# Teacher Agency of Novice Teachers: A Scoping Review

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## Abstract

Global policies, accountability standards, and various challenges in education around the world have a negative impact on the professional lives of novice teachers. Teacher agency has gained attention as a popular topic that offers different, new perspectives for teachers' professional development and efforts to improve the quality of education. The present study aims to examines the agency of novice teachers. For this purpose, the distribution of the compiled studies by years, countries, research method, sample size, experience level, and subject was examined. It also examined the barriers to novice teachers' agency and the findings of studies focusing on novice teacher agency. In order to identify the relevant peer-reviewed studies in the literature for scoping, research was conducted in the Web of Science, ERIC, Scopus, PsychINFO, and MEDLINE databases. The studies obtained from the databases were accessed in 53 studies using PRISMA research methodology. The study was prepared according to the stages of the scoping review methodology created by Hilary Arksey and Lisa O'Malley. As a result, the conditions affecting the agency of novice teachers were evaluated from teacher education, school context, and policy perspectives, and recommendations were made to researchers, teacher educators, and policymakers.

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## INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, the meaning and limits of agency have been debated by scientists and philosophers. The concept of agency has been interpreted in various fields, such as sociology, economics, political science, and education. Agency has been defined by social theorists as action, free will, freedom, autonomy, and judgement (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). Although not always explicitly discussed in the context of teaching and learning, agency has played an important role in educational practice. The idea that education can and should help individuals develop their capacity for agency and independent action has been a long-standing process in Western societies since the Enlightenment. In the last decade, the concept of agency has become more prominent in education and learning sciences, especially in discussions of workplace and lifelong learning (Eteläpelto, Vähäsantanen, Hökkä & Paloniemi, 2013). The concept of teacher agency has emerged in literature as an alternative way of understanding how teachers can practice and engage with policy (Priestley, Biesta & Robinson, 2015).

Teacher agency is a very popular concept today, and since it does not refer to a single characteristic of teaching, it is possible to see different definitions by different researchers in the literature. Teacher agency, or professional agency, refers to the capacity encompassing the deliberate and responsible management of student learning (Pyhältö et al., 2012). This concept also denotes the teachers' ability to make professional choices, have opportunities to make active choices regarding their work and professional identities, and critically shape their responses to problematic situations (Vähäsantanen, Hökkä, Eteläpelto, Rasku-Puttonen & Littleton, 2008; Eteläpelto, Vähäsantanen, Hökkä & Paloniemi, 2013; Biesta & Tedder, 2006). Professional agency is very important for teachers' ability to influence and transform the classroom as a learning environment (Soini, Pietarinen & Pyhältö, 2016), as well as for creativity, identity negotiation, individual learning, and organizational development (Vähäsantanen, Räikkönen, Paloniemi, Hökkä & Eteläpelto, 2019). In sum, agency includes student learning, implementation of modern educational practices, continuing professional development, shaping the organizational environment when necessary, leadership in the educational environment, and relationships with actors in education. In other words, it includes quality education and professional teaching.

As a result of global education reforms and policies based on neoliberal principles, teachers are now required to fulfill additional bureaucratic tasks, adhere to stricter standards, and meet higher levels of accountability and performance criteria. These changes have resulted in a significant increase in workload, which has led to emotional pressure, professional stress, and various difficulties for teachers (Ball, 2016; Bartell, Cho, Drake, Petchauer & Richmond, 2019; Dunn, 2018; Eteläpelto, Vähäsantanen & Hökkä, 2015; Kneyber, 2015; Priestley, Biesta & Robinson, 2015). This situation results in a decrease in teachers' professionalism, identity, agency, and voice in schools (Bartell et al., 2019; Eteläpelto et al., 2015; Priestley et al., 2015). Teacher agency is purported to be a pivotal capability, not just for enhancing student learning but also for promoting continuous professional development and collaborative teacher learning, thereby inducing school improvement (Toom, Pyhältö & Rust, 2015). Agency is not a natural or inherent disposition, but rather a phenomenon that emerges according to ecological circumstances (Priestley et al., 2015). Since personal experiences are not a reliable indicator of an individual teacher's agency within the education context, it cannot be viewed as a definite construct. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the dynamic nature and variability of agency (E et al., 2022; Pyhältö et al., 2012; Soini et al., 2016).

Novice teachers encounter numerous challenges when they complete their university education and join the teaching profession. The initial years of teaching are often the most arduous period of their careers as they lack the strategies and routines to cope with these challenges (Buchanan, Prescott, Schuck, Aubusson & Burke, 2013; Gan, 2018; Heikonen, Pietarinen, Pyhältö, Toom & Soini, 2017; Schaefer, Long & Clandinin, 2012). Moreover, the challenges faced by novice teachers often lead to frustration, demotivation, stress, anxiety, high levels of attrition, burnout, and resignation (Çelik & Kahraman, 2020; Schaefer et al., 2012). Examining the literature, it can be seen that approximately 30% of new teachers in the USA (Ronfeldt, Loeb & Wyckoff, 2013) and 30% to 50% of those Australia (Weldon, 2018) resign. The results of the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe, which was conducted

with 65,688 teachers in 19 European countries, also show that 25% of them leave their profession within the first two years and 45% within the first five years (Federičová, 2021). There is empirical evidence indicating that teacher turnover negatively affects school stability, collegiality, collaboration, and institutional knowledge, which in turn impacts the achievement of all pupils in a school, not just those taught by new teachers (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Ronfeldt et al., 2013; Sorensen & Ladd, 2020). In particular, the elevated rate of resignation among novice teachers undermines educational sustainability and is perceived as a cause for declining educational quality (Buchanan et al., 2013). These results show that retaining and supporting teachers in their early years is a very important strategy (Ingersoll, 2003; OECD, 2019). Teacher agency can be seen as an alternative way of understanding how novice teachers can implement practices and deal with global politics (Priestley et al., 2015).

This study focuses on novice teachers, because the first five years of working as teachers are important for their careers. Lavigne (2014) suggested that teachers can become teachers once they completed the first five years of their career. This is because the experiences they have at the beginning of their careers determine the future long-term job satisfaction, professional competence, development, and permanence of the teachers in the profession (Ashton, 2021; Huang & Yip, 2021; Trent, 2017). At the same time, sustainable professional development of novice teachers has been recognized as one of the key areas for improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools (Zhukova, 2018). Given this, gaining an understanding of novice teachers' agency, the challenges they face in their teaching practice, and how they respond are also important for understanding teacher educators and teacher agency more comprehensively (Ashton, 2021; Caspersen & Raaen, 2014; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Trent, 2017).

In the light of scientific data, the first five years of teachers' professional careers can be called a critical period. The agency of novice teachers can be used to overcome the professional challenges (Toom et al., 2015) they face in their first years. It has been found that agency is a determinant in reducing the risk of teacher burnout and is important for job satisfaction, well-being, and retention. (Kayi-Aydar & Steadman, 2019; McMullen, Lee, McCormick & Choi, 2020; Soini et al., 2016). Due to these characteristics of agency, it is important to examine the agency of novice teachers in schools and to support them in light of these findings. In addition, understanding the agency of novice teachers is considered worthy of research in terms of retaining novice teachers, ensuring sustainability in education, and training quality teachers. However, when searching in the literature, although there are many studies examining the agency of novice teachers, no study has been found to provide a holistic perspective. Therefore, this scoping study was prepared. According to Arksey and O'Malley (2005), a scoping study can be conducted for four reasons. It includes examining the scope, range, and nature of the research activity, identifying the value of undertaking a full systematic review, summarizing and disseminating research findings, and identifying research gaps in the existing literature. This study aims to explore the literature on novice teachers' agency, to provide an overview of their use of agency in the face of challenges, and to identify research gaps.

## METHOD

Scoping studies aim to quickly map the key concepts underpinning a research area and the main sources and types of evidence available, and may be undertaken as stand-alone projects, particularly where an area is complex or has not been thoroughly explored before (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). Scoping reviews also give researchers the chance to combine the results of many study types, including both quantitative and qualitative methods (Logan et al., 2021). This study was prepared according to Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) scoping review methodology steps.

### 1.Identifying the Research Question

Arksey and O'Malley (2005) stated that research questions must be identified as the first stage of scoping studies. The research questions are as follows:

1) What is the distribution of the studies included in the review according to the years they were conducted, the countries, the research method used, sampling, duration of experience, and the study subjects they dealt with?

2) What are the situations that challenges or restrains the agency of novice teachers?

3) What are the findings of the studies on the agency of novice teachers?

## 2. Identifying Relevant Studies

The second stage of scoping is the identification of relevant studies (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). The research included publications accessed from Web of Science (WoS), ERIC, Scopus, PsychINFO, and MEDLINE databases, which publish refereed journals. "Early career teachers and agency," "novice teachers and agency," and "beginning teachers and agency" were used as keywords, with "agency" preferred over "teacher agency." The use of "agency" as a preferred keyword among researchers necessitated its inclusion in our search alongside "teacher agency." To broaden our search, we utilized the Boolean operator "AND" to combine all keywords. The identification of relevant studies was carried out using the ENDNOTE bibliographic software package.

### 2.1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The study focused only on English-language publications and excluded studies published in other languages. As the aim of this study was to provide a comprehensive overview of the literature, no temporal restrictions were imposed. Only full research articles were included in this review, excluding books, book chapters, research reports, theses, review articles, conference abstracts, and alternative publication types. The sample was limited to teachers with 0–5 years of teaching experience. The review was conducted in all disciplines, not only in the field of educational studies. The search was conducted between June 2022 and September 2022 and updated on the 10th of each month. Table 1 provides the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

**Table 1.** Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

| Criteria | Inclusion | Exclusion |
|---|---|---|
| Language | English | Other Languages |
| Databases | WoS, Eric, Scopus, Psych INFO, MEDLINE | Other Databases |
| Document Type | Refereed research articles | Books, book chapters, research reports, theses, dissertations, review articles, conference abstracts |
| Sample | Teacher | Others |
| Teaching Experience | 0-5 years | More than 5 years |

A total of 2008 studies were located in the initial keyword search, with 768 from the WoS database, 367 from the Scopus database, 834 from the Eric database, 36 from the Medline database, and 3 from the PsychINFO database.

