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**The male teacher shortage in secondary public schools in Azerbaijan:
Why some males work in public schools while most do not choose teaching
as a career path?**

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and understand the factors that lead to the male teacher shortage along with the factors that motivate males to become teachers in public schools in Azerbaijan. This study addressed what affected men's career decisions, what would dissuade men from becoming secondary school teachers, and how important is it to have male teachers in secondary public schools. A semi-structured approach was employed to interview 16 male, 20 female teachers, 4 education experts, 2 sociologists, a psychologist, 4 school principals and 10 male university students studying teaching in an effort to understand the shortage of male teachers. Results indicated that despite male teachers have a strong desire and are passionate to work as teachers in secondary public schools, there are factors such as *diminished prestige of teaching, low salary, and feminization of the profession* that deter men from pursuing a career in teaching. Further, serving as a male role model for students was significant, since they considered filling the void left by absentee fathers. This study provided a review of existing literature, the results of interview, responses to research questions, discussed limitations, and made recommendations for further research.

Keywords: shortage, male teachers, secondary public schools, gender imbalance, career choice, perceptions.

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Chapter 1

1. Introduction

In every chapter of history and society, the varieties of professions have been considered to belong to specifically to one gender. Erden et al. (2011) have emphasized that many jobs have been separated along gender lines from the earliest gender division of labor in ancient cultures, defining certain occupations as women's and others men's jobs. Unlike men, duties such as household and childcare – which are associated with unpaid working practices – continue to be considered feminine jobs. Although nowadays men and women are participating in non-traditional occupations such as military and bus driving while men work as nurses and in the childcare sector, teaching is still commonly accepted as women's work by many societies (Cameron, 2001; Sandberg & Pramling-Samuelsson, 2005; Sumsion, 2005). OECD (2017) in “Education Indicators in Focus” reported that teaching is a highly gendered profession where female teachers are over two-thirds of the total numbers of teachers from pre-primary to secondary education on average across OECD countries. According to the Ministry of National Education Statistics (2011), only 7% of preschool teachers are males, compared to 6% in Sweden (Sandberg & Pramling-Samuelsson, 2005), 3% in the United States (The Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010), and less than 1% in New Zealand (Jones, 2009). Apart from this, among European countries, Norway had the highest rate of male preschool teachers with 9% (Peeters, 2007). Rentzou (2011) supported the idea that across most countries gender imbalance is seen to be identical, except in the Nordic countries. Male teachers' shortage did not pass by post-Soviet countries and the shortage is significantly remarkable in secondary schools in Azerbaijan as well. The imbalance among genders is particularly striking in post-Soviet countries such as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and the Russian Federation where approximately four out of five teachers are females (OECD, 2017). OECD (2017) reported in “*Gender distribution of teachers*” that in Latvia 83% Lithuania 81%

Turkey 55 % , and Russia 73 % of female teachers work in secondary public schools. Besides that, in the Statistical yearbook, the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2021) announced that 124,268 female teachers out of 153,208 teaching staff worked in general educational institutions in 2020 namely 81% of the teachers were females. The Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan (2021) also indicated that in 2000 110,757 teachers were female out of 161,492, in 2005 the number increased up to 122,385 out of 171,788 and in 2015 there were 127,479 female teachers out of 172,579 teaching staff. These numbers show that the percentage of female teachers is increasing which leads the gap between male and female teachers in its turn increase as well. Taking into account the shortage of male teachers, students have limited choice of different role models in secondary public schools in Azerbaijan. Tokić (2018) stated that men and women have distinct personalities, and children can only get the advantages of growing up with two distinct behavioral models. She added that recent studies suggest father role is very important in children's lives, for this reason, children need to see both gender during their education life (Yogman & Garfield, 2016; Carrillo et al., 2016; Leon et al. , 2016). Similarly, it is indicated in the scholarly work of Islami (2013) that the presence of male teachers in secondary schools is significant for children's psychological development stage and attitudes. However, she found no significant effect of male teachers on academic achievement of the children (Islami, 2013). This study focused on determining what factors influenced male teachers' shortage in secondary public schools in Azerbaijan and intends to increase awareness of this topic.

1.1 Definition of Terms

For a better understanding of this study, the following terms such as “general secondary school”, “teacher” and “feminization” are defined. The terms men –male, women – female are interchangeably used in this paper. Man and woman are referred to the biological

sex of an individual where male and female are referred to the product of societal structure (Turan et al., 2011).

General Secondary Schools are defined to cover from fifth to ninth grade in Article 11.2.3 on Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on education (Law on Education, 2009).

Educators (teachers) according to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on general education in Article 21.0.3, is defined as pedagogical staff who are engaged in pedagogical activities in general education institutions; such as teachers, consultants, educators, teacher assistants, pre-service training leaders (Law on Education, 2009).

Feminization is defined as the incorporation of women into a group or profession that was previously dominated by men, as well as a shift in gender norms (Patrick, 2009).

1.2 Significance of the Study

According to State Statistical Committee (2020-2021) of Azerbaijan in educational institutions namely preprimary, primary and secondary schools 26,372 out of 29,045 males work in secondary schools. In terms of female teachers, 86,525 out of 141,381 work in secondary state schools. Furthermore, Gadimova (2013) mentioned that 70 percent females sought jobs in secondary schools in 2013, however, in terms of males the number double decreased. She reported that having both male and female teachers contributes to students' gender knowledge; hence, it is significant to have nearly equal number of male and female teachers in secondary schools.

Additionally, Martino (2015) reported the importance of male teachers in secondary schools and emphasized having males was particularly important as they allow students to observe males who are non-violent and whose interactions with female teachers and students are positive. Furthermore, Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) also reported having male teachers in secondary schools was not only

significant for students to observe both gender but also having diverse gender can enhance decision-making processes about students, and drive positive outcomes.

Both men and women play a significant role in strengthening educational institutions when they become teachers. Nnaemeka (2018) suggested that the absence of male teachers is irreplaceable since they affect students emotionally, intellectually, socially, and behaviorally which cannot even be replaced by any well-intentioned mentoring programs. It is important to note that a certain percentage of the children come from single-parent families, were brought up by their mothers and not having the opportunity to study male role models. Nnaemeka (2018) added that male and female teachers behave differently and students react to these behaviors and take them as role models.

In Azerbaijan, raising child and care are seen as the primary responsibility of women (Wardle, 2004). Greece is also included among countries such as Azerbaijan, where women are the ones who take care of the responsibility of raising children, both at home and in collective settings (Wardle, 2004). Erden et al. (2011, as cited in Cameron, 2001; Haris & Barnes, 2009) believe that involving males to take an active part in teaching in secondary education will serve students to study different role models. Moreover, male teachers may also serve as excellent role models for healthy gender identity and societal gender problems (Cameron, 2001). A more comprehensive description can be found by Mammadova (2021) indicating that each of the genders chooses a person from the same sex to realize the identification process, which means that girls at school see their female teachers as a role model and get some feminine characteristics from them, however, for boys this opportunity is not very high in secondary public schools in Azerbaijan. Martin and Ruble (2004) stated that gender identity develops as children realize that they belong to one gender group and choose the person as a role model to develop the masculine and feminine sides inside of them. As

stated above from the younger ages, in primary and secondary public schools, boys mostly observe their female teachers and acquire the pattern of feminine characteristics which may lead to some psychological problems in their mental development. Meanwhile, it is emphasized by Davison & Nelson (2011) and Martino (2008) that an increased number of male teachers might serve as role models for male students, by demonstrating that teaching is a significant and possibly rewarding career choice (Davison & Nelson, 2011; Martino, 2008).

Furthermore, the perception of teaching as a feminine occupation results in a lesser professional prestige than other occupations (Cushman, 2008; Jones, 2007b; Sargent, 2000). Islami (2013) indicated that due to the women's rapidly dominating teaching profession at secondary schools, fewer males are considering to become teacher. Therefore, males do not tend to choose teaching due to its low salary and prestige (Wardle, 2003). Moreover, males are mostly not supported by their surroundings such as families, friends when they choose to become teachers (Cooney & Bitter, 2001; Wardle, 2003).

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the factors that affect males in their decision whether or not to become secondary school teachers in public schools of Azerbaijan. By involving the males who already chose the teaching as a profession and males who are planning to change their teaching career, this study helps to understand the factors that deter and motivate males to become a secondary school teacher. This can potentially help to design policies to decrease the male teacher shortage. Additionally, the research aims to find out what factors lead males to choose teaching as a profession in public schools. This helped to create a deeper understanding regarding the factors that can be taken into account to halter the male teacher shortage. Moreover, this study will help to increase awareness of male teachers' shortage in secondary public schools in Azerbaijan and the importance of decreasing this shortage.

This study allowed the perceptions to be heard lying behind the shortage of male teachers through interviews with male, female teachers, education experts and university students studying teaching.

