

Running head: TEACHER APPRAISAL SYSTEM IN ONE NAZARBAYEV SCHOOL IN
KAZAKHSTAN

**Teacher Appraisal System in one Nazarbayev Intellectual School in Kazakhstan:
Teachers' Perceptions and Experiences**

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in Educational Leadership

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November 2019

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“Teacher appraisal system in one Nazarbayev Intellectual School in Kazakhstan: Secondary school teachers’ perceptions and experiences” has been approved by the Graduate School of Education Ethics Committee of Nazarbayev University.

The changes recommended by the reviewer have been addressed and the proposed study now complies with all of the requirements of Nazarbayev University.

CITI Training Certificate**Acknowledgments**

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Abstract

Teachers remain to be one of the most fundamental parts of any educational system. As such, they need an effective system to develop professionally. A Teacher Appraisal System (TAS) is one way to address this need through a systematic approach to monitoring how teachers grow. In Kazakhstan, policy makers developed TAS that aims at systematic measurement of educators’ competences with promotion of pedagogues based upon these competences. Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS) in Kazakhstan provide an opportunity for piloting educational policies, practices, and reforms. In 2010, NIS created their own system for TAS. This new approach is intended to be spread to mainstream schools. By understanding the experiences and conception of NIS teachers as related to the TAS, it is then possible to know what to expect for the future implementation of TAS in mainstream schools across the country. Thus, the purpose

of this study was to explore the experiences and understanding of TAS by individual teachers of TAS in one NIS school. An exploratory, qualitative case study research design was used to answer the research questions. What are teachers' understanding of the teacher appraisal system in one NIS school? What are the experiences of individual teachers of TAS in one NIS school? Through semi-structured interviews with six participants, the following themes were identified: motivation for professional growth, encouragement for promotional advancement, aspects to help to pass attestation, role of appraisers, criteria of evaluation, and challenges teachers face. Findings revealed that teacher participants positively perceive the existing NIS TAS as an effective tool for professional development. Implications of this study for Kazakhstan include recommendations for school administrators, policy makers, and teachers who plan to apply for appraisal. Future studies are recommended to address the same topic from the point of mainstream schools.

Keywords: teachers' perception, teachers' understanding, teacher appraisal system (TAS), NIS, teacher promotion, teacher certification.

Abstract in Kazakh

Мұғалімдер кез келген білім беру жүйесінің ең іргелі сегменттерінің бірі болып табылады, осыған байланысты олар кәсіби дамудың тиімді жүйесін қажет етеді. Мұғалімдерді аттестаттау жүйесі (МАЖ) мұғалімдердің кәсіби өсуіне жүйелі тәсіл арқылы осы қажеттілікті қанағаттандырудың осындай тәсілдерінің бірі болып табылады. Бүкіл әлем бойынша әр түрлі МАЖ-дың кең спектрі бар, өйткені әрбір ел Жергілікті контекстке сәйкес келетін және көрсететін дәл осындай жүйені жасайды. Атап айтқанда, қазақстандық реформаторлар қазақстандық мұғалімдер үшін осы құзыреттіліктерге негізделген педагогтарды ілгерілетумен педагогтардың құзыреттілігін жүйелі өлшеуге

бағытталған МАЖ әзірледі. Қазақстандағы Назарбаев Зияткерлік мектептері (НЗМ) білім беру саясатын, тәжірибелері мен реформаларын басқару құралы болып табылады. 2010 жылы НЗМ МАЖ-ның жеке жүйесін құрды. Бұл жаңа тәсілді жалпы білім беретін мектептерге тарату көзделеді. НЗМ мұғалімдерінің МАЖ-дағы тәжірибесі мен түсінігін зерттей отырып, біз бүкіл ел бойынша жалпы білім беретін мектептерде МАЖ-ны болашақта енгізуден не күтетінін біле аламыз. Осылайша, осы зерттеудің мақсаты Қазақстандағы мектептердің НЗМ-де жеке оқытушылардың МАЖ-дың тәжірибесін зерттеу және түсіну болды. Осы екі сұраққа жауап беру үшін сұхбат әдісі қолданылды. Алты қатысушымен жартылай құрылымдалған сұхбат барысында келесі негізгі тақырыптар анықталды: кәсіби өсу үшін мотивация; қызмет бойынша алға жылжу үшін ынталандыру; аттестаттаудан өтуге көмектесетін аспектілер; емтихан алушының рөлі; мұғалімдерді бағалау критерийлері; мұғалімдер тап болатын мәселелер.