## 3. Study Selection

As stated by to Arksey and O'Malley (2005), the third stage of scoping studies is the selection of studies. In the first screening, 2008 studies were found. After filtering the databases according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 1185 studies were found. After duplicate studies were excluded from the search, 735 studies remained. Only article title, abstract, and keywords were taken into consideration and 735 studies were analyzed and 648 studies were excluded as a result of this review, leaving 87 studies to be read in full text. The screening process can be examined in detail in the Prisma flow diagram in Figure 1 below.
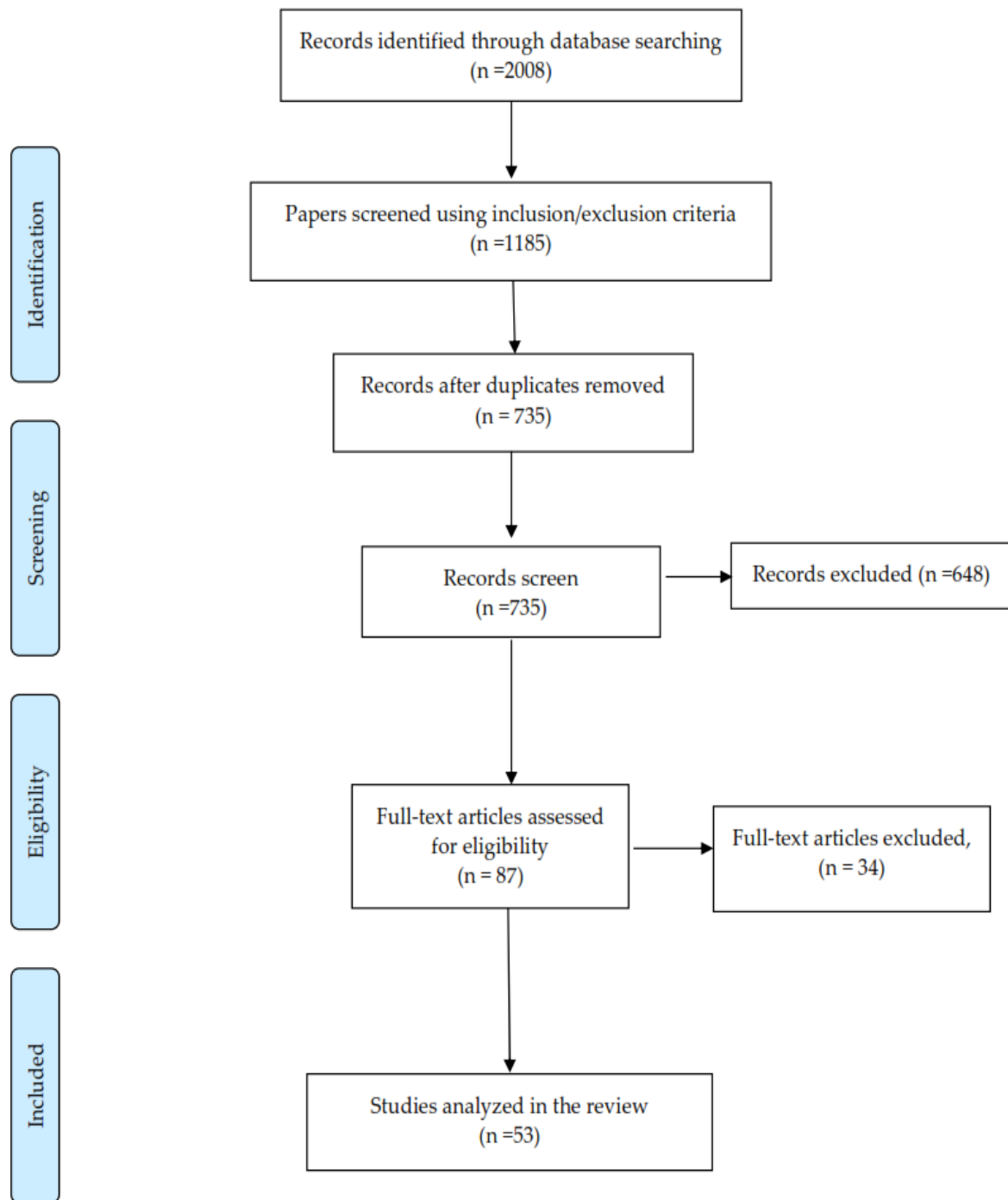
**Figure 1.** PRISMA flow chart (The last scan was conducted on 10th August 2023.)

For the validity and reliability of the study, the help of an academician working in the field of education was requested. In the selection phase of the studies, an excel form was created for 87 articles by taking the name of the article, keywords, index, year of publication, country of publication, purpose, questions, study group, research method, data collection tools, duration of teachers' experience, main findings, whether it received funding or not, suggestions, limitations, topics, and imprint information. During the full reading, the researchers decided to determine the duration of experience by using the date the teachers started to work. Again, in the sample determination criterion, only the sample of early career teachers was included in the study among the studies comparing the agency and identity of early and mid-career teachers. In addition, it has been determined that there are studies that examine teacher agency as a single subject as well as studies that examine teacher agency in different fields. For this reason, in order to create a systematic order in the article, the articles were categorized according to

the topics they addressed. The form filled by each researcher was compared mutually. Then, the mutual consistency rates of the form created by the two researchers were calculated using Miles and Huberman's (1994) reliability formula: "Reliability = Agreement / Agreement + Disagreement". According to this formula, a result of 70% and above indicates that it is reliable. The consistency rate between the researchers was found to be 86%. The parts that were not consistent were discussed among the researchers, and a 100% consensus was reached. As a result of the analysis, 53 studies were included in this article after removing 34 articles. 34 articles were excluded from the study because 24 articles did not fit the research topic, six did not meet the necessary sampling criteria, and four studies examined both new and experienced teachers without differentiating their findings.

## 4. Charting the Data

The fourth stage of scoping is the tabulation of the basic information obtained from the primary studies (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). Appendix 1, which was created as a result of the study, includes author(s), year, country, method of the studies, sample, teachers' length of experience, agency issues, purpose, and conclusion.

## 5. Collating, Summarizing and Reporting the Results

The fifth stage of Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) scoping review framework is collation, summarizing, and reporting results. The data obtained from the study were blended as descriptive, numerical summary, and qualitative.

## FINDINGS

1. What is the distribution of the studies included in the review according to the years they were conducted, the countries, the research method used, sampling, duration of experience, and the study subjects they dealt with?



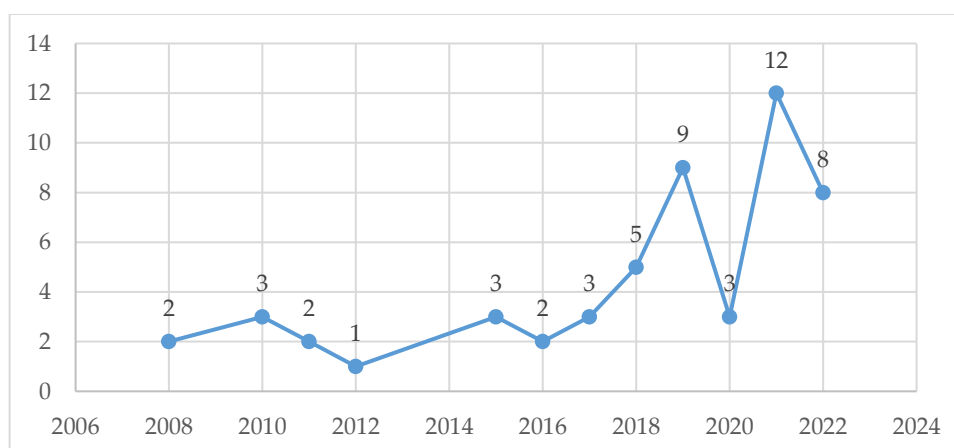**Figure 2.** Distribution of studies by years.

When Figure 2 is analyzed, the first study started in 2008, but no study was found in 2013 and 2014. Since 2016, researchers have gradually increased, but studies decreased in 2020, possibly due to worldwide COVID-19 cases disrupting research. The year 2012 (n = 1) had the least number of studies at 1.89%, while 2021 (n=12) had the most studies at 22.64%.
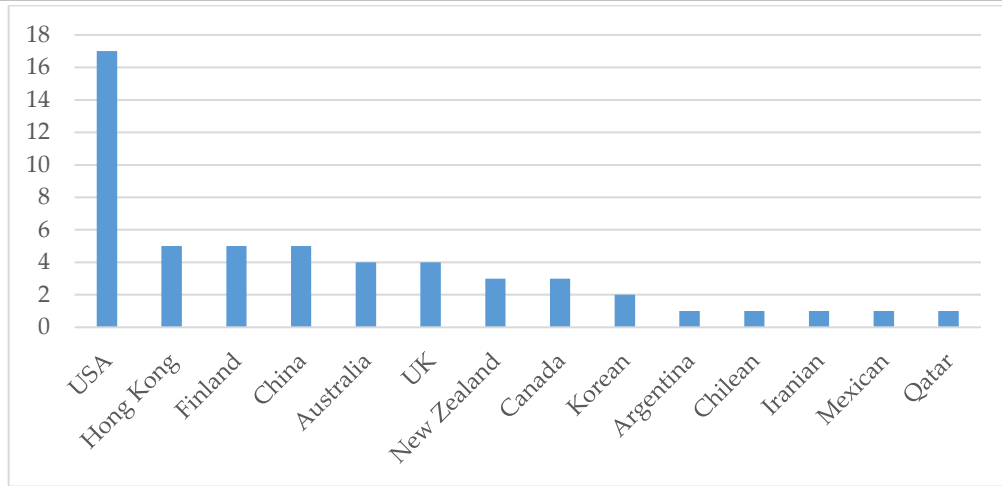
**Figure 3.** Distribution of studies by country