There is limited information and study that has been done in Azerbaijani context which explores both reasons and consequences of the shortage of male teachers in secondary public schools of Azerbaijan. For this reason, this study can add to literature and can be used to decrease the male teacher shortage in secondary public schools.

1.4 Research Question

Two main questions guided this study to get a deeper understanding of the shortage of male teachers in secondary public schools in Azerbaijan. To ascertain existing factors behind the shortage of male teachers in secondary education these questions were focused to answer:

Research Question 1: According to the perception of the stakeholders why some males do not want to continue their career path as secondary public school teachers? What are intrinsic and extrinsic factors that led them make this decision?

Research Question 2: According to the perception of the participants why do some males choose to become secondary public school teachers?

The first research question helped the researcher to understand the male shortage of secondary school teachers from the point of view of the male teachers/students who are planning to change their career path. These participants could truly show the factors that affected them to change their career. These factors can be taken into account to decrease the shortage.

The second research question guided the researcher to understand the factors that led male teachers to choose this profession and what kind of hardships they faced after this decision. Along with the main research questions, the participants of the study were asked to mention

their perception about the importance of having male teachers in the public schools. This emphasized the importance of this study and why there is need to decrease the gap.

Chapter 2

2. Literature Review

For the objectives of this study, this chapter provided a review of the literature on the shortage of male teachers. Nevertheless, literature in the Azerbaijani context does not provide any research regarding the shortage of male teachers, studies conducted in post-Soviet and western countries filled this void. Some major factors were highlighted such as the *feminization of the teaching profession, low prestige, and salary of teaching, cultural norms, and differences in gender* while choosing teaching as a profession. Cushman (2005) shared in his work that “While the reasons for the decline in the number of males enrolling teacher education are complex and multi-faceted, four factors which have been identified as contributing to the decline are experiences and attitudes related to the status, salary, working in a predominantly female environment” (p.227). This chapter also included important information, such as the historical context of the shortage of male teachers which in its turn focused on the changes in education after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

2.1 General Background of the Shortage of Male Teachers

The shortage of male teachers was explained by (Browne, 1999) in the “Evolution theory” that females are more caring and nurturing by nature hence they choose this profession correspondingly more than males. Male teachers’ shortage is a widespread phenomenon across post-Soviet and European countries. OECD (2021) showed in “Distribution of teachers in Russia by gender and education stage” only 18 percent of males worked as secondary school teachers. It should also be noted that after the collapse of the Soviet Union the preferences of people in the society changed and “*the status of teaching started to erode in the*

Caucasus and Central Asia as evidenced in such indicators as a teacher shortage, the feminization of the profession” (Silova, 2009,366).

2.2 Historic Overview

During the post-Soviet transformation period, the continuous fall of education expenses across the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia was observed due to the decline in national incomes, prioritization of shifting budgets, and the shortage of the central subsidies (Silova, 2009). She indicated “*By 2006, public education spending as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) remained below the OECD average (4-6%) in most countries of the region. For instance, public expenditure on education constituted 3% of GDP in Georgia and 2.7% of GDP in both Azerbaijan and Armenia. In Central Asia, public expenditure on education constituted 2.3% of GDP in Kazakhstan, 3.4% in Tajikistan, and 4.2% in Kyrgyzstan*” (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2009, p367). Teachers' pay has decreased, their social position has deteriorated, and their authority has eroded as a result of the long-term drop in public education funding (Silova et al, 2006; Silova, 2009). For solving this issue, the initiative was done by the UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2005 on education quality which recognized the centrality of teachers in achieving the (EFA) goals and also discussed how to support teachers during this process. The role of teachers in education has become increasingly recognized internationally with a number of international declarations recognizing the importance of the teaching profession. Silova (2009) added that the rising number of international declarations acknowledging the significance of teachers in education development was also one of the initiatives to increase the number of teachers (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2005, 2009; UNESCO, 2005; UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2006). Despite all these initiative, the interest for teaching profession declined and there is still shortage of male teachers in public schools in many countries.

The low salary was another reason for the mostly decreased number of males in enrollment in teaching position. Both male and female teachers left the teaching position for better-paying jobs because of the declining economic, social and professional status of teachers (Silova, 2009). Additionally, as the males are the main breadwinners in many families, the number of males choosing and continuing teaching was getting lower which ended in shortage (Silova 2006,2009). She presented that particularly, foreign language, information and communication technology (ICT) teachers quit their jobs to work in the private sectors. In 2006, teacher' salary in the Caucasus and Central Asia were much lower than the national salary average (Silova, 2009). Specifically in Kyrgyzstan teachers' wages accounted for 62 percent of the national average income and 53 percent in Azerbaijan (Steiner-Khamsi et al, 2008). Silova (2009) emphasized in 2006 in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, teacher salaries were really below the minimum subsistence level.

All the factors mentioned - declining salaries, limited financial resources, expanded job opportunities with high salaries, and declining the status of the teaching position, led finally to the diminished enthusiasm and morale among the existing and upcoming teaching force. More importantly, the situation got so critical in Kyrgyzstan that the government declared it a "pedagogical cadre crisis making it one of the education sector's top priorities (Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, Department of Strategic and Analytic Work, 2008).

2.3 Contributing factors

The literature about the male shortage mentions a set of contributing factors that lead to decrease in the number of the male teachers. These factors can be summarized to 4 main categories. The next section of this paper mentions those 4 main factors.

2.3.1 Cultural norms

According to Inanc & Ustunsoz (1998), gender is a natural aspect of social life that is utilized in social classification and divides men and women into two divisions. Gender roles

impose some social roles and responsibilities on the biological differences between the sexes and expand the scope of these differences in the cultural context. Ongen & Aytac (2013) stated that gender differences are established by societal norms and have an impact not only on women and men's everyday lives but also on their choices of career as well. Alberts et al. (2003) reported career choice to be one of the main aims of students who graduate school. Moreover, the family factor is also included among cultural norms in terms of the career choice of a child (Ingersoll, 2001; Menter et al., 2002). Influence may come from teachers and peers, however, parents are considered to be one of the key sources. Qashamoghlu (2021) emphasized parents in Azerbaijan consider schools to be one of the holy places, hence the biggest desire of theirs is their daughter, sister, daughter-in-law, and wife to be a teacher and work as a primary or secondary school teachers. Apart from this, most families in Azerbaijan want the “female” members of the family to work at schools since they do not have fixed schedules such as working from 8:00 to 18:00. Karimova (n.d, p.16) stated that “*women after childbirth are expected by society to care of the children, therefore they can't fully implement their career potential and have to work in part-time jobs below their skill and with little promotion opportunity*”. Boys growing up in such a culture and later continuing at school where male teachers are in shortage will regard teaching as a female profession.

2.3.2 Low Prestige and Low Salary of Teaching

As stated above, expanded new job opportunities with high salaries gradually diminished the interest in teaching profession (Silova, 2009). The highest paid jobs both for women and men in Azerbaijan are considered to be mining and finance and the lowest paid are in education, social work (Karimova, n.d). While high-scoring students chose socially attractive professions such as engineering, marketing, etc., on the other hand, students with low scores chose teaching as a profession with the hope to get admission to the university. One of the studies conducted by Beyazkurk (2006) revealed that even male students with low scores on university entrance exams choose preschool or secondary school teaching in Turkey

in order to get at least admission to the university. She added that, even though choosing teaching as a profession at the university with a low score, male students in most cases do not continue their career in this field. Further, Silova (2009) emphasized that the increased rate of low-scoring students choosing teaching led to the declining prestige of this profession. In the scholarly study of hers that was conducted in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, she focused on comparing and contrasting university admission scores of students among qualifications. The result of students' university admission scores by type of institution from 1996 up to 2007 revealed that newly enrolled students in pre-service teacher education institutions scored perpetually lower compared to their counterparts in other higher education institutions. Furthermore, except for Azerbaijani State Pedagogical University, the approximate admission scores of students were lower than 300s in pre-service teacher education institutions, slightly higher than the minimal pass criterion of 250 points. Besides that, from 1996 to 2007 average admission scores for almost all universities seemed to increase, but pre-service teacher education scores remained continuously low. Even though student scored in Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University doubled from 200 to 400 in 2007, the average of entrance score for teaching profession continued to be significantly below than other higher education institutions, including the Academy of Public Administration (with an average student admission score of over 600 points), Azerbaijan Medical University (over 500 points) and Azerbaijan University of Languages (almost 500 points). She concluded that while students with low scores were accepted for teacher education programs in Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University or regional branches of Azerbaijan Teachers Institute, however, Law, International Relations, and Management were among the high-demand study programs with average entrance scores usually exceeding 600 points.

In terms of salary, most of the men are considered to be the financial provider of their families hence they tend to choose high- paid professions. Berge (2004) cited that low salary

is a hindrance for males who want to pursue teaching as a profession. Silova (2007) studied the impact of lowering teacher pay for both female and male teachers. As females usually don't have the burden to support their families or provide food, the salary didn't bother them a lot. However, men are in most cases and countries are supposed to provide their family with food and other basic needs, they have to earn as much as possible in order not to face any troubles. She added that in Azerbaijan, a man is supposed to be the family's leader and supply them with almost everything; hence males choosing teaching with a low salary does not satisfy them.