Жалпы алынған нәтижелер сұхбатқа қатысқан оқытушылар НЗМ-де МАЖ-ны оң қабылдайтынын көрсетті. Әдебиетпен басты байланыс бүкіл әлем мұғалімдерінің кәсіби дамудың негізгі құралына жататын тиімді МАЖ туралы жалпы түсінуі болды. Бұл зерттеудің Қазақстан үшін салдары мектеп әкімшілігіне, білім беру саласындағы реформаторларға және аттестаттауға беруді жоспарлап отырған мұғалімдерге арналған ұсынымдарды қамтиды. Болашақ зерттеулерде осы тақырыпты жалпы білім беру мектептері тұрғысынан қарау ұсынылады.

Түйінді сөздер: мұғалімдерді қабылдау, мұғалімдерді түсіну, мұғалімдерді бағалау жүйесі (МАЖ), мұғалімдерді алға жылжыту, мұғалімдерді аттестаттау.

Abstract in Russian

Учителя являются одним из самых фундаментальных сегментов любой образовательной системы, в связи с чем, они нуждаются в эффективной системе профессионального развития. Система аттестации учителей (САУ) является одной из таких способов удовлетворения этой потребности с помощью системного подхода к профессиональному росту учителей. Существует широкий спектр различных САУ по всему миру, поскольку каждая страна создает именно такую систему, которая соответствует и отражает местный контекст. В частности, казахстанские реформаторы разработали САУ для казахстанских учителей, направленную на систематическое измерение компетенций педагогов с продвижением педагогов, основанных на этих компетенциях. Назарбаев Интеллектуальные Школы (НИШ) в Казахстане служат инструментом пилотирования образовательной политики, практик и реформ. В 2010 году НИШ создали собственную систему САУ. Этот новый подход предполагается распространить на общеобразовательные школы. Изучая опыт и понимание учителей НИШ в САУ, мы можем узнать, чего ожидать от будущего внедрения САУ в общеобразовательных школах по всей стране. Таким образом, целью данного исследования было изучение опыта и понимания САУ отдельными преподавателями в одной из НИШ школ в Казахстане. Для ответа на эти два вопроса был использован метод интервью. В ходе полу структурированных интервью с шестью участниками были определены следующие основные темы: мотивация для профессионального роста; поощрение для продвижения по службе; аспекты, помогающие пройти аттестацию; роль экзаменатора; критерии оценивания учителей; и проблемы, с которыми сталкиваются учителя.

В целом полученные результаты показали, что преподаватели, принимавшие участие в интервью, положительно воспринимают существующую САУ в НИШ. Главной связью с литературой стало общее понимание учителями всего мира об эффективном САУ, которое относится к основному инструменту профессионального развития. Последствия этого исследования для КЗ включают рекомендации для школьной администрации, реформаторов в сфере образования и учителей, которые планируют подавать на аттестацию. В будущих исследованиях рекомендуется рассматривать эту же тему с точки зрения общеобразовательных школ.

Ключевые слова: восприятие учителей, понимание учителей, система оценки учителей (САУ), НИШ, продвижение учителей, аттестация учителей.

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Chapter I: Introduction

This study investigated the perceptions of six NIS teachers toward the teacher appraisal system in one Nazarbayev Intellectual School in Kazakhstan. The purpose of this chapter is to establish the significance and relevance of this thesis. The first section of this chapter presents the background to this study. Further sections of this chapter outline the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, and the main research questions. Lastly, it ends with the significance of the study, the outline of this paper, and the conclusion.