As Figure 3 shows, studies on the representation of prospective teachers have been conducted in 13 different countries and one autonomous region. When the distribution of the studies by country is analyzed, it can be seen that the largest number of studies, accounting for 32.08%, were conducted in the United States (n = 17). It is evident that a proportion of the studies were conducted in Hong Kong, China, and Finland (n = 5), Australia and UK (n = 4), New Zealand and Canada (n = 3), South Korea (n = 2), as well as Mexico, Qatar, Iran, Argentina, and Chile (n = 1), with percentages of 9.43%, 7.55%, 5.66%, 3.77%, and 1.89%, respectively.
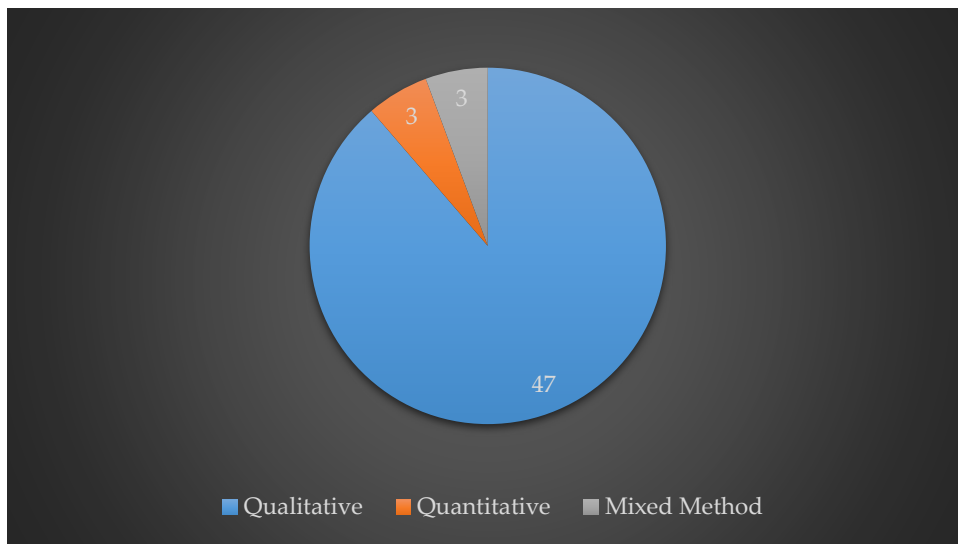


**Figure 4.** Distribution of studies by types of methods

According to Figure 4's study distribution in terms of methods, 5.66% were mixed-method (n = 3), 5.66% were quantitative (n = 3), and 88.68% were qualitative (n = 47). Researchers commonly opt for qualitative study methods, likely to obtain more in-depth insights into teachers' professional experiences. This trend may explain the preference for qualitative studies. 28.30% of the studies were part of longitudinal studies, while the remaining 71.70% were cross-sectional. Moreover, 52.83% of the studies considered in the research were funded, and the remaining 47.17% were not funded.

**Figure 5.** Distribution of studies by sample

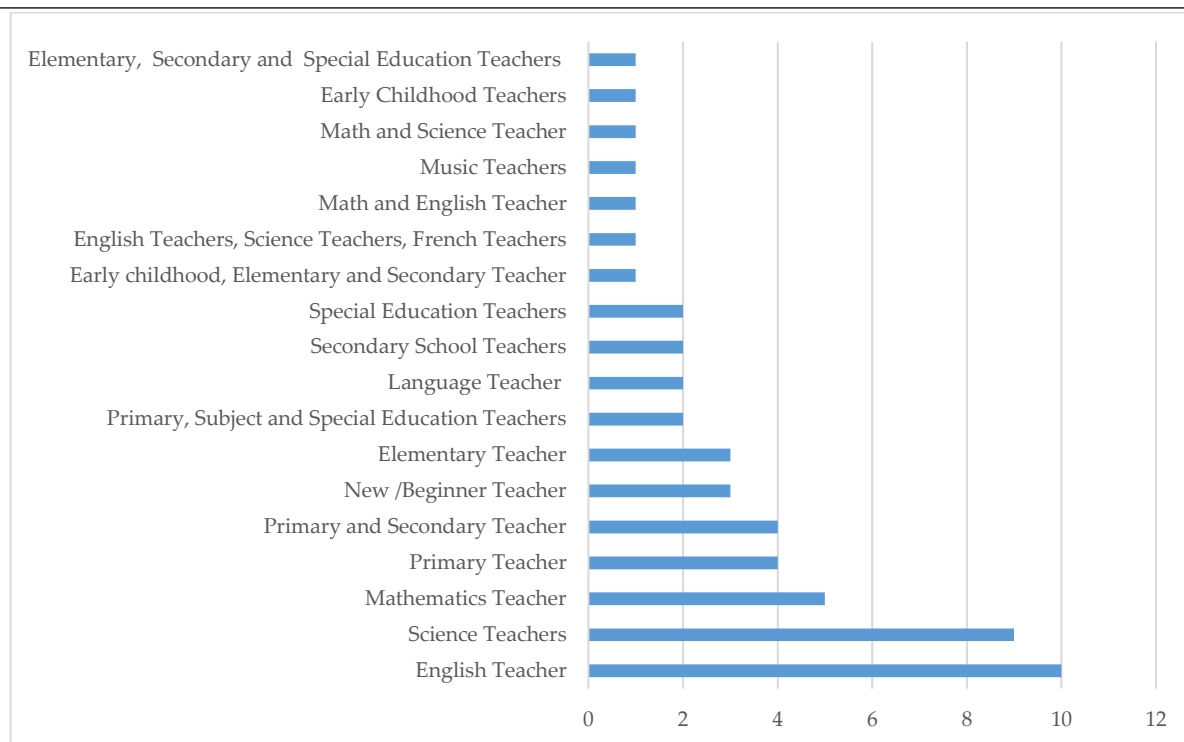The analysis of the researchers' sample selection in Figure 5 reveals that the majority of the research (18.87%, n = 10) focused on the agency of English teachers. Additionally, the researchers selected samples consisting of science, mathematics, primary school, early childhood, secondary school, special education, language, and music teachers, either alone or in varying combinations.
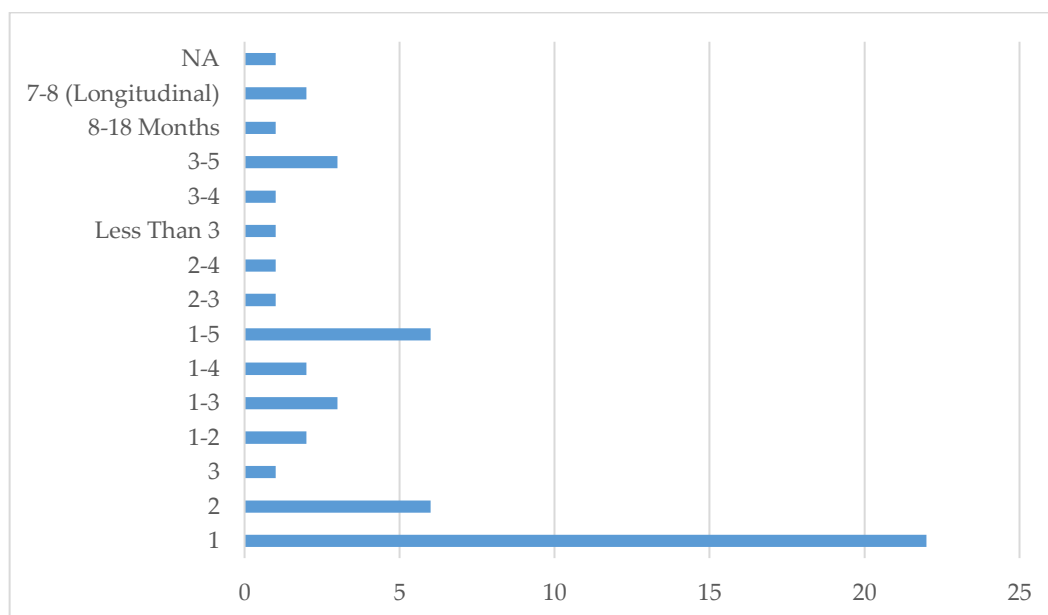


**Figure 6.** Distribution of studies by experience

According to Figure 6, analysis of the researchers' duration of experience reveals that 41.51% of them are in their first year (n = 22). This period is widely considered the most challenging in a teacher's career and provides insight into the transition from pre-service to teaching. Therefore, researchers may have chosen to focus on this group. Although the criterion for working experience duration was set at 0–5 years, two studies were included in the research due to their approximately 7-8 year longitudinal studies from the first year of teaching, which were deemed valuable contributions.

**Table 2.** Distribution of Studies by the Subjects

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Teacher Agency/Professional Agency | 17 | (Ashton, 2021; Bamber, Bullivant, Clark, & Lundie, 2019; E et al., 2022; Eteläpelto, Vähäsantanen, & Hökkä, 2015; Gan, 2018; Heikkilä, Iiskala, Mikkilä-Erdmann, & Warinowski, 2022; Heikonen, Pietarinen, Pyhältö, Toom, & Soini, 2017; Keogh, Garvis, Pendergast, & Diamond, 2012; Lim & Yun, 2022; Lu, Leung, & Li, 2021; Naraian, 2022; Nolan, 2016; Noyes, 2008; Paris & Lung, 2008; Powell, 2019; Rostami & Yousefi, 2020; Starkey, 2010; Wright, Weinberg, Sample McMeeking, Lin Hunter, & Balgopal, 2022) |
| Teacher Agency/Autonomy | 2 | (Fisher-Ari & Lynch, 2015; Huang, Lock, & Teng, 2019) |
| Teacher Development/Agency | 4 | (Huang & Yip, 2021; Rodriguez, 2015; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2011; Villegas-Torres & Lengeling, 2021) |
| Teachers' Perspectives | 1 | (Manuel & Carter, 2016) |
| Teacher Attrition/ Teacher Identity-Agency | 1 | (Trent, 2017) |
| Leadership Development | 2 | (Chaaban & Sawalhi, 2021; Woodhouse & Pedder, 2017) |
| Teacher Development/ Identy and Agency | 3 | (Brunetti & Marston, 2018; Huang, 2021; Losano, Fiorentini, & Villarreal, 2018) |
| Identities and Agency | 7 | (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2011; Narayanan & Ordynans, 2022; Ro, 2019; Wei, Avraamidou, & Chen, 2021; Wei, Chen, & Chen, 2020; Wilson & Deaney, 2010; Wray & Richmond, 2018) |
| Teacher Social Networks | 1 | (Lane & Sweeny, 2019) |
| Reform | 2 | (Lockton & Fargason, 2019; Olitsky, 2021) |
| Social Justice/ Agency | 3 | (Kettle, Burnett, Lampert, Comber, & Barnes, 2022; Marco-Bujosa, McNeill, & Friedman, 2019; Naraian & Schlessinger, 2018) |
| Accountability/Reform | 1 | (Connors & Bengtson, 2020) |
| Quality Teacher/Accountability | 1 | (Sullivan, Johnson, Simons, & Tippett, 2021) |
| Relational Agency | 2 | (Glas, Martínez-Miranda, & Dittmar, 2021; Schaefer, Hennig, & Clandinin, 2021) |
| Identity, Resilience and Agency | 1 | (Cobb, 2022) |
| Resilience and Agency | 2 | (Castro, Kelly, & Shih, 2010; Xun, Zhu, & Rice, 2021) |
| Reform/Identities and Agency | 1 | (Wei & Chen, 2019) |
| Accountability | 1 | (Taylor, 2019) |
| Agency, Efficacy and Resilience | 1 | (Keogh et al., 2012) |

Considering the distribution of studies in Table 2 by topics, it is apparent that the agency studies primarily focus on teacher or professional agency, autonomy, teacher or professional development, teacher perspectives, teacher attrition, leadership development, teacher social networks, social justice, accountability, reform, teacher quality, relational agency, identity, resilience, and various combinations of these subjects.

