

Bridging the Gap: Exploring Professional Expectations of Novice Teachers from Veteran Secondary School Teachers

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Abstract

This paper explores the professional expectations of novice teachers from veteran secondary school teachers and their effect on the workplace environment. The research methodology was based on the qualitative-interpretive approach. The participants were 10 novice teachers from different Government High Schools, and thematic analysis was conducted. The findings described a gap between novice teachers' expectations from veteran teachers and its effect on the workplace environment in case of a shortfall of expectations. The researchers recommend focusing on an individual guidance program for every novice teacher. This guidance program would be grounded on planning the teachers' abilities and requirements, structuring their professional development and promotion procedure. This should be made before their joining an educational institute, the veteran teachers and heads of the school may play an important role in this regard. Therefore, it is imperative to assist them in induction, proper and continuous guidance and mentoring are indispensable for these novice teachers to contribute to the school and students' development.

Key Words

Novice Teachers, Expectations of Novice Teachers, Veteran Teachers

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Introduction

Hiring a new employee, or onboarding, is a process through which someone from outside becomes an insider of the organization, which actually assists new employees to gain knowledge and skills, and behaviors they require to adjust themselves in the new organization (Friedman, 2016). A good onboarding process may result in effective employees with optimistic attitudes who serve with the organization for years, whereas ineffective onboarding or socialization results in premature turnover of employees, leading to wastage of time and resources (Bauer et al., 2007). At the time of entry into a new job, new employees, particularly teachers, interact with uncertain

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surroundings in their new role as members of the organization (Ingersoll & Strong, [2011](#)). In the U.S one one-fourth of the workers are experiencing organizational socialization (Rollag et al., [2005](#)). and employees change their jobs approximately ten times in 20 years (Bureau of Labor Statistics, [2005](#)). The new employee's socialization process contains various approaches in which the employee learns about the values, cultures and traditions, languages, communication tactics, and then further develops their own expectations and needs for the organization (Gallagher, [2011](#)).

Further, when new teachers join the teaching profession, they face numerous challenges, where they would quickly adjust themselves to classroom dynamics and shoulder heavy workloads. Newly hired teachers are struggling to deal with a new reality and expectation, which for them are different and challenging from their previous experiences and world (Fenwick, [2011](#)). They enter school with positive visions and expectations from veteran teachers; however, rather than fulfilling their dreams, they experience dissatisfaction and frustration, and more importantly, some of them meet with burnout situation (Helmke & Holden, [2003](#); Ahmad et al., [2022](#)). Therefore, it is imperative to assist them in induction, proper and continuous guidance and mentoring are indispensable for these novice teachers to contribute to the school and students' development.

Nevertheless, the dropout rate of newly hired teachers is 30-40 percent due to the non-cooperative and unprofessional behaviors of veteran teachers, along with other organizational and domestic factors (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Additionally, novice teachers face the challenge of fear (stage fear, facing crowds, and human psychology) and a communication gap with the veteran employees, and this anxiety can be manifested by different ways showing a facial expression, dissatisfaction and angry and frustrated mood (Timor, [2011](#); Ahmad et al., [2022](#)). With reference to this professional gap between novice teachers' expectations and realities in the workplace, this study explores the gap between the expectations of Novice teachers of veteran teachers. The mismatching and dissatisfaction of these expectations induce a wish to leave the job and poor performance. Hence, it is utmost to focus on novice teacher expectations and develop a guidance and support program based on the mapping of their expectations. Moreover, the future map of expectations of novice teachers from veteran teachers should be built for all novice teachers prior to their entry into school.

Literature Review

Induction in organizational life has been considered one of the continuous significant stages, because newcomers think about what their new organization will be and whether they will adjust themselves or not. Some researchers have described that newcomers' initial attitudes affect their consequent attitudes (Thomas & Beauchamp, [2011](#)). Similarly, entry into a new job on the very first day has always remained very fascinating, captivating, and unforgettable for an employee. Some will recall this for edgy and non-cooperative conversation with a veteran employee who realized that their setting would be difficult, whereas some newly hired employee recalls cooperative employees who guided them in the right direction (Bauer et al., [2007](#)). These early interactions between newly hired employees and existing employees have a really significant impact on the future life of the employee (Saks et al., [2007](#)).