2.3.3 Differences in Gender

In certain ways, the notion of sex varies from the concept and the usage of gender. It is so well explained by Turan et al. (2011) that sex is an intrinsic property, while social gender emerges as a product of social structure. Societal notions define women to be caring and nurturing, while males seek masculine roles in the professions they choose. Bittner and Cooney (2003) discussed through qualitative research how they can increase both gender role models at secondary schools by recruiting male teachers. They also discussed the institutional barriers that exist within the women-dominated secondary education profession. They emphasized a gender-balanced classroom environment, male and female role figures are essential for both students and teachers. Bittner and Cooney (2003) concluded by agreeing that administrators, teachers, parents, and the community members who wish to bring about a change in the primary and secondary education profession from a women-dominated field to one that has more gender balance could work together to make meaningful change that positively influences the lives of children. For more balance among male and female teachers, gender equity is required at school, especially in secondary education. Diverse backgrounds and experiences will allow males to demonstrate masculine behavior to students who are not used to seeing it (Benton DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Brookhart & Loadman, 1996; Davison & Nelson, 2011). Although there is no obvious link between gender balance and student

accomplishment, according to Bricheno and Thornton (2002), gender balance should still be a goal for students to have both male and female role models to study. Although gender balance in education should be a goal, few researches on gender balance in secondary schools have been conducted (Bricheno & Thornton, 2002; Drudy, 2008).

The idea that same-gender teachers may serve as good role models for students and influence their success has been researched, with mixed findings, especially at the secondary school level. Dee (2007) found that when secondary school students were partnered with instructors of the same gender, student success, teacher evaluations of student performance, and student involvement all increased considerably.

Some students are lacking male role model or dominance at home, or in their relationships outside of the school. They are lacking, for instance, an adult male that they can relate to, communicate with, or perhaps even try to become like (Cushman, 2005). He strongly emphasized that, male teachers should be praised and encouraged, instead of being assigned challenging discipline problems and obligations to fill the gap left by the absence of fathers.

Men avoid working at school and also with young students for some external reasons which one of them is that males are not accepted by many people as caregivers. It is commonly accepted by the eastern and western societies that female teachers are nurturers and can have physical contact (hugging, stroking) with young students. However, the situation changes totally when it comes to male teachers. The "no-touch" rule, in which males are hesitant to have physical contact with young children for fear of false predatory allegations, is an example of the differing standards and expectations between males and females in teaching Blount (2000). However, the same thoughts do not apply to women (Cushman, 2005).

2.3.4 Feminization of the Teaching Profession

The teaching profession is thought to be dominated by females in secondary and primary schools. Browne (1999) stated that many people believe educating young children is

the women's job and that men are not naturally suited to caring and nurturing tasks. Also, Gadimova (2013) reported that teaching and being a doctor are the most common professions among women in Azerbaijan where it is thought care is more needed, whereas men do not tend to choose teaching because of the high rate of females in secondary schools in Azerbaijan. Depending on the women fulfilling the nurturing tasks, low salaries and expanded job opportunities led males to seek jobs outside of school that led to the increase of female teachers which in the end resulted in a notion that teaching only belongs to women (Silova, 2009). She mentioned that some countries retained the high status of the teaching profession (for instance, Finland, Ireland, and South Korea), but most countries reported a growing percentage of the feminization of the teaching profession (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2005).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

It is important to have a theoretical framework or ideas on the factors leading to the shortage of male teachers. In this section of the study, the researcher provided the theoretical framework, which is based on the role of the personal and contextual elements and the stages in career choice.

Choosing a profession is a significant life choice that most individuals struggle with. As established by Kingsley Browne (1998), there is an assumption that males are physiologically appropriate for some specific professions that we perceive as masculine and females are biologically fit for some others which are perceived as feminine professions. Then a question arises if the career choice can be anticipated based on a person's biology, then why in our daily life do we see female bus drivers, police officers, and male nurses or teacher assistants? The question can be answered by taking a near look at career choice development explained by Linda Gottfredson's (1981; 2002) Theory of Circumscription, Compromise, and Self-Creation which describes the stages that each of the children goes through when deciding

on a career choice. Moreover, the theory emphasizes how individuals narrow down their career choice while going through the stages which are elaborated upon below.

Apart from this, Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) developed by Robert Lent (1994), Steven Brown (2000), and Gail Hackett (2002) also support the above-mentioned theory. Further, SCCT evaluates personal and contextual elements like gender, social support, and obstacles interact with self-efficacy, expected outcomes, and objectives that affect the career choices of individuals.. The study explored male teachers' career choice by using SCCT theory and the intrinsic and extrinsic factors such as gender, obstacles were analyzed and clarified in this study. Both theories shed light on what intrinsic and extrinsic factors deter males from choosing teaching as a profession The importance of each theory for the specific objective of this study is discussed further down. Linda Gottfredson's (1981; 2002) Theory of Circumscription and Compromise, Self-Creation explains the steps of career choices in young people. According to Gottfredson's (1981; 2002), the stages of circumscription are as mentioned:

Stage 1: Size and power orientation (age 3-5). At this age, children start to group adults with their occupational roles and imagine becoming an adult one day.

Stage 2: Orientation to sex roles (ages 6-8). Children already start to analyze and match the role of sexes and match jobs with their gender identity. Particularly, *stage 2* guided this study on how gender is important in the career choice of an individual.

Stage 3: Social values orientation (ages 9-13). Children at this age are able to observe in more abstract ways and begin to notice social status (e.g., education, money, clique membership) as well as sex type. At this age, children start to differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable jobs with low and high status.

Stage 4: Orientation to one's own internal, distinct self (14+ years old). At this age, children start to understand their uniqueness and are capable of sorting out their interests,

abilities, personalities and unacceptable career options. This is the stage where they realize some of their desired jobs yet they may know that those jobs are not available. According to Gottfredson (1981;2002), this may lead to Compromise where the individual is ready to sacrifice the desired and suitable roles to the easily accessible ones. Besides that, Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) that was developed by Robert Lent (1994), Steven Brown (2000), and Gail Hackett (2002) covers 3 aspects that are *development of career interests, the making of career choices, and obtaining career success*. SCCT explores gender, social support, and obstacles interact with self-efficacy, expected outcome, and objectives and it also indicates when people are capable of doing something, have environmental support and they get interested in and pursue careers that are compatible with their self-efficacy beliefs. Lent (1994), Brown (2000), and Hackett (2002) stated that extrinsic (environmental) factors such as family pressures, culture, economy, accessible opportunities, and education play a noteworthy role for shaping the career choice. For instance, people get involved in various ranges of activities at school, home and in their communities that are gender- specific. These activities are believed to serve as the foundation for cultural norms. Throughout these activities young people develop their self-efficacy which will lead them to discover their strengths and weaknesses. To conclude the theory, SCCT proposes that whenever environmental factors are opportune the interests of the person it might predict the career choices. However, if it is the opposite then the individual's interest it might be rased and compromised since career choice is limited to practical or culturally acceptable options.

A research done by Tokic (2018) explored male students enrolled at Undergraduate preschool education in Osijek and Slavonski Brod, their motivation and viewpoint on teaching profession. First, second and third year male students enrolled participated in the research and were interviewed in order to collect data. The result of the research showed four clusters of male students' motivation on teaching profession which were (1)students' internal and

external environment(2) teaching as a calling; (3) positive reputation of the profession; and (4) male preschool teacher as a father figure. To conclude, the study found out male students were motivated for teaching since some of them dropped out from their previous qualification and enrolled at the Faculty of Education to become school teachers. Furthermore, male students also reported that the support from their family, surroundings were as important as their internal motivation.

Another study was conducted by Erden et al. (2011) in Turkey, among preschool male teachers to explore why not many males worked in childcare settings such as preprimary, primary or secondary schools. The researchers emphasized although teaching is traditionally considered to be a female profession, males entering pre-school settings in this study consciously decided to become teachers. Furthermore, male teachers seemed to replace the father figure for some students who come from single parent families.

All in all, literature on male teacher shortage includes information about the factors that lead to the shortage and most research mentioned in this paper used survey and interviews with male teachers and students to deeply analyze the shortage. However, there is no literature on the case of Azerbaijan and this paper will contribute to literature by interviewing participants involved in education and teaching. The results of this paper can show the perception of the participants on the male teacher shortage in public schools of Azerbaijan.