2) What are the situations that challenges or restrains the agency of novice teachers?

Novice teachers face many challenges in the early years of the profession that affect their agency. In the studies analyzed, novice teachers' stances, struggles, and negotiations against the challenges indicated in Appendix 1 determined their agency. First of all, the attitudes, behaviors, perspectives on education, the organizational environment, and discourses of school principals or leaders who are responsible for the working context have a great impact on the agency of novice teachers. Authoritarian rhetoric and attitudes from school principals or leaders, as well as top-down decision-making without taking into account the voices of teachers, failure to provide necessary support and assistance for novice teachers, inadequate provision of materials and resources needed to conduct effective lessons, and limitation of teachers' autonomy are some of the challenges faced by novice teachers. When examining the negative factors influencing their agency in school or work environments, certain issues are evident. These issues include accountability and performance pressures, inflexible school culture, traditional educational philosophy and methods, severe criticism of novice teachers in reform efforts, rigid school policies and procedures, demands and stress associated with teaching, and adherence to textbooks or curricula. Other factors that impact the agency of novice teachers include challenges with social and pedagogical classroom management, low self-

confidence and self-efficacy, curriculum preparation and implementation, the perception of colleagues that lower student achievement is inevitable and unchangeable, bureaucratic work requirements, and time limitations. Issues such as lack of collegial cooperation and support, problematic or absent parental relations, inadequate support, mentorship, and ineffective mentorship practices, family tensions, lack of respect, low salaries, negative portrayal of teachers by the media, qualifications lacking among teachers, and heavy workload have been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic.

3) What are the findings of the studies on the agency of novice teachers?

In this section, the findings of the analyzed studies will be discussed in terms of their distribution according to the issues related to agency.

**Teacher Agency**

Teachers' definitions of difficulties may vary depending on the school context; teachers' personal philosophies and personalities, and the presence of a supportive and collaborative work environment play an important role in teachers' agency (Ashton, 2021; Gan, 2018; Lu et al., 2021). In addition, novice teachers may hesitate to use their agency because they lack power and status within the existing context, and when they do not dare to use their agency, they accept the terms of the existing context and fail to bring about the desired change in schools (Powell, 2019). When they find the necessary courage and they want to introduce modern educational practices against traditional ones, they may receive a reaction from the existing doxa. Once teachers have discovered that doxa will not change immediately in the context of their work, they can demonstrate their agency by hiding or not mentioning modern educational practices (Nolan, 2016). At the same time, it is thought that the social tendencies that constitute the existing habitus of teachers are utilized by teachers in using their agency to adapt to the habitat of the school, and that the harmony between habitus and habitat can be effective in retaining teachers (Noyes, 2008). In schools, it was found that there was a positive relationship between novice teachers' perceived incompetence in student interaction and teachers' turnover intentions, and a negative relationship between teachers' sense of professional agency in the classroom (Heikonen et al., 2017).

Standardization practices and political conditions are among the situations that teachers have to deal with. Teachers are subjected to formal and informal pressures due to standardization practices. In their research on the impact of standardization practices on early childhood teachers, Paris and Lung (2008) found that teachers had to contend with pressure from the school principal and demands from parents that were not appropriate for children's development. In addition to these challenges, teachers are reported to take a stand for children's development, welfare, and the well-being of families, and to demonstrate autonomy, self-efficacy, intentionality, and reflectivity in the use of their agency (Paris & Lung, 2008). When Naraian (2022) investigated how a novice inclusion teacher manifests agency, he found that novice teachers exhibit attenuated agency in relation to the responsibilities and duties of the teacher in the school under the current neoliberal conditions.

The agency of novice teachers in schools is determined by the school principal, their relationships with colleagues, supportive and cooperative organizational environment. This situation is revealed in many studies. Novice teachers' agency in the work context can emerge through professional talk with peers, colleagues, and managers, dialogic feedback, and collaboration with online communities. In addition, since novice teachers believe that administrators and experienced teachers have higher identity and agency, it has been revealed that novice teachers perform better with positive feedback from them, and negative feedback increases the probability of leaving their profession (Rostami & Yousefi, 2020). After the teachers got over the reality shock, it was concluded that with the understanding of the working context, teachers were able to get professional support, trial and error, and to use their initiative and agency in the face of difficulties (Lim & Yun, 2022). Schools need to be equipped and given the necessary support for effective implementation. Starkey (2010) stated that novice teachers can show their agency against rigid school procedures and policies by knowing how to access and acquire digital equipment in schools (Starkey, 2010). It is concluded that teachers can use their agency at certain levels by taking into account the role of

the school principal and the working context in reflecting the political and ethical values of the country to education (Bamber et al., 2019). Sudden and unexpected situations can affect the whole education. One of these situations is the COVID-19 pandemic. Wright et al. (2022) examined the reactions of novice teachers in the face of adverse conditions caused by the pandemic and reported that the lack of necessary support from the school principal negatively affected the agency of novice teachers.

Teacher education is seen to be important for agency. It is possible to observe this in studies conducted in Finland. Novice teachers in Finland showed strong agency in creating and implementing new ideas and methods for change in the classroom context, initiating and participating in joint professional activities, and assuming responsibility appropriate to the current context. However, they showed weak agency in social management of the classroom and ethical standards (Eteläpelto et al., 2015). Again, according to the longitudinal study conducted in Finland, how the agency of novice teachers changed over time was examined. It has been reported that the teachers participating in the study have three levels of teacher agency profiles with 64% high level, 32% medium level, and 4% low level (E et al., 2022). In the narratives of Finnish teachers discussing their teacher education and work, the factors that affect agency include low salaries and lack of appreciation, multiculturalism, inadequate digital tools, culturally demanding parents, negative social media comments, and a lack of professional training (Heikkilä et al., 2022).

## Identity and Agency

Teachers begin their career with an image of teaching, a teacher identity. The mismatch between novice teachers' beliefs about the ideal teacher and the actual practice in school leads them to question their identity. As a result of this questioning, teachers reconstruct their existing identities by re-evaluating the characteristics of the working context and using the transformative feature of agency (Ro, 2019). If there is no necessary negotiation or identity transformation between the conditions of the school context and the existing self-image, accompanied by a negative self and low self-efficacy, teachers may fail in the pedagogical and social management of the classroom. This leads to increased attrition and even resignation due to intense anxiety, stress, and frustration (Trent, 2017; Wilson & Deaney, 2010). It has been observed that teachers cannot realize identity transformation only through their individual agency, but with the help, support, and cooperation of administrators, colleagues (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2011), and mentors in the context, and with their relational agency. This support and collaboration enables teachers to cope with negative situations and contributes to their development of agency and identity (Wray & Richmond, 2018). In cases where support was not sufficient, some novice teachers found gaps in the context or figured worlds in the face of challenges, used their agency to take a stance against challenges through improvisational attempts, and renegotiated their initial identities (Losano et al., 2018). Teachers have been observed exercising their agency and shaping their identities by striving for the well-being and learning of students by confronting and even challenging the expectations of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic (Narayanan & Ordynans, 2022).

Wei and Chen (2019) examined how agency emerges and how it interacts with identity in science education applied reform work in China. They identified six domains in which agency manifests in novice teachers. Of these, personal characteristics and beliefs represent the perspective aspect of agency, while interaction with students and colleagues, curriculum, materials, and important examinations represent the action aspect of agency. It was also revealed that the perspective aspect of agency influences the actions aspect of agency. It was concluded that the teachers in this study demonstrated positive and negative agency in the practices of the science course, and that agency is in constant interaction with identity formation.

Wei et al. (2020) investigated how three novice science teachers in China presented their identities during practical work in the school environment and what the differences and commonalities of their identities were. They found that teacher identity consists of four different dimensions: personal characteristics dimension, interaction dimension representing relationships with colleagues and students, discourse dimension consisting of beliefs about practical work, and institutional interactions dimension. It was concluded that agency plays a central role in identity

formation in terms of practical work, that it interacts indirectly with these four dimensions, and that teachers can show negative/positive and passive/active aspects of agency in each dimension. In addition to the four dimensions of teacher identity (personal characteristics, interaction, discourse, institutional interaction), they added the dimension of agency.

Wei et al. (2021) examined the formation of a novice science teacher's identity in applied studies in a socio-cultural context. They tried to explain the teacher's professional identity in four categories: (a) personal characteristics, (b) contextual constraints, (c) sense of agency, and (d) ongoing interpretation of practical work and experiences. It was stated that the science teacher primarily used his personal characteristics in his applied science studies at school to show his students that physics is an applied science and to make them like it. However, it was reported that although contextual factors such as accountability pressure on student achievement, the curriculum that teachers had to carry out and time constraints had a negative impact on the teacher's hands-on work, the teacher searched for colleagues to work with her and found teachers with whom she could collaborate. It was concluded that the teacher's efforts to eliminate negative contextual elements used her sense of agency and strengthened her identity.

### Efficacy, Resilience and Agency

Researchers have examined the relationship between agency and resilience, efficacy and identity. It has been suggested that as novice teachers begin to adapt to their working context and become more successful in classroom practice, their agency, efficacy and resilience will contribute to their development as their self-efficacy increases (Keogh et al., 2012). At the same time, it has been concluded that resilient teachers use agency in the process of overcoming difficulties in the face of current pressures, challenges and fluctuating feelings of confidence in the process (Castro et al., 2010). It has also been emphasized that agency and resilience play an important role in the construction of identity in the early years of the profession (Xun et al., 2021) and that identity, resilience, and agency work in harmony in mutual interaction (Cobb, 2022). It was concluded that COVID-19 pandemic conditions tested the resilience of novice teachers and negatively affected their agency (Xun et al., 2021).