Similarly, some researchers recommended that initial interactions may have effects on subsequent results, describing the need to measure interactions that effects the future outcomes (Miller, [2006](#)). The research study of Jokisaari and Nurmi ([2009](#)) described that among new hired ones, deteriorations in co-workers support were leaded to reduces in new employee role and satisfaction.

The previous literature described newly hired teachers' initial career as a world of struggle and survival because they find it different from the world they imagined (Gilad & Alkalay, [2014](#)). They are anxious about survival in professional life and struggling to be accepted by the veteran staff. So, getting a sense of confidence, teachers will

be free to enhance their professional world (Floden & Stanulis, [2009](#)). Another aspect demonstrated in novice teachers' challenges is teacher fear and communication gap with the veteran employees, and this anxiety can be manifested by different ways showing a facial expression, unsatisfaction, and an angry and frustrated mood (Timor, [2011](#)). Novice teachers have to integrate themselves with the environment and rules in pre-defined realities, having more experienced teachers than themselves. They need encouragement and assistance, wish that there is someone who answers their questions satisfactorily and proves themselves as an efficient teacher without being hurdles or interrupted (Gilad & Alkalay, [2014](#)). So, newly hired teachers' adjustment is like to that of the new immigrant, they have to adjust themselves to school norms and environment, failure of which leads them to abandon from teaching profession (Lahad et al., [2018](#)).

Previous researches describe that when newly hired teachers join the teaching profession, they enter with their dreams and expectations for themselves and integrate system and, more importantly, with veteran employees (Singh & Krishnan, [2008](#)). They are motivated and have a sense of mission and wish to build a generation, but while starting their work, they are struggling and face hurdles and frustration, and some of them experience burnout at the start of their career (Malach-Pines, 2011).

Similarly, Helmes and Holden ([2003](#)) indicate that newly hired teachers join the education system with the experiences, knowledge, and skills they have in their lives before joining the education system. However, in reality, their sense of dedication and vocation is put aside, and they start approving characteristics that are assumed to be favorable from the perspective of the education system. In reality, employees demonstrate themselves by features that are acceptable to the education system. Further, the study by Gallagher & Sias ([2009](#)) highlighted that achieving and getting the goal enables people to be happy and satisfied, and motivates them to contribute more and more to the system.

Moreover, the researchers Gilad and Alkalay (2011) describe that newly hired teachers need professional, social, and organizational guidance and assistance. Where the veteran teachers and professional staff are expected more by the novice teachers as they have first-hand experiences of the work. Further, novice teachers expected that head and veteran teachers would support them in adopting and adjusting to the new culture of the school. Furthermore, novice teachers believe that they will benefit from cooperation with the veteran employees in the educational process and expect that they will be integrated into the school as a significant part (Shimoni & Avidav-Unger, [2013](#)). Further, the relationship between new and existing employees enables us to see how new employee may differentially responds to interactions with different agents of socialization (Menguc et al., [2007](#)). Further, Bauer et al. ([2007](#)) described that noncooperative coworker behaviors hamper new employee adjustment, and positive, cooperative behaviors and interactions assist employees' adjustment.

Laconically, when novice teachers are inducted in a school, their expectation from the veteran employees are: welcome and proper orientation, guidance and mentorship from their experiences, supportive workplace environment, sharing of institutional knowledge, fair usage of seniority, friendly environment, clear and informative communication style, feedback for promotion and encouragement of positive activities. Further, new teachers face adjustment challenges from the veteran teachers due to the new physical environment and culture. They perceive themselves as an intelligent, most suitable, and unique person and expect the same from veteran employees and students as well. They are eager to know the person's life and academic/professional qualifications of the veteran colleague. They have a positive attitude to uplift their institute to a high and ideal position. New employees also have the expectation from the school head to provide a proper place for sitting, that are table, chair, cabin/room, and cupboard. Sometimes, these challenges and gaps in communication and lack of proper understanding of one another result in unpleasant effects on the psychological and mental health of new employee, existing employees, and students as well. This study focuses on knowing the challenges of new employees from veteran employees, to