Background to the Study

Teachers' performance is considered to be a vital element of an educational process and hence the key to the continuous advancement of the success of students. Teacher appraisal is a fundamental feature of the productivity administration system and is aimed at reforming the quality of teaching and, hence, the quality of learning. The role of an effective performance management system cannot be overestimated, conversely it requires accurate and well-conceived analysis.

An overarching interest in performance appraisal has a place in other domains as well. Private or public sector, commerce or industry, technology, or cinematography strive to identify three major objectives that a performance appraisal conveys:

1. to develop positive and effective habits through adjusting existing working habits;
2. to provide individual workers with constructive and meaningful feedback; and,
3. to make a provision of profound data to managers for equal and fair assignments and compensation distribution (Monyatsi, Steyn, & Kamper, 2006).

While there is a plethora of similarities across different labor domains, it can be assumed that the constitution of the organization precepts the insides and the materiality of its appraisal system. Although teacher appraisal roots originate in the 1980s when countries like Canada, England, Australia, and the United States decided to reconsider and reform the existing education system to improve the quality of education, the Kazakhstani educational system managed to establish teacher appraisal system on a formally approved level in 2000 (Sinnema, 2005). On par with that, the Kazakhstan Ministry of Education and Science (hereinafter, MES) introduced changes to it in 2003, 2016, and 2018 accordingly.

In 2016, MES published a document with rules on conditions for carrying out certification of pedagogical workers and persons equated to them, which delineates all the major guidelines of a national teacher attestation system that diverged from its initial protocol. The changes were mostly in the categorization section. The new document explains that there are four major categories of a teacher appraisal system: “teacher without category”, “teacher of the first category”, “teacher of the second category”, and “teacher of the highest category”, respectively (MES, 2016). It is equally important to note the appearance of a similar document with the guidelines for teacher attestation procedures within the system of Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (hereinafter, NIS), which was also issued in 2016. Correspondingly, the rules offer teacher attestation guidelines for the educators of NIS overtly vary from the teacher attestation instructions for the pedagogues of mainstream schools in Kazakhstan. It differentiates seven levels of a pedagogical expertise of a teacher: "basic level", "first-level", "teacher", "teacher-moderator", "teacher-expert", "teacher-researcher", and “teacher-master” (AEO, 2011).

Henceforth, the most compelling notion to the teacher appraisal system in Kazakhstan is its division into two different dimensions: the teacher appraisal system for the teachers of mainstream schools and the teachers of NIS. In the hope that the two separate protocols would work well within schools, in 2018 MES made some amendments to the guidelines for mainstream school teachers, which demonstrates its redemption from the existing system of teacher promotion and transition to the system of categorization of teachers' expertise using the NIS teacher appraisal system.

On the one hand, it may be concluded that the teacher appraisal system in Kazakhstan is under modification and advancement. On the other hand, the question arises as to whether the existing teacher appraisal system for NIS teachers is reliable and well-conceived for its further dissemination.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the presence of a wide range of perspectives on the role of teachers in reforms in education (Harris, Jones & Huffman, 2017), teachers continue being one of the most fundamental elements of an educational system in any country. Therefore, educators deserve a reliable system that will address their needs and allow them to grow professionally.

Consequently, it is highly essential to explore the experiences and understanding of NIS teachers toward the teacher appraisal system (TAS) and recognize the aspects that affect their success in the TAS as this may affect the success of the teachers all over the country as the experiences of NIS schools are usually disseminated to all mainstream schools.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this exploratory qualitative case study research is to understand the ways in which the national appraisal system (TAS) works in one Nazarbayev Intellectual School (NIS) in Kazakhstan. Specifically, this paper will explore understanding and experiences of teacher practitioners on the teacher appraisal system in NIS.

Research Questions

The two research questions that guided this study are as follows:

- 1) What is teachers' understanding of the teacher appraisal system in one NIS school?
- 2) What are the experiences of individual teachers of TAS in one NIS school?