### Social Justice and Agency

The researchers investigated novice teachers' agency in the context of social justice since teachers are supposed to be the agents of change for a socially just and equitable pedagogy. Marco-Bujosa et al. (2019) investigated social justice, identity, and agency change in the transition from in-service training to teaching in urban schools. They observed that novice teachers used their agency in the face of challenges, transformed their identities, and on the basis of social justice, teachers not only focused on students' learning but also tried to change the existing school policies of the school that hindered their learning. Naraian and Schlessinger (2018) investigated the process of teachers' fulfillment of inclusive education and how they struggle against difficulties. It was concluded that teachers use their agency in their professional roles, curriculum preparation and implementation, student and colleague relations, and agency in their professional roles by using a critical understanding of equality and difference to the demands of the performativity culture. Kettle et al. (2022) reported that in Australia, teachers for low socio-cultural students use indigenous culture and language in their curriculum practices, strive to eliminate student-teacher power inequalities, and use agency in the form of using personal funds and opportunities to combat disadvantage and high poverty.

### Autonomy

Teachers need to be autonomous in their work context in order to have agency. In Fisher-Ari and Lynch's (2015) study on curriculum creation and implementation, 46% of novice teachers reported that they accepted the curriculum uncritically, believing that it was imposed from outside, that students and teachers were objects rather than subjects of the curriculum, and that they were unsure how to exercise their identity, agency, and autonomy. However, it was concluded that over time, when they receive the necessary support for curriculum design (Teach

For America), teachers will be able to develop a critical epistemological stance towards the curriculum and will be able to use their flexibility, autonomy, and agency. It has been stated that if there is a supportive and collaborative socio-institutional context in schools, teachers can be provided with spaces to exercise their autonomy and use their agency (Huang et al., 2019).

**Leadership and Agency**

Chaaban and Sawalhi (2021) examined the relationship between prospective teachers' leadership skills and their agency in a socio-cultural context. The study assessed student teachers' agency in the personal, relational and contextual domains. Personally, it was found that student teachers were enthusiastic about achieving their career goals and made efforts to support students' social-emotional well-being. Relationally, teachers were successful in initiating learning activities for their students, influencing their colleagues and working collaboratively. Contextually, the inability of some teachers to demonstrate leadership and agency was attributed to factors such as a rigid school culture and inadequate decision-making processes. Overall, it was concluded that novice teachers receiving affirmation and appreciation from school leaders, trust and support to encourage innovation helps teachers to identify with leadership values, feel a sense of belonging to the school, gain autonomy and agency, and uncover and use their leadership skills (Woodhouse & Pedder, 2017).

**Reform and Agency**

The pressure that teachers feel due to accountability for carrying out reform instructions can support or limit their ability to realize their agency depending on the school context and culture (Connors & Bengtson, 2020). Supporting novice teachers in their reform efforts by school principal, providing autonomy, positive mentor advice, and feedback can help novice teachers develop positive identities and use their agency. At the same time, self-talk as a method for teachers to use their agency has been observed to be used by these teachers to question the reasons for their failures, problem-solve to correct them, and plan for the future. On the contrary, self-talks are realized within the framework of disappointments and negative thoughts reflecting the emotional state, and negative feedback can cause teachers to change schools or resign (Olitsky, 2021).

Lockton and Fargason (2019) examined novice and experienced teachers' agency towards institutionalized practices in schools, teacher education programs, and school reform efforts in the context of structure and culture. When novice and experienced teachers' differences towards school reform efforts were examined, no difference was found between the two groups; however, it was emphasized that there was a difference within the groups. It was found that schools that support institutional practices are often widely supported by formal and informal power and status structures that privilege seniority. For this reason, it was observed that some of the experienced teachers maintained the existing institutional practices, while novice teachers acted together with experienced teachers and did not use their agency. Those who used their agency implemented reforms and challenged the status quo, but did so without destroying their relationships with their colleagues. It was also observed that some of the novice teachers used their agency by not talking about reform practices without disturbing their relations with the status quo.

**Professional Development and Agency**

In professional development research, novice teachers' agency has been investigated. Novice teachers may submit to authoritarian discourse due to external norms and pressures. However, when they are enabled to use their agency positively with a high sense of self-efficacy, it is stated that progress can be achieved in their professional development (Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2011). Sometimes, when teachers face problems and challenges in the school context, receiving help and support from the people they socialize with can help them use agency and transform their attitude and identity towards professional development (Villegas-Torres & Lengeling, 2021).

Rodriguez (2015) analyzed how novice teachers cope with institutional and socio-cultural challenges within the structure-agency dialectic framework. He explored the challenges science teachers encounter at school through two main themes. The first institutional challenge is the school's limited resources, which lead to concerns about the

time and resources needed for developing a multicultural curriculum. The guilt of not being able to carry out some of the activities, along with the teacher's own out-of-pocket procurement of materials, also contribute to this challenge and create tension in the family. The second challenge is socio-cultural, including factors like low expectations for student achievement and low student participation and success in lessons. Thanks to the constructive dialogue with the teacher mentor, the teacher employed effective practices to develop a curriculum featuring socio-transformative constructivism, fostered a scientific community, raised student achievement, dispelled negative perceptions regarding achievement, and was acknowledged as a leader by peers and the school principal.

Brunetti and Marston (2018) examined the professional development of early and mid-career teachers in terms of identity and agency. They found that teacher identity consists of six themes (validation, collaboration, relationship with students, continuing professional development, leadership, and balance), but that each theme has different proportions in early and mid-career. Validation is the appreciation of teachers by their principal, colleagues, students, and parents, and it was emphasized that external validation is important for novice teachers and internal validation is important for mid-career teachers. Collaboration with colleagues was seen as essential for professional development, helping to shape the identity of novice teachers and providing a high sense of agency. In relationships with students, which is a part of professional identity, it was argued that novice teachers focus primarily on lesson implementation and student behavior, while as the career progresses, the focus shifts to student learning and the development of the whole child. It was emphasized that continuous professional development is important for teachers at all career stages and is considered as an indicator of agency. Professional development was said to be done first for immediate needs, then for the teacher's own desire for professional development, and finally for autonomy. Balance is related to the ability of teachers to allocate their time and energy satisfactorily to professional responsibilities and personal interests and demands, and it was noted that novice teachers spend too much time on their new profession and not enough time for themselves. Teachers were said to be able to demonstrate their leadership role as their career progressed. In the first years of their career, novice teachers were in search of identity, and agency was not related to career stage. In general, it was concluded that context is decisive in professional development, teacher identity includes six elements, and a highly developed sense of identity is associated with increased agency.

Huang and Yip (2021) examined how three English teachers in Hong Kong used their agency in their teaching and professional development over a period of seven to eight years after they started teaching. The study utilized the TRFCAC model developed by Jenkins and was organized in a three-tiered framework. In the first layer, novice teachers were reported to show proactive agency through goal-oriented effort in their work practices with colleague and mentor support, reactive agency as a result of forced changes, and passive agency when teachers had low competence and motivation for change. Teachers can switch between the changing school context and the state of agency. In the second layer, perceptions of teacher agency can change significantly over time, especially in terms of intentionality and foresight. Such changes affected three teachers' self-reflexivity and self-reactivity. In the third layer, personal, environmental, and behavioral determinants functioned together and influenced the professional agency of the three teachers. The mismatch between perceived and actual teaching practices has been reported to be a constraint for teachers' awareness of their actions to use their agency in teaching.

In his longitudinal study, Huang (2021) investigated teacher professional development through agency and identity. It was stated that an English teacher had to work in three different schools in a period of seven to eight years due to different reasons, such as different institutional cultures in schools, lack of cooperation among colleagues, authoritarian school leadership, tensions in work and family life. In fact, depending on the education the teacher received, it was stated that the teacher wanted to apply an innovative educational philosophy, had a pedagogical stance, and drew the image of a strong teacher identity. However, conflicts and incompatibilities between the teacher's teaching image and the realities were mentioned to have a negative impact on the teacher's

identity. It is concluded that external macro systematic, political, sociocultural factors can negatively affect the development of teacher identity and agency.

## Relational Agency

Glas et al. (2021) investigated the role of teacher agency in students' beliefs and experiences regarding student motivation to learn English as a foreign language. They reported that teachers demonstrated a clear sense of responsibility despite challenges such as administrative workload, lack of parental support, the school's rigid assessment system, lack of materials, and pressure to work under teacher-centered methodologies. It was observed that teachers tried to use relational agency by wanting to share their agency with students to transform their classrooms into motivating learning environments. In identifying the sources of students' frustrations and lack of motivation, the teachers' lack of experience and inability to fully utilize their agency was identified. In other words, it was concluded that teachers could not use their relational agency and remained at the level of individual agency in motivation.

Schaefer et al. (2021) investigated the relational agency aspects of novice teachers' interactions with children and the support they receive at school. The teachers who participated in the study stated that their relationships with children were important not only inside the school but also outside. It was observed that they were able to use their agency in their relationships with children. Teachers emphasized that relational support was important and that they sought the support of their mentors, colleagues, and even school principal. Some teachers reported that they were able to provide support by building relationships with colleagues, but some teachers reported that they did not receive this support. Novice teachers reported that they felt a sense of belonging as part of the school and that this belonging created opportunities for them to use relational factors. It was concluded that the professional knowledge environment provides the basis for building relational agency.

There are also studies that include the agency of novice teachers in different subjects. Manuel and Carter (2016) examined the extent to which the motivation and experiences of novice teachers in Australia changed during the process from the teachers' perspectives. In general, it was concluded that novice teachers' agency was limited due to the pressure to prepare for high-stakes exams, workload, lack of autonomy in the classroom, and lack of consideration of teachers' views in school decisions. Between 20% and 50% of the teachers who participated in the study stated that they wanted to leave the profession within the first five years of teaching.

Taylor (2019) investigated how high-stakes testing shapes teacher agency. In the explanation of how high-stakes testing restricts teacher agency, it was stated that teachers use their proximity to test creators, administrators, and students and their position in the hierarchy. According to the power hierarchy, test creators and administrators are positioned above the teacher, so they have no chance to intervene, but it is concluded that they can use their agency on behalf of their students (Taylor, 2019).

Lane and Sweeny (2019) examined the relationship between novice teachers' social tie formation in the organizational structure and their agency. It was concluded that teachers use their agency by establishing strong ties with the school staff and colleagues they work with in their daily routines at school, which is the most likely to provide meaningful and consistent help in time within the organizational structure. Again, it was also stated that teachers establish weak ties with people who cannot provide resources for them because it would be a waste of time and energy. It is argued that distinguishing between strong and weak ties is necessary to understand teacher agency (Lane & Sweeny, 2019).

Sullivan et al. (2021) examined how novice teachers perceive the quality of high-achieving teachers, and how they evaluate themselves according to a quality framework. The study highlighted that early career teachers were under accountability and performativity pressures, but also expressed opinions regarding desirable teacher qualities. The study's agency results suggest that effective classroom learning requires passionate and committed teachers who prioritize building positive relationships with students. Additionally, teachers should strive to make a positive impact on students' lives and engage in continuous professional development (Sullivan et al., 2021).