inform both the parties, the supervisor, the owners of the organizations, and policymakers to eliminate/reduce the mentioned gap by designing a proper guidance program. Optimizing and understanding the expectations of new employees makes the workplace environment conducive for teaching learning process and assists the employees to serve for a long time satisfactorily.

Significance of the Study

Exploring and understanding the expectations of new teachers from veteran teachers is important for an effective onboarding process that influences both novice teachers and veteran teachers. Satisfied completion of the expectations of novice teachers increases teachers' retention rate, assists teachers' adjustment, understanding their roles, leading to enhanced performance and productivity. This study would be helpful for the onboarding process by providing a clear, meaningful, and informative communication style to novice teachers, from which they may get crucial information and mentoring. It will assist new teachers' adjustment to their new culture, become an active contributor from the passive contributor, and reduce turnover cost. In a nutshell, exploring and understanding the expectations of new teachers not only enables a smoother transition for newcomers but also helps the organization's overall success by fostering committed and satisfied teachers.

Research Questions

1. What are the professional expectations of novice teachers from veteran secondary school teachers? And why do they have these expectations?
2. How these professional expectations of novice teachers from veteran teachers do affect the workplace environment?

Research Methodology

Qualitative-interpretive research design from case study design, was adopted for this study to explore the professional expectations of the novice teachers from the veteran teachers at the secondary school level. Novice teachers/employees always have pre-determined perceptions about their expected colleagues, and these expectations are always meaningful and significant for a long time. Therefore, a survey was conducted following semi-structured interview questions.

This approach enables exploring, description, and interpretation of what happens between novice teachers' expectations of veteran teachers. Further, it consists of the hidden features from the perspectives of the teachers themselves. The advantages of such a type of study exist in its ability to present inner phenomena in the real background in which they emerge.

Research Participants

It is imperative to select representative and reflective study participants to collected data related to novice teachers' professional expectations from their veteran colleague, these novice teachers are available at primary, elementary and secondary school level however, at secondary level these teachers have a diverse and dynamic perspective which motivate the researchers to select the study participants from this section. A total of 10 newly inducted teachers from 8 different Govt. High Schools, District Swat, Pakistan. Out of which 3 teachers were from one High School and 7 from other Government High Schools, and all these participants were selected purposively.

Research Tool

The research tool for data collection was a semi-structured interview with the selected students. The 20 interview questions were designed for this study, related to the professional expectations of novice teachers from their

veteran colleagues. These questions cover all the related aspects of the professional expectations at the school level, from welcome to the discharging of their teaching duties. Further, the interview questions referred to what extent the veteran teachers comply with the expectations of the novice teachers. 10 teachers were interviewed separately, their responses were recoded. Before the data collected from the study participants, these questions were validated through expert opinions from three experts. Likewise, efforts were made to ensure ethical consideration during the data collection process, such as prior permission, time consideration, and anonymity of the study participants.

Data Procession

The data obtained from the participants were thematically analyzed recommended by Barun & Clark (2006), as is usually done in qualitative research. In this thematic analysis, identified codes and patterns within the data, and an interpretive approach involving the meaning and significance of themes were made.

Results and Discussion

The findings of this study explore a gap between novice teachers' expectations from veteran teachers and the reality at school. On the other hand, novice teachers expect that they will be oriented and inducted on the very first day according to some predefined rules and school culture; they also expect that veteran teachers will not misuse their seniority and experience to affect their academic and professional growth. Additionally, they expect that the school would identify and accept them as important human assets and would use them for the betterment and improvement of the school.