Significance of the Study

It is critical to investigate the understanding and experience of teachers from Nazarbayev Intellectual School towards the teacher appraisal system, as they are the initial testers of the system that will expectedly be disseminated to the mainstream schools all around the country. By knowing the understanding and experiences of teachers, people involved in the education processes in Kazakhstan may make adjustments toward its improved realization. As for the school coordinator in one NIS school it is important for me to know what are the aspects that facilitate teachers to grow through the process of appraisal smoothly and successfully. Besides, I am also interested in knowing what are the factors that impede some of the educators from prosperous appraisals. Moreover, the results of this research may serve as a guiding document

for policy makers for further dissemination of NIS TAS experiences to all mainstream schools in Kazakhstan.

Apart from the above, school administrators in NIS schools may draw benefit from the results of this research by articulating and addressing the needs of the teachers in NIS in the area of TAS. Lastly, NIS teachers who plan to apply for the appraisal may gain a lot of useful information from this thesis as it proposes some recommendations to them. Overall, this thesis may fill the existing gap in literature on teacher appraisal systems in Kazakhstan.

Outline of the Study

After theorizing the background to the study, defining the problem statement, research purpose, questions, and significance of the study in Chapter 1, I will review the related literature in Chapter 2. Primarily, Chapter 2 dwells on TAS globally, the national teacher appraisal system, and NIS experiences. In Chapter 3, I will present the methods that will be used to elicit teachers' perceptions of TAS. This will be followed by Chapter 3 where I will justify my rationale for how a qualitative case study with the help of semi-structured interviews will address the research purpose and its questions. Along with it, I will outline the rationale for the number and criteria for the participants' selection processes. Chapter 4 aims to demonstrate findings for each of the research questions. This will be followed by Chapter 5 which delineated my researcher's voice through the interpretation of the collected data regarding the literature analyzed in Chapter 2. Finally, Chapter 6 provides the conclusion of the research by answering a set of three research questions and depicting how and to what extent the research purpose is attained prior to introducing implications and limitations of the study.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the significance and relevance of this thesis by outlining the background to this study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the main research questions, significance of the study, and the outline of the whole paper. The next chapter provides a review of the literature in the field of teacher appraisal systems both worldwide and in Kazakhstan.

Chapter II: Literature Review

The focal point of the literature review section is the key issues surrounding teacher appraisal systems (TAS) worldwide, which, in turn, elicits the purpose of my study. In the following chapters of this section, I will discuss the “function” of TAS on global and local levels. A solid understanding of its role, purpose, and importance both for a country’s educational system and for an individual teacher will help me in my analysis as I try to explain why teachers need TAS. Next, I will make an overview of “criteria” by which teachers are evaluated and hence promoted. The subsequent debate that heavily affected my study is “who the appraisers are?” The section does not refute the role of appraisers in the development of criteria, instead, it majorly focuses on the two-sided work of the appraiser and appraisee. If it is the point to be overlooked, then it is not the appraisees to be chastised, rather the policymakers.

Next, I will delineate the answer for “how the process takes place?” Three different accountability models will be discussed in this part: professional, organizational, and parental (Williams & Engel, 2012). In addition, the literature review section outlines the “conceptual

framework”, which best explains the development of the phenomenon under discussion. The following chapter will attempt to give a full overview of the “definition” for teacher appraisal. It is important for my study as it systematizes and promotes the knowledge that I as a novice researcher expose to scholarly masses. And the final chapter, the “conclusion”, summarizes all the ideas that have affected the nature of my study.

TAS Function: Globally & Locally

A solid comprehension of the teacher appraisal system puts a set of questions, answers for which demand accurate scrutiny: what functions TAS performs, what should be evaluated, who are the appraisers, and how they conduct an evaluation process. While attempting to address the following questions, I am inclined to think of “why do we need TAS?”