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

As a result of the study, 53 articles analyzing the agency of novice teachers were found. In general, what is noteworthy in these articles is that the situations that prevent the agency of novice teachers are similar in the process. For this reason, the results of the agency of novice teachers were evaluated in terms of teacher education, school context, and politics and recommendations were made.

When the agency findings of novice teachers in the studies are analyzed in general, it can be said that teacher education is not sufficient. Researchers emphasize that pre-service teachers are not fully prepared for the school context as they focus more on content knowledge and methods during their education (Cobb, 2022; Gan, 2018). This situation causes almost all teachers to make an intense effort to adapt to the school context in their first year and causes teachers to be worn out. Therefore, as Lipponen and Kumpulainen (2011) argue that teacher education should not only focus on content knowledge and methods, but also provide an education that strengthens the identity and agency of pre-service teachers from the first year of teacher education.

Teacher education should also be organized in a way that allows them to develop skills in analyzing the school's policies, culture, bureaucracy, conditions, practices, and values. Teachers need to be prepared for the fact that they will negotiate power with the politics, culture, and actors that make up the school context and that they will shape their autonomy, identity, and agency according to this negotiation. A training of this scope can ease the transition to the profession and enable teachers to cope with professional challenges more easily. It can also be said that there are deficiencies in curriculum preparation during teacher training (Ashton, 2021; Fisher-Ari & Lynch, 2015). Teachers have problems in creating a multicultural inclusive curriculum in their first year (Rodriguez, 2015). Due to their lack of epistemological and critical perspectives, teachers are concerned about curriculum creation, implementation, and student achievement. Therefore, pre-service teachers should be given additional training on curriculum design and implementation during their university education.

Research indicates that novice teachers do not know how to collaborate with their colleagues (Losano et al., 2018; Trent, 2017). It is seen that their inability to collaborate professionally causes the normal practices or reform practices in the school to fail and not to show their agency (Lockton & Fargason, 2019). A pre-service teacher should be trained to communicate and collaborate with school administrators, colleagues, and other actors.

It has been observed that teachers start their careers with excitement, love, desire to teach, and an image of a teacher. Teachers want to reflect their modern practices, professional beliefs, personal qualities, and educational philosophies to their lessons and to make a change or a difference (Chaaban & Sawalhi, 2021; Wei et al., 2021). When the agency of novice teachers is evaluated within the school context, it can be said that there are conflicts between modern educational practices and traditional educational practices (Nolan, 2016; Trent, 2017). This is also seen in reform practices (Lockton & Fargason, 2019). The fact that some teachers are students in the current culture and then teach in the same culture a few years later may prevent them from being agency. Novice teachers are seen to be unable to show their agency in modern education or reform practices by avoiding conflicts with school culture or school leaders and colleagues due to the belief of lack of power and status (Powell, 2019). Sometimes it is observed that novice teachers show their agency by not mentioning or hiding when they realize modern education practices or reform practices (Lockton & Fargason, 2019; Losano et al., 2018; Nolan, 2016).

When teachers fail to analyze the school context, they may face identity shock. If they cannot transform their identities, it is seen that they experience limited agency, frustration, disappointment, and this situation even causes them to change schools and resign (Huang, 2021; Trent, 2017; Wilson & Deaney, 2010).

Studies show that the key actor determining the agency of teachers in the school context is the school principal (Eteläpelto et al., 2015). The principal is responsible for implementing school policies, providing resources, supervising and evaluating practices, giving teachers autonomy, providing an organizational environment that fosters collaboration, helping novice teachers, and supporting novice teachers. When principals make top-down decisions without listening to teachers' voices, criticize novice teachers, fail to provide resources and support,

teachers become frustrated and resign (Gan, 2018; Huang, 2021; Manuel & Carter, 2016; Marco-Bujosa et al., 2019; Trent, 2017; Wray & Richmond, 2018). Principals should provide novice teachers with autonomy, help them to be a part of education and feel a sense of belonging to the school, and contribute to their professional development. Principals' approval and appreciation of teachers' practices can also help them develop their identity and agency and create an environment of collaboration with other colleagues. It can provide opportunities for teachers to take on leadership responsibilities.

Novice teachers need help and support because the teacher's agency changes with time and context. Although mentoring is practiced in some countries, its effectiveness and efficiency are open to debate. The fact that it takes place in meetings on certain days of the week is far from effective in responding to teachers' needs and solving problems. One-size-fits-all mentoring should be abandoned. Mentors' relationship and communication with teachers are also important. Mentors' harsh criticism of teachers' practices negatively affects teachers' identities and agency (Gan, 2018; Huang, 2018; Wray & Richmond, 2018). When teachers cannot find the help they need, they seek help from different sources or channels. Teachers seek professional support from colleagues in different schools through social media channels (e.g., teacher WhatsApp groups, teacher forums) and emotional support from friends and family (Rostami & Yousef, 2018). When some teachers cannot find the help they are looking for, they improvise to cope with difficulties and develop solutions to their problems using trial and error (Lim & Yun, 2022; Losano et al., 2018). Instead of traditional mentoring, needs-based, individual, supportive, encouraging, directive, reflectivity and dialogic mentoring should be practiced.

Politically implemented neoliberal policies, professional standards, accountability and performativity, and top-down decision-making reduce the agency of novice teachers. These political repercussions lead to a high attrition rate in teachers' early years and negatively affect their professional development. Policymakers expect teachers to provide high-quality education while limiting their agency through their education policies. Policymakers need to realize that this leads to a contradiction. Again, as a result of these policies, teachers are expected to take responsibility for fulfilling the various demands placed on them as soon as they enter the profession. Novice teachers, like experienced teachers, are expected to achieve student achievements or be politically evaluated based on students' performance on standardized tests, perform pedagogical and social management of the classroom, and fulfill administrative tasks assigned by the school principal. For teachers, this leads to an excessive workload. In South Korea, the extent to which the heavy workload strains novice teachers is exemplified as follows:

"*Minwoo said he had been skipping lunch for about a month to save time for one-on-one meetings with each of his homeroom students because of his busy schedule and intense workload*" (Ro, 2019).

Many teachers are overwhelmed by this heavy workload (Ashton, 2021; Lim & Yun, 2022; Ro, 2019; Rodriguez, 2015). Therefore, the workload of novice teachers should be re-evaluated, and necessary arrangements should be made. Policymakers should not evaluate the success of teachers only with the performative criteria of standardized tests. Resources should be provided, and legal arrangements should be made to support the continuous professional development of teachers.

When the studies are analyzed, there are no studies examining the agency of novice teachers except in the countries of the United States, Hong Kong, China, Finland, Australia, UK, New Zealand, Canada, South Korea, Mexico, Qatar, Iran, Argentina, and Chile. When the studies are analyzed methodologically, it is seen that the rate of qualitative studies is 88.68%. For this reason, more quantitative and mixed studies are needed to evaluate the agency of novice teachers in all aspects. At the same time, except for a few studies, the samples of the studies are always small-scale, and new studies can be conducted by increasing the number of samples. It was seen that English, science, mathematics, primary school, early childhood, secondary school, special education, language, and music teachers were mostly selected as the sample, and no study was found in other teacher branches. When the studies conducted in terms of professional experience were evaluated, the rate of studies considering the first year of teaching was found to be 41.51%. Longitudinal studies can be conducted to understand how the change of teachers' agency in the process is affected in the school context. When the studies are ranked from the most studied topic to the least studied

topic, it is seen that the studies were conducted on topics such as novice teachers' agency, identity, professional development, resilience, reform, social justice, autonomy, leadership development, relational agency, teacher attrition, teacher social networks, teacher quality, accountability, and teacher views. Therefore, in the future, new studies can be conducted on under-studied topics and thus contribute to the literature.

Consequently, it was found that the factors that negatively affect the agency of novice teachers are inadequate teacher education, conflicts between modern education practices and traditional education practices, rigid school culture, lack of resources, authoritarian school principals, teachers' inability to transform their identities, teachers' inability to get the help and support they need, lack of effective mentoring, lack of collaboration with colleagues, neoliberal policies, accountability, and performativity. The recommendations made in line with the findings of this study may help to prevent teacher attrition and resignation. In addition, it is thought that this study will be useful for teacher educators, researchers, and policymakers.

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**Appendix 1.** Findings of Studies

| Author(S) Years | Country | Types Of Method | Types Of Sample | Years Of Experience | Subject | Purpose | Barriers | Finding |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (Noyes, 2008) | UK | Qualitative | 2 Math Teacher | 1 | Teacher Agency | Investigating the mismatch between teachers' habitus and school habitus | Working, educational and social conditions of the school | Teachers' social dispositions, which constitute their existing habitus, are effective in using their agency to adapt to the habitat of the school. |
| (Paris & Lung, 2008) | USA | Mixed Methot | 18 Early Childhood Teachers | 1-5 | Teacher Agency | Teacher agency under conditions of standardisation | School principal, parents, | In the face of standardization, teachers showed their agency by standing against the pressure of the school principal and the criticism of the parents, considering the well-being and welfare of their children, |
| (Castro et al., 2010) | USA | Qualitative | 7 Secondary, 3 Elementary 5 Special Education Teachers | 1 | Resilience and Agency | Research resilience strategies | Bureaucracy, curriculum presentation, lack of communication between colleagues and parents, classroom management, equipment, lack of support from the school principal | Resilient teachers' use their agency in the process of overcoming difficulties |
| (Starkey, 2010) | New Zealand | Qualitative | 6 Secondary Teachers | 1 | Teacher Agency | First year experiences of teachers' digital skills | School policies and procedures, lack of support and access to equipment, | Teachers used their agency to overcome the problems they faced, to know how to acquire digital tools and to acquire them. |
| (Wilson & Deaney, 2010) | UK | Qualitative | 1 Science Teacher | 1 | Identity and Agency | The role of agency in identity construction | Negative self, lack of self-efficacy, social and pedagogical management of the classroom | Teacher's resignation due to not being able to use the transformative feature of agency in identity construction |
| (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2011) | Canada | Qualitative | 35 New teachers | 1 | Identity and Agency | Identity change in transition from pre-service to in-service | Lack of support | Teachers should use identity transformation with their relational agency as well as their individual agency. |
| (Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2011) | Finland | Qualitative | 11 Foreign Language Teachers | 3-4 | Teacher Development/ Agency | Agency of teachers' discourses in professional development | Curriculum, authoritarian discourse, classroom management, time pressure, lack of equipment | Seven of the teachers who participated in the study succumbed to authoritarian discourse due to external norms and pressures, while four teachers were able to use their agency positively with a high sense of self-efficacy, and their professional development was also related to the level of use of their agency. |
| (Keogh et al., 2012) | Australia | Qualitative | 16 Primary, Middle and Secondary Teachers | 1 | Agency, Efficacy and Resilience | How teachers demonstrate efficacy, agency and resilience in their first year | Bureaucratic demands, insufficient support, classroom management, lack of collaboration with colleagues | As novice teachers become familiar with the working context, they are more successful in classroom practices, which contributes to the development of teachers' efficacy, agency and resilience due to increased self-efficacy. |
| (Eteläpelto et al., 2015) | Finland | Qualitative | 13 Primary Teachers | 1-5 | Professional Agency | Professional agency in the first year and the factors affecting it | School principal | Teachers showed strong agency in creating new ideas for change in the classroom context, implementing new methods, initiating and participating in joint activities at the school level, assuming joint responsibilities as much as their mental or physical resources allowed, and weak agency in social management of the classroom and maintaining ethical standards, |