Professional Expectations of Novice Teachers from Veteran Teachers

When asked from the novice teachers that what kind of expectation do you have from the veteran teachers, their responses were different as one participant P1 said that *"I was expecting cooperative and friendly environment and relationship from the veteran teachers, they will provide such environment for novice teachers where we can stay for long time as employee"*. Another participant, P2, added that *"in government schools, the number of economically weak students is more, veteran teachers have good salary packages, they would be financially supportive to the deserving students, but there were no such initiatives by them"*.

Likewise, P3 shared his experiences about the young veteran teachers and said that *"I expected more dedication and dynamic role from the young veteran teachers towards colleagues and students because they were energetic and have high qualification from others most senior teachers"*, which was supported by P4 that *"I expected veteran teachers as active students' problem solvers, some students needed individual attention"*. P5 said that *"I thought that veteran teachers would be very soft and gentle in their communication and would have been encouraging students towards positive activities and would not have used abusive and harsh language against students and colleagues"*.

Another important expectation from veteran teachers was that they will provide emotional support like P6 added that *"I expected emotional support from veteran teachers to minimize feeling of isolation of novice teachers, as in induction time novice teachers have few friends for sharing both institutional and personal information"*. Similarly, P7 said that *"my expectation from the veteran teachers were to learn/educate from their experiences and knowledge but there was no such environment in my school"*. Participants 8 shared that *"I have the expectation of appreciation by having high academic qualification as compared to other veteran teachers but found no such environment where high qualification considered as prestige"*. Participant 9 shared that *"my expectation from veteran teachers to share assistance in classroom management to maintain discipline, as the number of students in classroom was greater than actual size of the classroom"*. Participant 10 shared that *"I have the wish for freedom to apply my own (modern) teaching practices, but veteran teachers were applying conventional teaching practices."*

Orientation and Introduction

Novice teachers expected from the veteran teachers that they will be warm welcomed on their very first day in the school. They will be introduced to the other staff according to the pre-defined protocols and the relevant institutional knowledge will be shared with them.

One of the study participants, P1, revealed that *"when I entered the school on the very first day, the school security guard guided me towards the Principal's office. Where I received with respect and honor, treated me as a guest (new teacher) as per local culture, introduced me with other colleagues and students, officially inducted me in school record"*. The participant further added that *"due to cooperation, well-disciplined and good leadership environment of the veteran teachers and Principal, I can't forget my first day"*. The research study of Gallagher and Sias (2009) supported the findings and described that when novice employees are inducted, the veteran employees have the chance to lead and shape whether novice teachers may stay/leave their new organization.

The other participant, P3, shared his views that *"I was welcomed and oriented by the two veteran teachers (personally known to me) and facilitated me on the first day. However, I was not satisfied with the ignorant behavior of the other colleagues and the loss of administration of the school"*.

The next participant told that *"in my school, the teachers' ratios as per students were less and facing a heavy workload. So, instead of proper welcoming and orientation, they quickly handed over the class schedule to me"*. However, the study participant P4 added that *"I wasn't welcome by my colleague due to my appointment in a higher scale and was in an inferiority complex due to low qualification and was in the misconception that this would reduce their dignity"*. Likewise, other study participants revealed that *"my colleagues did not welcome me because of my belongingness to a faraway area (non-local residence)"*.

These results were supported by the study findings of Gilad and Alkalay (2014) who concluded that, novice teachers are mostly ignored by their veteran colleagues and they did not treat them as a newly inducted member with unique qualities and did not use their strength and potentials. This leads new teachers to be less motivated and they feel that there is no place for their uniqueness and alignment with other teachers.

Academic and Professional Qualifications of Veteran Teachers

After induction, the novice teachers remain keen to know about the academic and professional qualifications. They are also eager to know about the residence (area and village) from which the veteran teachers belong, mostly this situation occurs when veteran teachers impress novice teachers. One of the study participants, P1, said that *"when I and a veteran teacher were sharing our experiences with each other. The veteran teacher explained his academic and professional experiences in very clear and informative way and offered me his assistance at any sort of situation at any time"*. Similarly, one of the other study participants P2 said that *"one of the veteran teachers shared his academic experiences which highly impressed me, suggested me how to improve your academic and professional qualification, his advice and plan helped me a lot in my future carrier."* This result is supported by Shimoni and Avidav-Unger (2013), who concluded that novice teachers need social and professional help and guidance at the time of induction, veteran teachers and head of the institute will use their experience and assign responsibilities to the newly hired as per their qualification and talent.