Chapter 3

3. Research Methodology

As it was reflected in the previous chapter cultural norms, financial and even biological factors may influence the decision of males while choosing teaching as a profession. For finding out the factors that affect males choose teaching, as well as the factors that lead males to change their career path, the qualitative research approach was used in this paper. The qualitative design is the data that ensures a greater grasp of a study problem and

analyzes it in depth (Creswell, 2012). Moreover, Eisner (1998) added by explaining, “it is through qualitative inquiry, the intelligent apprehension of the qualitative world, that we make sense” (p.21). Further, words from interviews, written texts are used to collect data in qualitative research (Remler & Ryzin, 2015; Barun & Clark, 2013). Through a qualitative approach for collecting primary data, this study adopted an exploratory research design in order to explore the factors leading to the shortage of male teachers in secondary public schools in Azerbaijan. For completing this qualitative study, the interviews were conducted. The participants were the male teachers working in public secondary schools and the university students that study teaching in one of universities in Azerbaijan. The first group (male teachers) gave insight about the hardships they faced as a teacher and as well as what factors motivated them to become a teacher. The second group (university students) gave insight on whether or not they are planning to continue their career path in teaching. Those who are not willing to become teachers showed the factors that hinder males to choose teaching as a profession. Both of these groups gave idea about the factors leading to the male shortage in secondary public schools of Azerbaijan. For additional information and having broader perception about the male teacher shortage, additionally education experts, school principals, female coworkers of male teachers, sociologists, and psychologist were interviewed.

Moreover, the interpretivist paradigm -guided the researcher to develop thoughts and claims about male teachers' and university student`s approach to this shortage, since it focuses on using qualitative methods to identify multiple values and views on the issue (Mertens, 2012). Since any research about the shortage of male teachers in secondary schools in Azerbaijan does not exist in the local context this study attempted to broaden the viewpoint and provided a basis for future research in this area.

3.1 Research Site

Due to limited timeline and the resources the study focused on the male shortage only in schools located in Baku. The factors such as the access to the targeted population, the availability of teachers and school principals were considered. For interviewing the male teachers and other participants in public schools, the ADA University guided through for getting permission. Due to the agreement of the Baku City Education Department with ADA University, the schools were accessed easily by the researcher. As the number of schools who agreed to the interview was limited, four schools were chosen because of their proximity and the number of their teaching staff with the help of *non-random sampling* (Patton, 1990). For the second part of the interview, the students from Pedagogical University of Azerbaijan were contacted. The person that the researcher knows personally contacted with the other last year students of the university with the help of snowball sampling (Cresswell, 2012). Ten last year students agreed to participate in the study. The students were interviewed during the first weeks of July. The consent form (See Appendix C) was signed by all the participants before the interview to ensure that everything is legal.

4. Data Collection

Creswell et al. (2007) described study design as approaches to research that involve developing research questions and methods for collecting, analyzing, and reporting findings. The current study used an interview to explore and understand participants' perceptions of the shortage of male teachers in secondary public schools. In education, the most frequent method of data collection is said to be interviews (Brinkmann, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Further, Brinkmann (2018) defined the interview as a face-to-face verbal interaction in which the researcher seeks to learn about the beliefs or opinions of an interviewee. Also, interviews can contribute to the collection of useful information about the study participants' personal experiences and their meanings (Brinkmann, 2018).

To answer the research questions of this study, the researcher chose to conduct interviews with education experts, two sociologists, a psychologist, secondary school male and female teachers, school principals, and male university students. The sampling of the data collection can easily be called as *purposeful sampling* as it guided the researcher to select the sites with larger number of teachers and experts (Patton, 1990).

Given the nature of this research, the main *target populations* were both male teachers and male students. The other participants were selected for creating broader understanding about the male teacher shortage. The researcher decided on the sample size consisting of 5 male teachers from each 4 different secondary schools located particularly in Baku for the convenience of the researcher. The female teachers and the school principals in the same schools also participated in the study. In terms of male students, due to the time limitation the researcher only included the students that were available to have online interview. Ten male students participated in the study. Moreover, for having broader understanding about the male teacher shortage in schools, my supervisor advised me to talk to education experts, psychologists, and sociologists. The supervisor provided me with the contact of the 5 education experts and one sociologist that works at ADA University that he believed to have information regarding the male teacher shortage. Additionally, another sociologist that works at Azerbaijan Pedagogical University also participated in the study. The researcher contacted the psychologist who works and conducts researches in Baku State University to participate in the study.

In order to ensure the credibility of the research, data triangulation and member checking were used. For *data triangulation*, the notes taken from the interviews with male/female teachers, school principals, five education experts, and findings from focus groups were used (Patton, 1990).

Semi-structured interviews were adopted to fit the research design and purpose since the researcher asked some pop-up questions to get additional information during the interview with education experts (Creswell, 2012). Further, semi-structured interviews also provided more control over the interview's direction since they guided the research in this study to identify and develop key issues raised by the research participants (Brinkmann, 2018).

The researcher started by interviewing five education experts, two sociologists, and a psychologist to get their views and answers on the shortage of secondary school male teachers through interview questions. The interviews with education experts were conducted online on a convenient social platform both for the researcher and the participants. For the next step, school principals - two males and two females were interviewed on-site (in the school where they work) to get deeper information about the male teacher shortage in secondary schools. The research was followed by interviewing 5 male and 5 female teachers on-site from each chosen school. However, in two of the schools, the total number of male teacher participants was 8 due to the shortage of male teachers in those selected schools. Five available male and female teachers were able to participate were put in 2 separate focus groups. Similarly, in the other school, 2 focus groups were created and one of them consisted of male teachers and the other one female teachers. Focus groups were guided to elicit shared understanding from a group of people as well as particular viewpoints from individuals (Creswell, 2012). In terms of expressing their thoughts, experiences without feeling any pressure from the opposite gender in the focus groups males and females were not mixed by the researcher, although the clash of ideas would be useful in data interpretation (Creswell, 2012).

For the interview with the university students, specifically only male students were asked to participate in the study. The different set of interview questions were created for male students as they are potential workers and they have a chance to work in other sectors as well. Their thoughts about the teaching and the factors that they mentioned regarding why

they do not choose teaching as a career path were very useful to understand the male teacher shortage in Azerbaijan. The students had limited time as they were last year students in university and for this reason, no focus groups were created. All the participants were interviewed online and separately.

4.1 Trustworthiness

An interview protocol was developed for the teachers and education experts (see Appendix A) that consisted of the questions which guided the researcher through to gather information from the participants regarding the shortage of male teachers in secondary public schools. For the male university students, a different set of questions were developed (see Appendix B). Interview questions and a *consent form* were developed and emailed with detailed information about the purpose and type of the research for all the experts to make sure that they are aware of each of the steps of the research (Cresswell, 2012). Each of the interviews was recorded with the agreement of the interviewees and later it was translated and transcribed (Cresswell, 2012). Furthermore, each of the participants was informed that withdrawal from the research can happen any time they want, and the anonymity of the participants was ensured (Cresswell, 2012). All the interviews with participants lasted approximately up to 40-45 minutes.

4.2 Limitation of the Study

Limitations are an inevitable part of any research. Few limitations needed to be addressed while considering this study. An initial limitation of the study was in the sample size of male teachers. Taking into account that males are in shortage in most of the secondary schools, the first limitation the researcher encountered was reaching the desired number of male teachers while conducting interviews or focus groups. The researcher aimed to interview 20 male teachers in total, however, the number decreased to 16 due to the few numbers of male teachers in the chosen 4 schools. However, this limitation did not prevent the researcher from developing insight into perception of the factors on the shortage of male teachers since

all the research questions were thoroughly answered by a variety of participants such as education experts, sociologists, a psychologist, male/female teachers, senior year male students and school principals.

The other limitation is that accessing the university students studying teaching in Pedagogical University of Azerbaijan were done with the help of personal connections of the researcher with the students. Due to the time limitation and access problem to the university, only 10 students were interviewed.

Additionally, the focus of this study was only Baku city, for this reason, the study cannot fully show the real picture of the male teacher shortage in the regions of Azerbaijan.

Chapter 4

5. Analysis of Data

This study aimed to define why male teachers are in shortage in public secondary schools and to see which particular variables influenced their choice while choosing teaching as a profession. Thirty-six teachers (20 females and 16 males) from 4 different schools , 5 education experts, a psychologist, 2 sociologists , 4 school principals, and 10 university students studying teaching participated in this qualitative, semi-structured interview study. According to the school principals, the teachers that participated in this study have many years of experience in teaching and are employed in full-time positions in public schools. The more detailed information about the participants can be found in Table 1.