In the broadest context, TAS is the major tool to recognize an effective teacher (Brookhart, 2009). It may not only assist administrators in assigning the status of a teacher but also to observe one’s progress or regress throughout his/her pathway in a particular educational institution (De Pascale, 2012). In the same greatest sense, TAS may be considered as a measurement instrument to see whether educational goals are met (Monyatsi, 2002). Despite peculiarities of each country’s educational system, universal goal maintains to be the same—to educate an intelligent citizen who appreciates his culture and can accept that individuals with different backgrounds can also be right (AEO NIS, 2013).

However, any TAS should go in compliance with the context of where it is applied and disseminated (Filipe, Ferreira, & Santos, 2015). For example, while Kazakhstani TAS does address international demands, it still undercovers the national context (MES, 2016). To clarify, TAS in Kazakhstan fully supports the idea that it assists the measurement of educational goals when they are achieved, but still primarily retains to be a system to promote teachers for their qualification (AEO NIS, 2013). Hence, Kazakhstani TAS is a universal tool that may be used both in the state and school contexts. Finally, worldwide TAS seeks to motivate teachers and therefore lead to improvements in daily teaching practices (Martínez, Schweig, & Goldschmidt, 2016). From my point of view, the discussions above enhance the credibility of TAS's significance and therefore may disarm any naysayers who ignore its unflinching actuality.

Having discussed what functions TAS performs to the broadest extent, let us seek what role it plays for an individual teacher. Admittedly, while teacher promotion triggers different thoughts in the mind of all educational stakeholders, it generally provokes positive insights in teachers. One of the most compelling pieces of evidence is that teacher assessment may provide a focus for professional development (Close & Amrein-Beardsley, 2018). As an illustration, in 1999 the National Institute for Excellence and Teaching (hereinafter, NIET) in USA tried to align teachers' professional development to the evaluation system (Ritter, & Barnett, 2016). The educators operating in this environment were enraptured by the approach since everything the pedagogues did was customized to their real needs (Close & Amrein-Beardsley, 2018). The study of Murphy, Hallinger, and Heck (2013) extends this area by highlighting the meaningfulness of such an evaluation system as it totally changes the paradigm of teacher evaluation.

To elaborate, once teachers are assessed on the number and quality of the workshops, courses, seminars they have participated in, teachers will get accustomed to that and therefore will grow systematically even after evaluation. In this case, the assessment of teachers will have a long-term effect on teachers and henceforth the whole school. Some later research draws on the NIET's idea and adds that a meaningfully-built evaluation practice creates space for meaningful feedback. In particular, in a school where teachers are promoted for professional development, they interact with? pedagogues who are usually engaged in purposeful discussions based on classroom instructions or student achievements (Firestone, 2014). As a result, teachers grow professionally, exchange relevant information, and fall into useful conversations. On par with these two remarkable assets that an effective TAS may bring to an individual teacher, some scholars believe that a good TAS helps to raise teachers' wellbeing. Once educators systematically put efforts on their professional growth and reap constructive feedback, they start to see the usefulness of their work and efforts and consequently feel confident about themselves and their performance (Darling-Hammond, 2015). In the final analysis, it may be summarized that a well-conceived, teacher-oriented TAS may not only provoke an innocuous reaction among educators but also may pave the way to their professional growth, and their intention to teach to give, get productive feedback, and improve their overall well-being.

Criteria by which Teachers are Evaluated: Style, Students' Performance, and Experience

Teaching is multidimensional (Shulman, 1987) and involves a wide range of various pedagogical skills and concrete subject knowledge (Darling-Hammond, et. al., XXXX) on par with manifold classroom practices (Reynolds, 1999). Efforts to customize the criteria for "effective teaching" and an "effective teacher" who are worth promotion require strong appeal as

they bare the debates, which pertain to teacher appraisal systems. Although the idea of measuring one's performance by criteria raises concerns both for those who evaluate and those who are evaluated (Brookhart, 2009; Goe & Croft, 2009), the implementation of study for the choice of valid criteria is important as may enhance the credibility of the whole appraisal system.