However, other participant P4 revealed that when *"I asked a veteran teacher about the academic and professional qualifications to take some benefits from his experiences and knowledge. The veteran teacher did not share the correct information because he did not reveal himself to be less qualified than the novice teachers"*. Participant P5 shared his experiences and described that *"when I asked from a veteran teacher about his academic qualification, he said that "I was the topper of my class (Master of Arts in Urdu), later on I came to know from official record that he has 3rd*

division". Similarly participant 6 described that *"one of the veteran teachers in my school told his ability and command over his subject (Computer Science), but once when his assistance needed, he made excuses and said that since a long time has been passed of my degree, so I have forgotten my subjects"*. Actually, new teachers did not ask this question for the purpose of discrediting/checking the ability of veteran teachers, but to gain experience. However, the veteran teachers have not satisfied them.

On the other hand, only two participants, P8 and P9, said that *"the veteran teachers have asked about the academic and professional qualification and the eight participants revealed that no veteran teacher asked us about our qualification. However, the Principal/Head of the school asked about our academic and professional qualifications for assigning the most relevant subjects"*. These results were supported by the study of (Gallagher et al., [2009](#)), who concluded that employees' communication chains interrelationship benefits both the novice and existing employees. These authors further described that the novice employee's induction process consists several factors in which they learn about veteran employees and organizational cultures and develop their expectations for the betterment and improvement of the organization.

Misuse of Seniority

The misuse of seniority by the veteran teachers can affect novice teachers and students that leading to imbalance and an unproductive educational environment that exploits novice teachers in different ways. For examples, one of the study participants, P3, revealed that *"veteran teachers assigned me a heavy workload and relaxed their workload load, and three of the most senior teachers have excluded the novice teachers from the decision-making process"*. One of the other participants, P5, shared his experiences and said that *"some veteran teachers used verbal abuse language and were involved in student favoritism by assigning extra marks to the students and internal and external examination"*. One of the other participants, P6, shared that *"veteran teachers may resist accepting novice teachers, new teaching methodologies because of conventional practice, which deprives the organization of the adaptability to the modern mood of teaching"*. This result is supported by (Khadka & Bhattarai, [2021](#)), who concluded that the seniority of the veteran teachers may lead to unfair decision-making where facility and key responsibilities are given by personal relationship and benefits instead of following merit, which demoralizes and deters the progress of the organization. The next participant of the study, P7, said that *"some veteran teachers are in a superiority complex that is more biased about themselves and rate themselves as superior to others. Some of that time in which veteran teachers adopting a superiority posture as a protective mechanism, keeping themselves away from colleagues to cope with stress"*. This result is supported by Foghang & Fon ([2022](#)), who concluded that a superiority complex may hamper cooperation, as novice teachers can be belittled and underestimated by senior teachers, resulting in sectarianism among teachers and affected sharing and collaboration practices. Eight out of ten study participants agreed and shared the same view that *"veteran teachers' discussion was about their financial issues, like salary increase and promotion, rather than students' issues"*. The study of Mwamwenda ([2004](#)) supported the result and concluded that teachers were discussing the promotion and salary increase process, which may lead them to shift their compensation and career improvement rather than focus student student-related issues.

Weak Points of the Veteran Teachers noted by Novice Teachers.