Interviewee Demographics

	Gender	Position
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1. Interviewee #1	Male	Education Expert currently cooperates with the European Azerbaijan Society and is a consultant on education issues
2. Interviewee #2	Female	Education Expert. Assistant Professor , researcher at one of the universities in Azerbaijan
3. Interviewee #3	Male	Education Expert. Education and social development consultant for IDPs in Azerbaijan
4. Interviewee #4	Female	Education Expert. Former director of one of the schools in Azerbaijan, currently running private educational company
5. Interviewee #5	Male	Sociologist and faculty of one of the universities in Azerbaijan
6. Interviewee #6	Female	Sociologist , faculty of Social Sciences in one of the universities in Azerbaijan
7. Interviewee #7	Female	Psychologist, faculty one of the universities in Azerbaijan

For the purpose of attaining deeper knowledge of the factors leading to the shortage of male teachers, semi-structured interviews were conducted among four education experts, 2 sociologists and a psychologist. The 4 education experts chosen for the interview have once worked as a teacher, however, now three of them work as a faculty at universities in

Azerbaijan, while the rest work as an education managers and run their own NGO in education field. In terms of sociologists and the psychologist, along with their qualifications, they work as faculty in different universities in Azerbaijan. They had unique and in-depth understanding of the shortage of secondary school male teachers in public schools in Azerbaijan as they worked in education sector and interacted with many teachers. Moreover, most of these people are researchers in education sector and have better knowledge about the education system of Azerbaijan.

After the data collection procedures were completed, for data preparation the recorded interviews were transcribed, translated and coded. As mentioned by Creswell (2009), the concept of data analysis should prepare the data in the way to be organized and eventually coded. As a support for the idea of Creswell (2009) the researcher transcribed the interviews verbatim directly from the audio recordings. The audiotaped interviews were listened to several times and transcribed in the order in which the questions and responses were asked. The interviews that were conducted in Azerbaijani were translated into English as well. Each transcription was coded separately.

One of the first results retrieved from the interview question was the fact that there is significant disproportion between male and female teachers/students. Table 2 and 3 summarizes this disproportion.

Table 2.

The numbers of teachers (male and female) in 4 different school

School Name	Total pedagogical staff	Female teachers	Male teachers
1. X	99	89	10

2. Y	117	106	11
3. Z	64	56	8
4. N	86	83	3

Table 3.

The numbers of students (male and female)

Group Number	Total number of students	Female Students	Male Students
1. A	40	35	5
2. B	36	30	6
3. C	32	26	6

According to Table 2, the percentages of the male teachers in 4 different schools of Baku are 12%, 10%, and 9%. This supports the claim and aligns with the statistics mentioned in the introduction that there is male teacher shortage in schools. Similarly, 10 male students that participated in this study were studying in 3 different groups of the university and only 13%, 17%, and 23% of the students in those groups were males as shown in Table 3. The more detailed results of this study are discussed in the next section.

6. Findings

After exploring the information gathered with the help of interview questions, the factors and consequences mentioned by all the participants on the shortage of male teachers in public secondary schools are presented in the next section. The responses to interview questions revealed perceptions on some important extrinsic factors that influenced male teachers not working in public secondary schools, or not choosing teaching as a profession at all. Financial concerns, cultural norms, and decreasing prestige of the teaching profession appear to be extrinsic factors for the male teacher shortage, while gender differences is aligned with intrinsic factors. The factors leading for some males to choose teaching profession are specific interest to teaching or low entrance exam scores. Each of these factors is discussed in detail in the next section of this paper.

6.1 Financial hinders

Economic issues were regarded mostly to be the primary cause of the shortage of male teachers by all participants. They stated that in our culture, even though women work, males are primarily responsible for the financial maintenance of the family. Another male expert supported the idea that this is the main characteristic of Azerbaijani men to support his family financially, however, with the given salary for the teaching profession male teachers mostly feel worried and underestimated.

According to the education expert,

Teachers' salaries are still low and each parent wants their children to work in prospective and better-paying jobs. That is the reason while choosing a profession they advise their children to become an engineer, manager, etc. knowing that most teachers struggle to make ends meet. I would like to add that back to 1970 and 1980s, I worked in one of the rural schools and there were only two female teachers among the 22 pedagogical staff, even though teaching salary was not the highest at that time.

He went on saying that,

I have two children studying in upper secondary school. I will never let them become a teacher since I observe teachers' situations, know how much they earn, and how they cannot afford whatever they want for themselves and their family

One of the sociologists claimed that although currently the situation about the salary has been improved, back to the 90th century due to her observations male teachers changed their direction and started working in private sector. Additionally, two male colleagues of hers left the school for Russia in order to support their family financially and got engaged in trade there.

According to another interview expert's perception,

Back in my childhood (1980), 50 percent of our teachers were males. I assume there might be some shifts in culture, but nonetheless, males are the ones that financially support the family, and because of the low wages they have left this profession. I do not believe anything unusual occurred during the last 15 or 20 years, such as discrimination against male teachers or anything connected to it.

All four principals claimed that public secondary schools are in need of male teachers and the percentage of the male teachers from each of the four schools was not above 15 percent. Interview with one of the female principals revealed that economical factors made male teachers either find a second job for themselves after school or to leave the profession.

The female school principal recounted an observation she made on how the percentages of male teachers decreased in 2003 at the school where she now works. In comparison to the current situation, there were more male teachers; however, the majority of them traveled to Russia or other countries to make their own fortune.

Apart from this she elaborated on her speech that,

A teacher who teaches literature and her husband who teaches history work in our school. I am aware of the fact that due to some private issues they are not able to give private

lessons after school hence I try to increase their teaching hours at school so that they can earn slightly more than other teachers. I'm aware of their teaching wage and appreciate how difficult it is to sustain a family with two teenagers.

The above mentioned teacher added that:

My husband and I have been working in this school for more than 30 years. I teach Azerbaijani Literature and my husband History. Nevertheless, we both work and earn money; it is very difficult to support our two children financially. For these reasons, I have advised my children to become either an engineer or a doctor.

Nearly all participants stated that they would prefer to work in private sector if they had a chance rather than becoming secondary school teachers in public schools. The next female education expert believed that more male teachers are observed in private schools or education centers since the salary they get is higher compared to secondary public schools and they have some status in those working places. She added that:

Nowadays, there are many education and language centers. One example of this is Dersevi where many male teachers work as subject or language teachers. I also run my own private education company and from time to time in some gatherings I encounter with those male teachers. When they are asked the reasons for working in private sectors, their first answer be, high salary and prestige of working in private education centers in teaching positions.

When it comes to the answers of the male university students, 4 of the 10 participants from Pedagogical University stated that they would not continue their career and the main reason of this is low salaries. Two participants claimed that from the 3rd year they started to take extra private lessons on ICT (Information Communication Technologies) since they did not aim to pursue their career in teaching. One of them reported that,

My qualification is English language teaching however, I have taken extra courses on ICT since nowadays there is a significant demand for those who are good at computer sciences. From the 2nd year of university I realized that teaching doesn't align with nowadays demands due to the prestige and low salary of this profession. During my internship years in one of the state schools in Baku, I witnessed the low percentage of male teachers and how they were not satisfied with the earned monthly salary.

Another participant added that,

From my 3rd year at university I realized that I am not into this profession due to some external factors. First and foremost, both of my parents have been working as secondary school teachers for 20 years, and they were never satisfied with their salary. Furthermore, nearly all my female cousins are teachers in secondary schools and male relatives run their own business. I witnessed that even though my male relatives are younger than my parents their monthly salary were higher than them. Consequently, I decided to start running my small business from my 3rd year at university, and now, as I have officially graduated university I can focus more on my business and earn more than I am used to.

One of the male students went on saying that,

I have worked part-time as a Math teacher in different language courses and education centers in Baku since my 3rd year at university. However, most of my peer were working there in order just gather money and to change their career path.

Next participant stated that,

My mother has always wanted me to become a secondary school teacher which was my dream since my childhood as well. I have chosen this profession with great pleasure, however, I absolutely don't think to work in any state secondary schools. I am familiar with the teaching salary from my male teacher friends, and how they cannot afford everything

what they want to their family. Therefore, after graduating I will take private lessons on marketing and continue my career path on this line.

Next expert added that teachers in Japan and Scandinavian countries according to OECD (2019) earn above fifty thousand US dollars with 46 and 53 percent of male teachers respectively. He believes that increased salary would attract more male teachers to the teaching profession. One of the male teachers mentioned that getting a high salary is the desire of each of the workers. Apart from this, he added that teachers are the ones who mostly need to be motivated since their work is to build our children's future in a healthy and appropriate way. As soon as they get demotivated it will affect their way of teaching and students as well.

The perspective of these 4 participants and education expert clearly reveals that low salary of the teachers in public schools, compared to other sectors are the main factor that forces males to change their profession or work in private education centers. However, it is also important to note that the working hours of teachers are more flexible that allows them to give private teaching or work in private education sectors. When male students were asked about this issue they stated that they do not want to work all day long to make good money.

On the other hand, another female principal approached the economical situation in a different way stating that the salary of the teachers is high enough. She said that even though the salary currently has been increased and nowadays teachers who teach Physical Education earn up to 900 AZN, however, there are still not enough male teachers. She added that,

Nowadays with the increased salary teachers earn enough especially considering that they work from 8 am to 2 pm. After school they can find another job for themselves such as tutoring or working in any private education courses.