Hence, while foreign scholars raise heated discussions on why we need an effective teacher promotion system, I believe that another prominent perspective from which TAS should be investigated is "what" a real TAS should assess. In other words, what are the criteria by which a teacher should be evaluated? One can differentiate three prominent concepts of teachers' work and performance: students' performance, style, and experience (Archer, 2019). Whatever a teacher does in a classroom unconsciously refers to the style of a teacher (Monyatsi, 2002): relaxed or tense, friendly or not (Archer, 2019), warm or cold (Brookhart, 2009) or a mix of them may be one's style. Although policymakers and school administrators relinquish consideration of this aspect when appointing a teacher's status, it is still an inevitable part of a teacher's work and thus their performance. Hence, the style of a teacher may be regarded as one of the criteria of TAS.

The next aspect to be considered by some by which a school faculty member can be appraised is students' performance (Rose, 2018). More specifically, Monyatsi (2002), by talking about students' performance, refers to teachers' effect and role of their effectiveness both in and out of the classroom. Archer (2019) dwells deeper into this point and resumes that there is an interdependent connection between students' performance and criteria for teacher appraisal. If students are eagerly positive about classes and strive to contribute to the class, then they believe that a teacher is highly effective and therefore may be highly appraised. This point clashes with

the opinion of Brookhart (2009) who insists on the repugnancy of the student's productivity as a teacher's promotion attribute. Instead, it is suggested that educators are supposed to be assumed by society as agents in education who perform on their own and therefore their status cannot be a part of a two-sided action (Braybrook, 2019).

This understanding of Braybrook will help me in my analysis as I try to understand and explain what a good TAS should assess, whether students' achievements are a product of a pedagogue's work. However, at this stage, I believe that teachers should not be advantaged or disadvantaged based on the students they teach (Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardsley, Haertel & Rothstein, 2012). Some other modern scholars build on these and conclude that teacher-student correlations are not the aspect by which one side of this correlation is assessed as it violates the naturalness of such a union. While heated discussions on these topics on a world arena do not subside, Kazakhstani stakeholders in education lack communication among each other and thus do not rely on one point universally.

Another feature by which school teachers are usually promoted is experience (De Pascale, 2012). This ultimate aspect is never omitted and plays a fundamental role when attributing one's achievements (Radinger, 2014). Glazerman et al. (2011) advocate for the invalidity of such criteria since it does not always work and then is not universal. Braybrook (2019) provides evidence on this notion by adding that escalating and ubiquitous usage of these criteria may leave no room for fresh teachers for awards. Although there are various perspectives on criteria or dimensions of a good teacher appraisal system, in this study, I will try to find out the ones that will both be helpful for teachers and valid for policymakers. In the following chapter, I will try to

look at TAS from the viewpoint of appraisers, who are an inevitable part of any appraisal process.

Who are the Appraisers?

While there is no world consensus on what dimensions are to be observed, whether student achievements or set of teacher's qualifications, it is conceptually significant and practically viable to define the role of people who observe these dimensions (Glazermanetal et al., 2011). Those who evaluate may not only improve teacher's performance (De Pascale, 2012), facilitate their learning-to-teach process (De Corte, Lievens, & Sackett, 2007) but also reduce teacher attrition levels (Martinez, Borko, & Stecher, 2012). Indeed, a study of TAS appraisers builds a fuller picture of the whole teacher evaluation process.

Despite the fact that research on appraisers is limited, Kazakhstani policymakers believe that teacher attestation jury members convey two important functions: (1) the recognition of experience and in-depth teaching skills through a formal positioning; and, (2) the matching of roles and responsibilities required by the appraisal system's specific level with the skills of the teachers, as more experienced and efficient teachers may be assigned higher positions, be paid higher salaries, and therefore perform special functions in the school (AEO NIS, 2013). Henceforth, local teacher evaluators are found to be the ones who execute managerial roles and are not interested in supporting teachers through constructive feedback. As Radinger (2014) pointed out, appraisers may face challenges while reconciling administrative, managerial, and evaluative responsibilities. In countries where there is no established system of teacher attestation, they may also face resistance from appraisees (Brauckmann, 2012), as the last ones

never received supportive feedback and hence do not believe and trust their expertise. In this sense, the study of Close & Amrein-Beardsley (2018) describes that evaluators are usually perceived as the ones who seek answers for “who should we fire” and not “how can I help”. Opponents of such an approach contend that appraisers are solely administrators and insist that they should incorporate some instructional and supportive functions and act as internal leaders, not external evaluators.