Different participants shared different experiences related to the weak points of the veteran teachers. For example, participant P1 said that *"veteran teachers lack punctuality and did not attend the 40 minutes of the assigned class time, used to enter the classroom 5-8 minutes late and left the classroom 5-7 minutes earlier"*. Participant P2 shared that *"the majority of the teachers and students belonged to the same village, bringing the personal conflict (village conflicts) to the school, which affected the school environment"*. Participant P3 told that *"there was no designated Headmaster in the school and one of the veteran teachers (in-charge) was involved in financial corruption and purchasing of items for himself from*

school money". Participant P4 shared his experiences and concluded that *"there was loose management in school and veteran teachers were not interested in assisting the headmaster in discipline issues"*. Participant P5 shared that *"veteran teachers were discussing weak points of other teachers instead of rectifying their weaknesses"*. Participant P6 shared that *"some of the local teachers in their school were left at the school before official closing time and have jealousy with non-local teachers"*. Participant P7 said that *"the school in which I was inducted, the veteran teachers were not dedicated to the teaching learning process and were gossiping with each other and passing their time idly"*. Participant P8 shared that *"my school teachers were not academically well qualified and only got this position by promotion due to service for a long time from the lower scale"*. Participant P9 shared that *"the majority of the veteran teachers were not satisfied with the salaries and promotion processes and blamed the Government and Education Department for this injustice"*. Participant 10 shared that *"many veteran teachers were reluctant to use new technologies due to less exposure and lack of in-service professional training"*.

Effect on Workplace Environment

The results of this study reveal that fulfilling novice teachers' expectations assists employee adjustment in an organization for a long time. One of the study participants, P2, said that *"I was not satisfied with the behavior and environment of my school, and all the time I thought about how to transfer from this school"*. Participants P3 and P4 said that *"mismatching and dissatisfaction of my expectations from the veteran teachers induced a wish to leave the Job and will recall this day for edgy and non-cooperative conversation"*. This result is supported by Friedman (2016), who concluded that a good environment assists new teachers to gain knowledge and to adjust themselves to the new workplace environment. In addition to this, researchers (Ahmad et al., 2022) referred that various challenges and communication gaps with veteran teachers lead employees to an angry and frustrated environment. One of the other study participants P6, revealed that *"I always recall my inducted days due to cooperative and friendly guidance by the veteran employees, and I always consider them like family members due to their positive and supportive behaviors"*. Similarly, one of the other participants, P7, said that *"my first interaction in a friendly environment has given me learning opportunities from veteran colleagues, which affected students' academic achievements positively, and I felt improvement in my teaching day by day"*. The research study of Jokissari and Nurmi (2009) described that among newly hired ones, deteriorations in co-workers' support led to reduced new employee role and satisfaction. Laconically, when veteran teachers provide supportive environment and satisfy novice teachers expectations, it can affect workplace environment positively and failure of which lead them leaving from the job.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings of this study explored a gap between novice teachers' expectations of veteran teachers. Optimizing and understanding the expectations of new employee make the workplace environment conducive for teaching learning process and assists the employees to serve for a long time satisfactorily. The recommendation for a novice teacher's induction in the education system highlights veteran teachers' role as important figures. It is recommended that veteran teachers hold meaningful dialogue with new teachers for the purpose of understanding their needs and abilities. According to the research results, it is recommended that veteran teachers, head teachers, and policy makers develop a systematic layout which will assist the expectations and perceptions of novice teachers. Further, the expectation of the novice teachers would be mapped with the existing system. It is also significant and indispensable for novice teachers that veteran teachers indicate to them the future map of their professional and social development. The components of professional, social, and personal promotion will help the most effective teaching/learning process. In addition to this, it is recommended that veteran teachers carefully acquaint themselves with the novice teachers, apply efforts to reduce novice teachers from leaving the education

profession, and bring them from passive teachers to active teachers. Overall, assisting novice teachers will improve the school and teaching/learning process.

However, by fostering collaborative and reverential relationships among the new and veteran teachers, leads effective workplace culture that benefits both teachers and students. On the other hand, an unsupportive and unfriendly school culture will promote feelings of isolation, a high turnover rate, and a hesitant school culture. Therefore, guidance program, professional training, and recognition of the efforts and ideas of novice teachers may enhance their confidence.

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