Another participant stated that:

My sister-in-law graduated from one of the universities in Baku and she has chosen to return to the region and work at one of the rural schools there. For this, besides her salary she is given an extra 200 AZN. Taking into account that she works there full-time, her monthly salary is approximately 800 AZN and sometimes more. We must agree that this is a good indicator for someone who lives in the region or village; however, there are still male teacher shortages in regions. For this reason, we can believe that the situation is not only related to economic reasons, but cultural...

When the participants were asked other questions, they revealed that there are other factors as well which make teaching less favorable profession for males. Those factors are summarized in the next 2 sections.

6.2 Feminization of teaching profession

The other factor stated by the participants was feminization of teaching which was considered to be an intrinsic factor by the participants. Gender identification, as defined by the psychologist, occurs when children, from a younger age, start to realize that they belong to one gender group.

Other experts (n=3) also agreed that the lack of male teachers are causing problems in the classrooms as students see only one representative of gender in the classroom and perceive this profession as a feminine job. According to the psychologist: *The lack of visibility of male teachers contributes to the perception that teaching is a job better suited to women.* For this reason, the shortage of male teachers in the school can create a cycle, as the few male teachers are present in the classroom; the fewer students are willing to choose teaching as a profession.

Both male and female teachers also stated that some of them even propagate to their students about becoming teachers after they graduate and insistently explain it is a profession that belongs not only to females but males as well. They went on saying that we had several

male students who wanted to become teachers, however, due to the insistence of their family; they changed their direction to engineering or economics.

To support the idea, one of the male teachers mentioned that,

I am a teacher and I want my son to follow in my footsteps. However, when I suggested this to him, his response was - Dad, but teaching is a female profession since all my teachers are female.

Another participant stated that,

My mother is a secondary school teacher. She earned good amount of money by private tutoring. I have chosen this qualification at university in order to realize my childhood dream, however, I do not want to continue her path anymore. I realized that I am not that patient to sit at home and from afternoon till evening hours and explain things to students. I evaluate this as being female profession since they are more patient by nature and can stand each type of students.

Most of the male students that chose teaching profession mentioned that almost all of their teachers were females and the reason they chose this profession was because of the male teachers in the family or in schools and without them they would not choose this profession.

One of the university students that plans to change his career mentioned that,

Apart from the low salary of the teaching profession that makes me to consider changing my profession is I had very traumatic memory. When I first got my entrance exam scores and it became obvious that I would need to choose teaching as profession, my family was very dissatisfied and even offered me to reenter the exam next year. While when my older sister was accepted to Pedagogical University, they were very happy. The same attitude was shown to me by my friends and relatives. I ignored all and decided to choose this career, but even now most of male students constantly offer me to join their business or find another job

and say that it is a feminine job. I guess their attitude toward teaching also affected me in my decision about my future career path.

The similar idea was stated by one of the teachers and she stated that,

Back in our time there were more male teachers in schools and our families. For this reason, most of us had a childhood dream to become teachers as our fathers or grandfathers. Nowadays, when I speak to students about their future plans, students are reluctant to choose this profession and they all state that it is better career choice for their female friends. Although I know some of these students personally and I knew they had interest in teaching when they were younger. I believe, some students do not want to face a group pressure from their friends. The idea that “teaching is a feminine job” is spreading.

All in all, feminization of the teaching is mentioned several times by the participants of this study and it can be considered one of the factors leading to male teacher shortage. In general, the factors leading to the male shortage are interrelated. Low salaries in public schools of Azerbaijan leads to less male teachers in schools and less male teachers in school are causing the perception among students that teaching is a feminine job.

6.3 Cultural and Socioeconomic Hinders

The last factor mentioned by participants that leads to the male teacher shortage is low prestige. Low scores for becoming teacher, low salaries, and gendered approach to teaching decreased its prestige and these led many people to see the teaching as an unfavorable job. In our culture women work at low paying or low prestigious jobs while males seek prestige. The reason for this is that in our culture the thoughts of the others are very important and many families prioritize their social status. From marriage to many other social interactions, people make decisions by taking into account prestige. Males that work in prestigious work are more respected and favored by the others.

According to most of the participants' point of view, beginning in the 1990s and continuing into the 20th century, the tendency emerged in society to encourage and support more females to become teachers by their families and teachers. Since working hours for teachers were from 8 to 1 or 2 p.m., teaching and working at a school were regarded as adequate for females. One of the former directors remarked that while she was in school, the word "teacher" conjured up images of male models since female teachers in most of the schools at that time were the minority and male teachers were in the majority. The expert who works as faculty supports the idea that,

Societies always set up some priorities. As an example, my grandfather was a teacher in the rural area for 60 years, and he was considered as the most reputable one in this small town. Even from my childhood I recall him being invited for the weddings and funerals, being granted a seat at the head of the table, and being more regarded than, say, the Communist Party' first secretary. Since there were no other educated people around and being a teacher immediately elevated your social status. Due to low number of the teachers in schools, my grandfather was paid quite well. First and foremost, it was a job for the government, it was an educational level, but the situation had changed since my childhood.

The other participants stated that although *teaching* for a long time was a reputable profession, after the independence in many countries, some socially attractive professions became popular such as economist, researcher, and business management. When young boys were offered to work as teachers, it was not any longer a prestigious and appealing position, both financially and socially. The education experts agreed that this idea of “teaching” not being a socially and financially rewarded profession has influenced the situation.

Another expert added to this viewpoint by stating that, the former Minister of Education of the Russian Federation Mr. Livanov once stated that low prestige of the teacher

profession has also resulted in very low quality of teacher cadres. He referred to this as a double *negative filter* which occurs when low-scoring school graduates apply for Pedagogical universities which in the future decreases the quality of teaching and leads to heavily influenced social prestige of this profession. The second filter was among Pedagogical University graduates only those who could not find a job outside of schools were choosing to work at school, while the best graduates were finding another job in a labor market.

One of the female principals further noted that the shortage of male teachers happened due to the social problems such as each of the low-scoring graduates selected to study in Pedagogical University without the intention of continuing the profession of teaching. After graduating university, students either work in the business sector or pursue further studies to enable them to engage in the socially attractive professions. To work in one of the socially attractive professions not only was the key to earn higher, but also to have more prestige in the society than others. The idea of the male principal overlapped with one of the expert's ideas since she also mentioned that low-scoring students select Pedagogical University since it is easy to get admission and after graduating they completely alter their direction. This lowers the prestige of teaching as it is seen by many as the place where only low scoring students enter.

Apart from this, another female expert mentioned that the concept of feminism worked against women in our country taking into account that after working hours they are supposed to taking care of children and do household chores as well. Furthermore, she added that according to Molyneux (1992), in feminist analysis, gender division of labor is not seen as a purely technical division of labor since this division of labor places men in the top position and women in the subordinate position and allows women to do lower-paid jobs in their working life.

Few participants shared their personal experiences regarding this issue. According to one male teacher participant,

I am only working as a teacher in public schools for 3 years, but I already faced negative comments from my family and relatives. Many of them ask me if I will do any additional job on top of teaching or change my work. The main reason for this attitude towards me is that teaching is not considered prestigious job nowadays. Although, for example, some doctors also earn the same salary as teachers, the doctors are very respected by all. I am aware that the doctors need to have higher scores to enter the university, but even the small business owners are praised more. One of my relatives even dared to tell me that I will not be able to create a family of my own as many people want their daughters to marry males with prestigious jobs. Although I do not listen to the things that is said as I love my job, I can imagine how negatively affects many males who also want to become teachers. It is very sad that noble job as teaching is not socially praised.

6.4 Why male teachers chose this profession?

The interview with the male teachers and students revealed some of the factors that lead them to choose teaching profession. One of the most mentioned reason was the fact that they had a specific interest in teaching and they had a role model who motivated them during their education. 10 out of 16 male teachers supported this idea while 4 out of 10 male students also stated that they had a role teacher model in their family. One of the participants stated that,

My mother is a secondary school teacher and after school she has been tutoring since my childhood. My mom could afford me everything that I wanted since my childhood and our house were full students till evening hours. Although she worked most of the day, her patient towards teaching was very strong and I decided to walk on her footsteps. I am aware that I

will need to have private classes to earn more money, but I love teaching and it would not be a burden on me.

The other participants mentioned that they have male teacher role model rather than female teachers. They all stated that having male teachers in their immediate family and/or school encouraged them to pursue this career. All in all, this finding showed that having more males in the schools can encourage next generations to choose this career.

Apart from the participants who stated they have an interest in teaching, all the other participants claimed that they did not have a choice to choose other major/career because they scored low from university entrance exam. This can potentially mean that almost 1 in 3 of the teachers is not really enthusiastic about their work. This can also result in low interest of their students in teaching.

The sociologist supported the idea by saying,

I am currently working in one of the universities in Azerbaijan. As soon as I ask my students about their university admission score, I realize that female students who mostly scored low, and males who never thought of pursuing their career in teaching, study in "Teaching" qualification. My male students always mention that after graduating university they will never work as a teacher, however, taking extra private courses will help them to find high paid jobs in private sectors. Others who have no other option than continuing teaching profession stated that they do not believe they can become a successful teacher.