| Author(S) Years | Country | Types Of Method | Types Of Sample | Years Of Experience | Subject | Purpose | Barriers | Finding |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (Fisher-Ari & Lynch, 2015) | USA | Qualitative | 27 Elementary Teacher | 2 | Teacher Agency/ Autonomy | The extent to which teachers are able to use their flexibility and agency in designing and implementing curricula | Curriculum preparation, lack of autonomy | 46% of the teachers believed that the curriculum was imposed from outside, that students and teachers were objects instead of subjects of the curriculum, that they accepted it uncritically, that they were not sure how they could use their identity, agency and autonomy, but that the level of agency use increased with TFA. |
| (Rodriguez, 2015) | USA | Qualitative | 1 Science Teachers | 2 | Teacher Development/ Agency | The structure-activity dialectic in teachers' coping with difficulties and success in schools | Institutional and socio-cultural challenges | The teacher was able to advance his/her professional development by using his agency in addressing the challenges faced by the teacher through critical and effective dialogic feedback from the mentor. |
| (Manuel & Carter, 2016) | Australia | Quantitative | 22 English Teacher | 1-4 | Teachers' Perspectives | Examining the extent to which the motivation and experiences in the first years of the profession change in the process from the perspectives of teachers | High-risk exams, workload, lack of autonomy, lack of teacher voice | Teachers felt that their agency was limited due to difficulties and 20%-50% of teachers wanted to leave teaching within the first five years. |
| (Nolan, 2016) | Canada | Qualitative | 2 Mathematics Teachers | 1-5 | Teacher Agency | The relationship between school structure and teacher agency | Traditional school structure and culture, parent criticism, book pressure | Teachers use their agency by hiding or not talking about the new teaching practices they implement in the classroom to avoid reactions from colleagues, administrators and others, to find a temporary solution to doxa, or because they do not know how to transform the habitus |
| (Heikonen et al., 2017). | Finland | Quantitative | 74 Primary, 78 Subject, 132 Special Education Teachers | 1-5 | Professional Agency | The relationship between agency, perceived ineffectiveness in teacher-student interaction and turnover intentions | Perceived ineffectiveness in teacher-student interaction | There was a positive relationship between perceived inadequacy in teacher-student interaction and teachers' turnover intentions, and a negative relationship between novice teachers' sense of professional agency in the classroom. |
| (Trent, 2017) | Hong Kong | Qualitative | 5 English Teachers | 1-3 | Teacher Attrition/ Identity-Agency | Examining identity construction through discourse, agency and teacher attrition | Exam pressure, traditional educational philosophy and practices, need for autonomy, authoritarian discourses, classroom management | As a result of the conflict between novice teachers and the status quo, with administrators and teachers who maintained the existing institutional practices and discourse, teachers resigned as a result of not being able to use their agency and create the identity they wanted. |
| (Woodhouse & Pedder, 2017) | UK | Qualitative | 2 English, 1 Science, 2 French Teachers | 2-3 | Leadership Development | Examining teacher agency in the context of school leadership development | School principal, student performance measure | Teachers receiving approval and appreciation from school leaders, being encouraged to innovate by their leaders, and the trust and support provided to teachers help teachers to identify with leadership values, to gain a sense of belonging, autonomy, and agency, and to reveal and use their leadership skills. |
| (Brunetti & Marston, 2018) | USA | Qualitative | 21 Elementary Teachers | 1-3 | Teacher Development/ Identy and Agency | Examining early and mid-career teachers' professional development in terms of identity and agency | School principal, lack of support, parent criticism, workload, classroom management | It was concluded that school context is a determinant in professional development, teacher identity includes avalidation, collaboration, relationship with students, continuing professional development, leadership and balance, and a highly developed sense of identity is associated with increased agency. |

| Author(S) Years | Country | Types Of Method | Types Of Sample | Years Of Experience | Subject | Purpose | Barriers | Finding |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (Gan, 2018) | Hong Kong | Qualitative | 4 English Teachers | First Year | Professional Agency | Teachers' ability to cope with professional challenges in the first year and how they use agency in their successes and failures | Classroom management, support from school leader and mentor, lack of respect | It was found that a supportive and collaborative school context contributed to a sense of efficacy, while classroom management failure, lack of support from the school leader and mentor, lack of respect were the reasons why the teacher resigned. |
| (Naraian & Schlessinger, 2018) | USA | Qualitative | 7 Special Education Teachers | First Year | Teacher Agency/ Social Justice | Teachers' process of implementing inclusive education and how to deal with difficulties | Curriculum and pedagogy, performance-oriented education culture | Using a critical understanding of the demands of a culture of performativity, equality and diversity, novice teachers are reported to use curriculum preparation and implementation, student and colleague relationships and agency in their professional roles. |
| (Losano et al., 2018) | Argentina. | Qualitative | 1 Mathematics Teacher | First Year | Teacher Development/ Identy and Agency | Development of professional identity and agency in the first year | Traditional educational philosophy and practices, classroom management, curriculum preparation, authoritarian discours | It was observed that the teacher had the opportunity to position herself, organize her identity and develop her agency in the face of many ambiguous, difficult, contradictory and authoritarian discourses in the figured worlds of the school. |
| (Wray & Richmond, 2018) | USA | Qualitative | 3 Science Teachers | First Year | Identity and Agency | The interaction between agency and identity in the early years of science teachers in under-resourced schools | Insufficient resources, classroom management, lack of respect, curriculum preparation and implementation, lack of support | The ability of teachers to receive help and support from the administration, colleagues and mentors in curriculum preparation and implementation can contribute to the development of successful identities and agency, but if teachers cannot access support and collaboration when they need it, it can negatively affect their identities and agency. |
| (Bamber et al., 2019) | UK | Qualitative | 12 Beginning Teachers | NA | Teacher Agency | Levels of use of agency in teaching core British values | School leaders, parents, community | It was concluded that teachers used their agency to some extent in evaluating the political agenda, taking into account the role of the school leader and the context of work. |
| (Huang et al., 2019) | Hong Kong | Qualitative | 2 English Teachers | First-Year | Teacher Autonomy/ Agency | Teachers' autonomy development and factors affecting it | Classroom management | If teachers are aware of their working conditions and there is a supportive socio-institutional environment, teachers can be provided with spaces where they can use their autonomy and use their agency. |
| (Lane & Sweeny, 2019) | USA | Qualitative | 18 Elementary School Teachers | 1-4 | Teacher Social Networks and Agency | How teachers use their agency in the formation of social tie in the organizational structure | NA | In their daily routines in the school that is most likely to provide timely, meaningful and consistent assistance within the organizational structure, teachers use their agency by establishing strong ties with the school staff and colleagues they work with. |
| (Lockton & Fargason, 2019) | USA | Qualitative | 15 New, 26 Experienced Math Teachers | 1 | Reform | Examining novice and experienced teachers' agency towards institutionalized practices in schools, teacher education programs and school reform efforts in the context of structure and culture | Reform | It was concluded that there was no difference between experienced and novice teachers in terms of reform practices, some of the novice teachers maintained the existing institutional practices because they could not use their agency against formal and informal power and status, while those who used their agency maintained their relationships with their colleagues, opposed traditional educational practices, or hid reform practices from school leaders and colleagues. |

| Author(S) Years | Country | Types Of Method | Types Of Sample | Years Of Experience | Subject | Purpose | Barriers | Finding |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (Marco-Bujosa et al., 2019) | USA | Qualitative | 4 Science Teachers | 1-2 | Social Justice/ Structure-Agency | Investigating teachers' transition from in-service training to teaching in urban schools and changes in social justice, identity and structure agency | Traditional teacher figure, classroom management, lack of time, resources and support | It was observed that teachers struggled with the standard science curriculum, school culture and policies that contradicted the USTP program, with some difficulties, using their agency, transforming their identities, and in terms of social justice, teachers not only focused on students' learning, but also tried to change the existing school policies of the school that hindered their learning. |
| (Powell, 2019) | USA | Qualitative | 3 Music Teachers | First Year | Teacher Agency | Examining how their agency changes in the transition from pre-service to in-service | Standardized tests, curriculum, school principal | It was concluded that although the teachers who participated in the study saw the pre-service practices as limiting, they were expected to be more agency after entering the profession, but instead of opposing the limiting factors of the current structure, the teachers accepted this situation of the structure. |
| (Ro, 2019) | Korean | Qualitative | 4 Secondary Teachers | Less Than 3 Years Of Professional Experience | Identities and Agency | Exploring the professional identity of novice teachers in the Korean education system | Test-based accountability context, bureaucratic control, administrative workload | In the face of challenges, teachers reconfigure their identities that do not fit the school context by using their agency. |
| (Taylor, 2019) | USA | Qualitative | 1 Primary Teacher | 3 | Accountability | How high-stakes testing shapes teacher agency | High-risk tests | In the explanation of restricting teacher agency in high stakes tests, it was stated that the positioning of teachers in the test creators, administrators and students is based on proximity and hierarchy, and that teachers can only use their agency with their students. |
| (Wei & Chen, 2019) | China | Qualitative | 2 Science Teachers | 2 | Identity and Agency/Reform | How agency emerges in applied reform work in science education and how it interacts with identity | Traditional educational philosophy and practices, textbooks, performative criteria | It was concluded that there are six domains in which agency is manifested in teachers' practical reform work, personal characteristics and beliefs represent the perspective aspect of agency, interaction with students and colleagues, curricular materials and important examinations represent the actions aspect of agency, and that the perspective aspect of agency influences the actions aspect, that agency is in constant interaction with identity formation. |
| (Connors & Bengtson, 2020) | USA | Qualitative | 2 English Teacher | First Year | Accountability/ Reform | The influence of contextual factors that support and constrain teachers' agency in carrying out reform instructions. | Reform, accountability | The pressure that teachers feel to be held accountable for carrying out reform instructions can support or limit teachers' ability to implement their agency, depending on the school culture |
| (Wei et al., 2020) | China | Qualitative | 3 Science (Physics) Teachers | 2 | Identities and Agency | Investigating how science teachers present their identities during practical work in the school environment, what are the differences and commonalities of their identities | High-stakes exams, school a principals, textbooks | It was concluded that agency plays a central role in identity formation in terms of practical work, that it indirectly interacts with the four dimensions of identity (personal characteristics, interaction, discourse, institutional interaction), that teachers can show negative/positive and passive/active aspects of agency in each dimension, and that agency should be added to the four dimensions of teacher identity. |

