhsilinizi davam etdirməkdə ailəniz rolunu nədən ibarət olub?
- Təhsilinizi davam etdirməkdə müəllimləriniz rolu nədən ibarət olub?
- Ali məktəbə qəbul zamanı hər hansı çətinliklərlə üzləşmişinizmi? Hansı çətinliklər idi?
- Ali təhsilə hazırlaşarkən qarşıda duran ən böyük maneə nə idi?
- Ali təhsil alacağınıza qərar verərkən mövcud çətinliklər zamanı (əgər var idisə) hər hansı bir dəstək aldınız mı? Hansı formada oldu bu dəstək?
- Sizcə, sizin məktəblərdən məzun olmuş şagirdlərin qəbul imtahanlarında aşağı bal toplamasının əsas səbəbləri hansılardır? Üç əsas səbəb deyin.
- Sizcə, kənd məktəblərinin məzunları üçün ali məktəbə qəbul olmağa mane olan əsas çətinliklər nələrdir? Üç səbəb deyin.
- Necə düşünürsünüz, hansı şəxsi keyfiyyətləriniz uğur qazanmağınıza təsir etdi?
- Təhsilini davam etdirməyən məzunlara nə demək istəyərdiniz? Uğur qazanmaq üçün nələri fərqli etməyi məsləhət görərdiniz?
- Ali təhsilinizi başa vurduqdan sonra planlarınız nədir?

Appendix E

School Graduate Interview Protocol

The researcher's name: Tamella Abdiyeva

Title of the study: Disproportionate representation of rural school graduates in higher education institutions in Azerbaijan

The purpose of the study: To explore the rationale of the disproportionate representation of rural school graduates in higher education institutions and to identify the challenges rural school graduates encounter and factors that lead to low admission scores in entrance exams.

The interview begins with questions about basic statistics and the participant's experience and background. Following are the examples of the questions that will be asked:

- Can you tell me about yourself? Write down three words that come to mind when you think of university.
- How about your background? Were you a first-generation university student?
- How about your background? Do any of your family members have higher education?
- Have you encountered any difficulties in pursuing higher education? If yes, can you be more specific and name three of them?
- What was a potential barrier in pursuing higher education?
- What external supports did you get to overcome difficulties and potential barriers in pursuing higher education?
- What are the factors behind the low results of your school's graduates in university entrance exams? Be specific and name at least three factors.

- What are the challenges or barriers for rural school graduates in not pursuing higher education institutions? Be specific and name three of them.
- What personal qualities do you possess that you believe prevented your success?
- What would you advise a school graduate who is not thinking to continue his or her education? What three things would you tell them to do differently?
- What is your current profession?

Müsahibə protokolu

Tədqiqatçının adı: Abdıyeva Tamella

Tədqiqatın adı: Kənd məktəblərindən olan məzunların ali təhsil müəssisələrində qeyri-bərabər təmsil olunması

Tədqiqatın məqsədi: Kənd məktəblərindən olan məzunların ali təhsil müəssisələrində qeyri-bərabər təmsil olunmasının arxasında duran səbəbləri tapmaq və həmin məzunların qəbul imtahanı zamanı üzləşdikləri çətinlikləri və imtahanda aşağı nəticə göstərməsinə təsir edən amilləri müəyyənləşdirmək.

Müsahibə ümumi məlumat və iştirakçılar haqqında ümumi məlumat və onların təcrübə və təhsilini əhatə edəcək suallarla başlayacaq. Müsahibə zamanı aşağıdakı suallar səslənəcək:

- Özünüz haqqında qısa məlumat verərdiniz, zəhmət olmasa. Universitet deyərkən ağılınıza gələn üç şeyi deyiniz.
- Ailə üzvlərinizdən ali təhsili olan varmı?

- Ali məktəbə qəbul zamanı hər hansı çətinliklərlə üzləşdiniz? Bunlar hansı çətinliklər idi?
- Ali təhsilə hazırlaşarkən qarşıda duran ən böyük maneə nə idi?
- Ali təhsil alacağınıza qərar verərkən mövcud çətinliklər zamanı (əgər var idisə) hər hansı bir dəstək aldınız mı? Hansı formada oldu bu dəstək?
- Sizcə, sizin məktəblərdən məzun olmuş şagirdlərin qəbul imtahanlarında aşağı bal toplamasının əsas səbəbləri hansılardır? Üç əsas səbəb deyin.
- Sizcə, kənd məktəblərinin məzunları üçün ali məktəbə qəbul olmağa mane olan əsas çətinliklər nələrdir? Üç səbəb deyin.
- Necə düşünürsünüz, hansı şəxsi keyfiyyətləriniz uğur qazanmağınıza mane oldu?
- Təhsilini davam etdirməyən məzunlara nə demək istəyərdiniz? Uğur qazanmaq üçün nələri fərqli etməyi məsləhət görərdiniz?
- Hal-hazırda hansı peşə, hansı işlə məşğulsunuz?

Appendix F

The permission letter

No _____ “ ____ ” _____ 2021-ci il

To the principal of Siyazan district village secondary school

Safarov Namik Shahbala

Dear Shahbala muallim,

We want to inform you that the final research work (Disproportionate representation of rural school graduates in higher education institutions in Azerbaijan) conducted by Abdiyeva Tamella Hamlet, a second-year student of ADA University's MAEM 2021 Master's Program in Education Management, requires interviews with graduates, principals, and teachers of three rural schools in Siyazan. The purpose of the interview is to find out the reasons behind the disproportionate representation of graduates from rural schools in higher education institutions and identify the difficulties these graduates face during the entrance exam and the factors that affect their low results in the entrance exam.

For this purpose, we ask you to cooperate with us to conduct research. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Saida Nabiyeva

Program director

İcazə məktubu

No _____

“ _____ ” _____ 2021-ci il

Siyəzən rayonu kənd tam orta məktəbin direktoru

Səfərov Namik Şahbala oğluna

Hörmətli Namik müəllim,

Nəzərinizə çatdırmaq istərdik ki, ADA Universitetinin MAEM 2021 “Təhsilin İdarəedilməsi” ixtisası üzrə magistr proqramı ikinci kurs tələbəsi Abdiyeva Tamella Hamlet qızının apardığı yekun tədqiqat işi üçün (Disproportionate representation of rural school graduates in higher education institutions in Azerbaijan/Kənd və şəhərətrafi məktəblərdən olan məzunların ali təhsil müəssisələrində qeyri-bərabər təmsil olunması) Siyəzən rayonunun nəzərdə tutulmuş üç kənd məktəbinin məzunları, direktoru və müəllim heyəti ilə müsahibə keçirilməsi tələb olunur. Müsahibənin məqsədi kənd və şəhərətrafi məktəblərdən olan məzunların ali təhsil müəssisələrində qeyri-bərabər təmsil olunmasının arxasında duran səbəbləri tapmaq və həmin məzunların qəbul imtahanı zamanı üzləşdikləri çətinlikləri və imtahanda aşağı nəticə göstərməsinə təsir edən amilləri müəyyənləşdirməkdir.

Bu məqsədlə tədqiqatın aparılması üçün şəraitin yaradılmasını Sizdən xahiş edirik.

Əməkdaşlığa görə təşəkkürümüzü bildiririk.

Hörmətlə,

Səidə Nəbiyeva

Proqram direktoru