Some of the male teachers participating in the research also emphasized that they would prefer a different career if their scores met the minimum limit of the university admission score since one of the important factors affecting the preference processes of teacher candidates are the score they get from the higher education entrance exam.

The interview questions were created to explore the teachers' perspective on how the presence of male teachers affect students' behavior and academic achievement in secondary

schools for emphasizing the importance of this study. Nearly all of the participants claimed that both male and female teachers contribute to student's gender awareness. Moreover, it was stated that the presence of male teachers may be particularly important for male students – allowing them to observe men's interactions with female students and teachers. Another male principal stated that he observed some noticeable changes in male students' behavior so that they easily get offended or hurt. He believes that all these indicators are also proof of the shortage of male teachers in lower secondary schools. Back in the 1970s he mentioned in the secondary schools he only had a female teacher in primary school and only two female instructors in upper secondary schools, with the rest being males, which helped for the boys at that time to study and observe masculine dominance in the classroom.

Focus group with female teachers also supported the above mentioned thoughts and added that in the school they work there are high and low performing male and female students where male and female teachers are homeroom teachers. They further added that, becoming a successful and experienced teacher depends on the hard work rather than the gender of an individual. All in all, male teachers are claimed to be important for behavioral and psychological development of the students and not for academic achievement. Although academic achievement of students does not change by having more male teachers, in the contemporary world, the psychology of students should be priority as well.

These findings show that in the absence of the economic and other factors that can motivate people to choose teaching as a career, most of the male teachers can be less enthusiastic teachers. Although the results of this research are based on subjective thoughts, the findings of this study can be taken into account to create motivating factors by government to increase the number of the male teachers. All of these findings are discussed in depth in the next section.

Chapter 5

7. Discussion

In the current study the researcher explored the factors that influenced male teachers' shortage in secondary public schools in Azerbaijan. The results of this paper help to explain why males are in shortage in secondary public schools. The findings indicated that even though there are still male teachers passionate about teaching, factors such as *cultural norms, diminished prestige of the teaching profession, and low salary* hinder them either to continue teaching or pursuing their career in the teaching.

The finding is supported by literature that the most important reason why male teachers are in shortage in this profession was due to the low salary. It is stated that men most of the time avoid the teaching profession because of the low salaries and its status (Cooney & Bitter, 2001; Thorton & Bricheno, 2000; Wardle, 2003). The finding of the current study throughout the interviews and focus groups is consistent with the stated literature. The participants indicated that male teachers are not satisfied with the teaching salary up to now; hence they prefer high-paid jobs in the private sector. Given samples of the experts and participants, it is noticed that teaching up to some period was one of the respected and important professions. However, after the collapse of the USSR, some confusion in the society occurred due to the financial concerns and the diminishing prestige of the teaching profession at those times put male teachers in a dilemma. Consequently, many of the male teachers found other socially attractive and higher paid jobs outside of the school or immigrated to accessible countries such as Russia to make a fortune. The gap of male teachers was gradually filled by female teachers and started to increase each following year. Silova (2009) also found similar findings stating that during the transformation period in post -soviet countries decreased salaries led to the decreased status of the teaching profession which resulted in male teachers leaving this profession, on the contrary the increase of female

teachers. In addition, of the school principals, when asked in this study if increased salary would encourage males to the teaching profession, all four principals confirmed the idea and added that this would open other horizons and opportunities for male teachers and students. Interestingly, this result agreed with Cushman's (2005) findings, which stated that salary or financial incentives were a major contributing factor in the decline of male teachers in secondary public schools.

Similarly, some male participants in this study when asked whether they were satisfied with the salary, almost all of the male teachers denied, besides, Physical Education teachers. There were evidence-based facts from principals about the teachers' salary is up to 500 AZN (900 AZN only Physical Education teachers). Further, some of the teachers get extra 40 manats for being a homeroom teacher as well. The increased salary only referred to Physical Education teachers taking into account that in each school there are two or one Physical Education teacher. When it comes to subject teachers, as the numbers of those teachers increase their working hours lessen which in turn leads to low salary. On the one hand, some teachers were satisfied with the increased salary; on the other hand, there were a majority who still believed that the given salary was not the value of their hard work with school children. As males in Azerbaijani culture are mainly the ones who support their family financially, there were two options left for them: either find a second job or totally leave the teaching profession and start working in the private sector. The finding is supported in the study by Silova (2009) stating that males are still believed to support their families financially in Azerbaijan. Also, several researches highlighted the factor for the shortage of male teachers, that they were deterred from teaching to pursue better paying jobs (Benton DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Blount, 2000; Johnson, 2008; Skelton, 2012). Furthermore, the study found that decreased salary led to decreased status of the teaching profession which resulted in male teachers leaving this profession.

Next reason the current study revealed for the shortage of male teachers was the diminished prestige of the teaching profession due to the shifting in the culture of the society and getting admission from university for teaching qualification even with low grades from the university entrance exam. Even students who scored lower than 250 or 350 in SEC exams selected teaching professions at Pedagogical University. The finding is consistent with the study conducted by Silova (2009) emphasizing that, although the required entrance point increased in other qualifications such as Law and Economics, the points gradually decreased in teaching qualification. To support the finding according to SEC annual report (2013-2014) students who applied for Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University for the qualification of physics teaching students' maximum entrance point was 266. Further, those who applied for "Math teacher" qualification scored maximum 281. This led to a new tendency in the society that even male students who scored low selected the teaching profession at the university, however, after graduating most of them do not want to continue teaching as stated by many university students. Those students took extra courses on their own expenses and chose so-called socially attractive professions such as engineering, economist, etc. These findings are consistent with the study by Bayler & Ozcan (2013) where it is indicated, males tend not to choose teaching because of its low status among other socially attractive jobs.

Current study through interviews with education experts and participants found cultural norms have an impact on men's decision on whether or not choosing teaching as a profession. In most of the Eastern cultures such as Turkey, women's work is still considered to be caring and being together with young children hence the number of secondary and primary school male teachers are low (Bayler & Ozcan, 2013). Since Azerbaijan and Turkey share some aspects of the same Eastern culture, the same perception is valid in Azerbaijani context as well. Furthermore, current findings are also similar to the results of study conducted by Balyer et al., (2013) indicating that cultural norms are one of the reasons that

deter men from choosing teaching as a profession. Moreover, the researcher in this study also revealed that due to the cultural norms, an increasing number of women choose teaching as a profession since it is considered to be a part time job, allowing women to have time to take care of the upbringing of their children as well after school. Apart from this, through interviews with education experts this study also found, gender imbalance led to feminization of the teaching profession which limited students to study both gender role models and males not choose teaching because of the high percentage of female teachers in secondary schools. This finding is consistent with the scholarly work that reported the female dominant environment to be another factor that deterred males from teaching (Foster & Newman 2005). In terms of cultural norms, the study additionally found, the cultural norms were inculcated for men through gender differences since men from younger ages are usually guided by their parents to choose socially attractive professions, meanwhile, girls are said to select the teaching profession for its convenience. As boys grow up with this manner and encounter mostly female teachers at school, consequently their choices narrow down as they grow up. There is a consistency with the Social Cognitive Career Theory of Lent (1994), Brown (2000), and Hackett (2002), in which career choices are shaped by sources of encouragement, including family and the individuals' surroundings. Furthermore, the researcher summarized education experts' perceptions and found that students throughout primary, secondary school years mostly observe their subject, homeroom teachers being female and few percent of them male, have led to the perception of teaching as a gendered profession. This occurs throughout the stages that an individual goes through from younger ages and continues in secondary school which is consistent with Linda Gottfredson's (1981; 2002) Theory of Circumscription and Compromise where from the first to the fourth stage an individual's career choice narrows down due to internal and external factors such as gender, family, peers education and income. Apart from this, some of the male teacher participants

(n=3) and education experts had a shared perception of male students not choosing the teaching profession due to not being supported by their surroundings. The researcher noticed that most of male teachers were not encouraged by their surroundings before becoming teachers, despite the fact that they were into the teaching profession from younger age. The finding discussed in the current study is similar to the result of Erden et al.(2011) study stating, despite the fact that male teachers get good support from their students' parents and female colleagues, they do not frequently get the same support from their families, friends, and peers which demotivates them.

On the other hand, the study found gender does not predetermine career types, since most of the male teachers and some male students in this study stated that for the sake of the students, their love, they still would like to continue or start to work as teachers. Their shared opinion contradicts the Evolution Theory (Browne, 1999) stating that women are more loving and nurturing by nature hence they tend to choose teaching more than men.