| Author(S) Years | Country | Types Of Method | Types Of Sample | Years Of Experience | Subject | Purpose | Barriers | Finding |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (Rostami & Yousefi, 2020) | Iranian | Qualitative | 15 English Teachers | 8-18 Months | Teacher Agency | Examining how novice teachers put their agency into practice across teaching communities | School principal, parent, classroom management | Teachers' agency was demonstrated through professional conversations with peers, colleagues, and administrators, dialogic feedback, and collaboration with online communities; teachers also believed that administrators and experienced teachers had higher identity and agency, that teachers performed better with positive feedback from them, and that negative feedback increased the likelihood of new teachers leaving the profession |
| (Ashton, 2021) | New Zealand | Qualitative | 8 Language Teacher | 2-4 | Teacher Agency | Examining the agency of language teachers | Lack of curriculum, and support | It was stated that the biggest constraint for the teachers in their first year was the lack of a curriculum, that they had to prepare a new curriculum and not knowing whether it would be effective in the process of its implementation caused them stress and that they spent their personal time to try to create an effective curriculum and in this way they showed their agency. |
| (Chaaban & Sawalhi, 2021) | Qatar | Qualitative | 5 Early Childhood, 5 Elementary, 3 Secondary Teachers | 1-3 | Teacher Leadership | Examining the relationship between teachers' agency and their leadership in schools in a socio-cultural context | Rigid school culture | Seven of the 13 teachers who participated in the study were unable to show leadership and demonstrate their agency due to contextual factors such as rigid school culture, not listening to teachers' voices, and top-down decision-making while six teachers showed a clear leadership stance. |
| (Glas et al., 2021) | Chilean | Mixed Method | 7 English Teachers | 1 | Relational Agency | The role of agency in students' beliefs and experiences regarding their motivation to learn a foreign language | Administrative workload, lack of family support, rigid school evaluation system, lack of materials and teacher-centered methodologies | It was concluded that teachers showed a clear sense of responsibility despite the challenges and tried to use relational agency to transform their classrooms into motivating learning environments, but they were unable to identify the causes of students' lack of motivation due to lack of experience and were unable to fully utilize their agency. |
| (Huang & Yip, 2021) | Hong Kong | Qualitative | 3 English Teachers | 7-8 Longitudinal Case Study | Teacher Development/ Agency | How teachers use their agency to take control of their teaching and professional development | Curriculum, pedagogical and social management of the classroom, heavy workload, performance-oriented education, management, | In the first layer of the TRFCAC model, teachers demonstrate proactive agency through goal-directed effort in work practices with colleague and mentor support, reactive agency as a result of forced changes, and passive agency when teachers have low agency and motivation for change; in the second layer, teacher perceptions of agency can change significantly over time, especially in terms of intentionality and foresight; in the third layer, personal, environmental, and behavioral determinants function together to influence teachers' professional agency. |
| (Huang, 2021) | Hong Kong | Qualitative | 1 English Teacher | 7-8 Longitudinal Case Study | Teacher Development/ Identy and Agency | Investigating the professional development of novice teachers through the framework of teacher agency and identity | Different institutional cultures, lack of cooperation among colleagues, authoritarian school leadership, tensions in work and family life | It has been concluded that the conflicts and incompatibilities between the teacher's teaching image and the realities have a negative effect on the identity of the teacher, which causes him to be unable to show his effectiveness, and that external macrosystematic, political, sociocultural factors can affect the inner world of the teacher and affect the development of identity and agency positively or negatively. |

| Author(S) Years | Country | Types Of Method | Types Of Sample | Years Of Experience | Subject | Purpose | Barriers | Finding |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (Lu et al., 2021) | China | Qualitative | 1 Mathematic Teacher | 2 | Teacher Agency | How a mathematics teacher uses agency to integrate history into mathematics education | Exam and performance oriented, time constrained | It was reported that the teacher wanted to implement the integration of history into mathematics in her curriculum, failed in the process, but with the support of colleagues and mentors, she was able to implement the curriculum to improve her students' performance in her free time. |
| (Olitsky, 2021) | USA | Qualitative | 1 Math and 1 Science Teacher | 3-5 | Reform | Challenges and obstacles in the context of teaching reform in the school and the process of developing a sense of professional identity, agency and group membership | Reform | In reform practices, the attitude of principals and supervisors towards teachers and the structure of the school context shape teachers' identity, agency and self-talk and determine their belonging to the school. |
| (Schaefer et al., 2021) | Canada | Qualitative | 15 Elementary and Secondary Teachers | First Year | Relational Agency | Investigating the relational agency aspects of novice teachers' interactions with children and the support they receive at school | Lack of help and mentors | It was emphasized that teachers perceived their relationships with children as important both inside and outside the school, that they were able to use their agency in their relationships with children, and that school belonging and an environment of professional knowledge formed the basis for building relational agency. |
| (Sullivan et al., 2021). | Australia | Qualitative | 8 Primary and 8 Secondary (Maths/Science) Teachers | 1-2 | Quality Teacher/ Accountability | Teachers' perceptions of quality and how they evaluate their own practices within a quality framework | Accountability and performativity | In the context of quality related to agency, the emerged view suggests that teachers ought to supply continual professional development, facilitate successful learning in their classrooms, demonstrate a passion and commitment to teaching, cultivate positive relationships with their students, and impact their students' lives positively. |
| (Villegas-Torres & Lengeling, 2021) | Mexican | Qualitative | 1 English Teacher | First-Year | Teacher Development/ Agency | The difficulties a teacher experienced in her first year and how she made decisions to cope with these difficulties | Classroom management, curriculum preparation and implementation, bureaucratic demands | It was stated that the teacher's receiving help and support from the people she socialized with in the face of various difficulties could transform her attitude towards professional development and her identity through her agency. |
| (Wei et al., 2021) | China | Qualitative | 1 Science Teacher | 2 | Identities and Agency | Investigation of the formation of the identity of the novice teacher in applied studies in the socio-cultural dimension | Students' academic performance, textbooks, time constraints | In the personal context, it was concluded that physics course is an applied science; in the interpersonal context, it was concluded that it cooperated with colleagues; in the situational context, it was concluded that it used its agency and strengthened its identity by organizing out-of-school activities despite time constraints. |
| (Xun et al., 2021) | China | Qualitative | 13 Beginnin Teacher | 1 | Agency and Resilience | Investigating the resilience and agency of the profession in the first year during the pandemic | Personal, professional, organizational and societal challenges due to Covid-19 | Resilience and agency are important in identity construction, and teachers' agency was negatively affected by Covid 19 |

| Author(S) Years | Country | Types Of Method | Types Of Sample | Years Of Experience | Subject | Purpose | Barriers | Finding |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (Cobb, 2022) | New Zealand | Qualitative | 4 Primary Teacher | First Year | Identity, Resilience and Agency | The relationship between pre-service to in-service transition experiences, identity, resilience and agency | Demand and pressure on teaching, workload | It is concluded that identity-resilience-activity works in harmony in the transformation and adaptation of teachers' teaching images in the negotiation of teachers' pressures, challenges and individual identities into collective identities. |
| (E et al., 2022) | Finland | Quantitative | 56 Primary, 48 Subject, 97 Special Education Teachers | 1-5 | Professional Agency | How novice teachers' teacher agency changed over a five-year period | NA | There are three levels of teacher agency profile with 64% high level, 32% medium level and 4% low level |
| (Heikkilä et al., 2022) | Finland | Qualitative | 10 Primary Teachers | 3-5 | Teacher Agency | To explore how Finnish teachers understand agency in their narratives in their teacher training and in discussing their work | Political, cultural and epistemic factors | The factors affecting the agency are politically low salaries, lack of appreciation, multiculturalism, lack of digital tools, culturally demanding parents, negative social media comments, and epistemically lack of professional training. |
| (Kettle et al., 2022) | Australian | Quantitative | 2 Secondary (Math) and 1 Primary Teacher | 3-5 | Teacher Agency/ Social Justice | Examining teachers' beliefs and actions based on social justice principles and practices through the lens of agency and teacher | Insufficient resources of the school, geographical distance, high poverty, mismatch of the curriculum with the local culture | Use of agency in the context of social justice in the form of the use of indigenous culture and language in curricular practices, the elimination of student-teacher power inequalities, and the use of personal funds and resources to combat disadvantage and high poverty |
| (Lim & Yun, 2022) | Korean | Qualitative | 3 Science Teachers | 1 | Teacher Agency | Investigating the experience and agency of novice teachers | Heavy workload, lack of help and support, lack of communication and support from director | With the understanding of the working context by teachers, teachers are able to use their trial and error, initiative and agency in the face of difficulties. |
| (Narayanan & Ordynans, 2022) | USA | Qualitative | 3 Secondary Teachers | 1 | Identities and Agency | Understanding how teachers use their agency in challenging circumstances. | Covid-19, lack of equipment, pedagogical management of the classroom, low self-efficacy and self-confidence | Under pandemic conditions, teachers have shaped their identities, striving for students' well-being and learning by confronting and challenging the negative expectations of the school. |
| (Naraian, 2022) | USA | Qualitative | 1 Special Education Teachers | 1 | Teacher Agency | How to define agency as a novice inclusive educator | Curriculum, CSA exams and school principal | Neoliberal conditions have resulted in weak agency |
| (Wright et al., 2022) | USA | Mixed Method | 70 STEM Teachers | 1-5 | Teacher Agency | How they perceive and cope with sudden and unexpected disruptions caused by Covid-19 | Covid 19, School leader | The fact that the school principal did not provide the necessary support to the negative situation caused by the pandemic negatively affected the agency of teachers. |