Current study also discussed perceptions related to the benefits of having more male teachers in secondary schools. Interestingly, all male and female teachers in the current study emphasized the importance of increasing the number of male teachers in secondary public schools, since their existence contributes a lot for the school culture and environment. The researcher found in this study that the masculine behavior of male teachers has a significant impact both on male and female students since they have the right to study both genders and get familiar with the characteristics of each gender through observing their teachers. The findings are consistent with the study carried by Lahelma (2006) emphasizing the importance of male teachers in secondary schools for the male and female students to study the masculine role model in the classroom. Furthermore, the finding is also supported by the Cushman(2005) study emphasizing that it is vital to have an overview of both genders from younger age in order not to encounter some behavioral difficulties in further steps

of psychological development. Moreover, he stated that observing both genders will help them in their personal and career life as well.

Apart from this, the current study indicated the gender- balanced staff to be precious for students since some of them may not have the opportunity to study both gender characteristics and may come from single parent families. There is consistency with the scholarly work that reported gender -balanced staff is believed to be significantly important for education institutions (Hansen & Mullholland, 2005). Male teachers in this study are found to be proud to work in secondary schools, namely, to be a male role model for students which aligns with existing literature indicating that male teachers are accepting of being a role model for students in secondary schools (Skelton, 2003; Montecinos & Nielson, 2004). Also, the next study is consistent with the finding of the current study emphasizing that male teachers can act as surrogate fathers for students when there is no father in the picture (Sanatullova-Allison, 2010a; Sargent, 2005; Sevier & Ashcraft, 2009).

Additionally, it is strongly believed that more male teachers were needed in secondary schools for a positive masculine role model for both male and female students (Holland, 2006; Cunningham & Watson, 2002; Mullholland & Hansen, 2003). Besides that, the existing literature supported the finding by Erden et al. (2011) and Cushman (2005) emphasizing that the gap left by absentee fathers is from time to time filled by male teachers at schools since secondary school stage plays a crucial role in the development of students since teachers in this stage affect students' both mentally and change their perception (Islami, 2013). Furthermore, the study found that, according to male teacher participants in the current study emphasized, the masculine role model is necessary for students particularly in secondary schools since throughout these stages students observe their teachers and build a role model in their imagination. The finding is supported by the scholarly work of

Xu(2019) reporting that in this stage teachers provide their students with the most effective masculine and feminine role models.

In terms of the students' achievement in the presence of male teachers it is noteworthy that the current study revealed both genders are needed in secondary public schools for students to study different role models; however, it is also significant to mention that few numbers of male teachers does not affect the quality of education and students' achievement. Further, this study found that most of the participants related students' achievement to teachers' readiness, classroom management skills and experience rather than their genders. There is a consistency with the existing literature mentioning that there is no direct correlation between the achievement of the students and gender of the teacher (Islami, 2013). She added that gender does not seem to influence the effectiveness of secondary school teachers since not gender but marital status and training appear to affect the effectiveness of male and female teachers.

8. Summary

According to the literature review and the findings of this research, the presence of male teachers in secondary public schools plays a significant role for students to have the opportunity to study both gender role models' characteristics. The current study explored perceptions on factors on the shortage of male teachers by examining and interpreting the perceptions of research participants.

Results of this investigation revealed that secondary school teaching is generally considered to be a female occupation and cultural norms in general deterred males pursuing their career in teaching. Although male teachers indicated that they consciously decided to become teachers, they were all not satisfied with their pay. Although they had chosen this profession for some reasons such as the desire to work in the teaching profession and

students' love, most of the male teachers indicated that still they have concerns about teaching salary and feminization of this profession. Since the number of the secondary school female teachers increase throughout the years, the notion of teaching being the "gendered profession" fastens in minds which consequently leads to males to change their career path and choose jobs either in private sectors or other socially attractive jobs.

Next, the study revealed though male teachers do not have a direct impact on the students' achievement, they are considered to be a source of emotional support for the students coming from single parent families. Further, in terms of male students, the presence of male teachers helps them to study the masculine characteristics among female dominated teaching staff. The educational system, as a whole, must take responsibility for the shortage of secondary school male teachers. Scholarship incentives, formal calls for male teachers and other incentives should be set in place to encourage men to pursue their career in teaching in secondary public schools. Increasing the salary of the teachers and increasing the entrance exam scores might help to restore the prestige of the teaching and decrease feminization of the profession. Although a more detailed research need to be done to decide how to halter the male teacher shortage in public schools, this study gives an understanding about the factors that might lead to shortage.

9. Recommendation for further research

It is acknowledged that there are some limitations in this study. The first limitation is the relatively small number of male participants. Future research on shortage of male teachers could initially be expanded to a larger population sample, and regional and remote rural schools could be included in the study. Teachers and principals working in regional and remote rural schools will have various contributions on factors on the shortage of secondary school male teachers.

Next recommendation would be, in terms of students, a survey can be conducted among 9 and 11th graders about their career choice at university or for vocational education. The results can be used later to compare and contrast in order to draw a conclusion about the percentage of male students who wanted to pursue their career in teaching after graduating secondary school.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Interview Protocol for Teachers and Education Experts

Introduction: The researcher will start the conversation by greeting the participant and thanking for accepting to participate. For further conversation the researcher will share personal information and gives detail about the research interest to start the conversation.

Purpose: The researcher will explain the purpose of the study, that is to understand the factors for the shortage of male teachers in secondary public schools in Azerbaijan.

Procedures: The researcher will explain that open-ended questions will be asked from the participant and that the participant may choose to answer or not to answer any questions. Interviews will last approximately forty minutes and will be audio-recorded and then transcribed. After collecting the data, the researcher will keep participant identity anonymous by replacing participants' names with pseudonyms.

Consent: The researcher will explain to the participant that their participation is voluntary and will ask them to sign consent form and will inform they can withdraw from the research any time they want. The researcher will inform that their privacy will be protected through the use of pseudonyms in the research.

- 1) What factors influenced male teachers to choose teaching as a profession?
- 2) What was the biggest intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for them?
- 3) Have they faced any barriers/hardship at school while they worked?
- 4) What factors discouraged them before becoming a teacher in secondary school?
- 5) Do male teachers think more males are needed in the education sector (elementary and secondary school), and if yes, why?
- 6) What can be done to increase society's acceptance of male teachers, especially when they start their career?
- 7) How did the family members react to their decision of becoming a teacher?
- 8) What groups will benefit from an increased presence of male teachers in secondary school?

APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol for University Students

Introduction: The researcher will start the conversation by greeting the participant and thanking for accepting to participate. For further conversation the researcher will share personal information and gives detail about the research interest to start the conversation.

Purpose: The researcher will explain the purpose of the study, that is to understand the factors for the shortage of male teachers in secondary public schools in Azerbaijan.

Procedures: The researcher will explain that open-ended questions will be asked from the participant and that the participant may choose to answer or not to answer any questions. Interviews will last approximately forty minutes and will be audio-recorded and then transcribed. After collecting the data, the researcher will keep participant identity anonymous by replacing participants' names with pseudonyms.

Consent: The researcher will explain to the participant that their participation is voluntary and will ask them to sign consent form and will inform they can withdraw from the research any time they want. The researcher will inform that their privacy will be protected through the use of pseudonyms in the research.

Interview questions for University Students:

- 1) How have you decided to enter the major that you are studying now?
- 2) Were you planning to enter to other major when you were in high school?
 - If yes, what made you to change your major?
- 3) How many male and female students do you have in your group?
- 4) What do you think about teacher profession (its importance/ its impact)?
- 5) Do you have male teachers in your immediate or large family?
- 6) Were the most of your secondary school teacher male or female?
- 7) Have you had any male secondary school teachers in your school? How many?
- 8) What do you think about the male secondary school teachers?
- 9) Why do you think there are less male teachers than females in secondary schools?
- 10) Why do you think some males choose to become a secondary school teacher?
- 11) What are your career plans after your graduation?
- 12) Would you be willing to become a secondary school teacher once you graduate?
 - (If the answer is no to 14th question) What are the factors affecting your decision of not to being a secondary school teacher?
 - (If the answer is no to 14th question) What kind of career path are you planning to take?
 - (If the answer is no to 14th question) Do you think the opinion of the others about the secondary school teachers affect your choice of not becoming one?
- ✓ (If the answer is yes to 14th question) What are the reasons for wanting to be a secondary school teacher?
- ✓ (If the answer is yes to 14th question) Would your family and friends support your decision?

APPENDIX C

Interview Consent Form

Research title: Shortage of male teachers in secondary schools in Azerbaijan

Research purpose: To identify the main factors that may lead to the shortage of male teachers in public secondary schools in Azerbaijan.

Researcher: Ulker Rasulova

Participant name:

Participant gender:

Participant position:

The interview will take at least 40 minutes. You have right to suspend the interview at any time and refuse to participate in the research if you feel any concerns about your health or the questions asked during the interview.

By signing this from I agree that:

I voluntarily participate in this research interview;

My interview will be recorded;

I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentiality

I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and hiding any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about

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 future

Participant name, signature, date

Researcher name, signature, date