Another dimension to be investigated while evaluating evaluators is their background, experience, and expertise. Whilst there is a plethora of different education evaluators ranging from local and school organizing bodies to regional, intermediate, or central appraisals (Radinger, 2014), as a rule, an appraisee has no interest in knowing who will evaluate him or her and thus lack a full picture of their attestation process. Some countries’ regulations set specific guidelines and requirements that an evaluator should address. Not meeting these standards may lead to disqualification or discreditation. For instance, in France, Portugal, and Poland an examiner is expected to have completed professional development on teacher appraisal (Cohen & Goldhaber, 2016). In Slovenia, the educational system looks for experts whose length of service is long enough to assess one’s service. In various autonomous communities as Northern Ireland or Belgium, TAS seeks exceptional evaluators whose expertise is rewarded and ranked to the highest level (Jiang, Spote & Luppescu, 2015). Broadly speaking, each country strives to make specific rules for TAS, which convey each region’s context and fit best with their appraisees and appraisers. Therefore, it may be concluded that the expertise of evaluators is rather a given fact for appraisees that is usually not discussed with them.

Studying appraisers' background, expertise, and experience gives a clear understanding that these are the factors that are in many countries set by policymakers, and most of them are set to fit the context. Specific training and professional development is another perspective that is crucial to be examined for my study as it strives to define all the elements that may make the Kazakhstani teacher appraisal system an effective one (Cohen & Goldhaber, 2016). According to the study of Taylor and Tyler (2012), well-designed professional training on "how to evaluate" may result in both accurate appraisers and well-selected school teachers. Weisberg et al. (2009) extend on this area by adding that training for evaluators is a must as it will encourage them to be generally more self-driven regardless of the teaching background they had and rewards they have won. As a result, such experts, when evaluating their effectiveness, will follow the lessons, they learned from relevant training instead of the lessons they learned from their educational career. The study of Dixit (2002) was evidenced to impose the role of professional training of a valuer earlier than that of Taylor and Tyler. In the same manner, it draws on the notion that an evaluator should not be qualified to evaluate until professionally taught how to do it, as evaluation may lead to negative consequences. In other words, Dixit believes that the unpreparedness of an expert to assess someone may result in the promotion of someone who may supervise in the future and this can be an unrecoverable error for the school's development.

By addressing the question "Who are the appraisers?" it may be concluded that many countries have their own understanding of teacher evaluators. While some governments' educational systems stress a lot on appraisers' background, experience, and length of educational service, other countries' policymakers also qualify those who meet only part of these criteria. Broadly speaking, the criteria in countries differ, but most of them address local contexts.

Concluding the above, it can be stated that appraisees all over the world pay attention to the appraisers by whom they are evaluated by. More than that, teachers wish them to be competent, professionally trained, and qualified for such a job.

How does the Process Take Place?

There is a wide range of principles to make an effective evaluation of teachers. When assessing an educator, it should not be forgotten that evaluation goes side by side with an appraisal and therefore should be accurately organized. What has already been learned in the previous chapter is that teacher evaluation systems are organized differently around the world and it depends on the context. As to understanding “how does the evaluation take place?”, the following forms of accountability models will be examined in this chapter: professional, organizational and parental accountability (Williams & Engel, 2012).

Professional accountability refers to the mode when the evaluation process is closely tied to professional norms and peer assessments (Luschei, 2012). For instance, in Finland, teacher evaluation is primarily of a consultative manner, and predominantly conducted face-to-face. In other words, Finnish appraisees when they are being assessed get involved in conversations with the experts and receive feedback on a formative basis (Sahlberg, 2011). This results in realizing the aim of making this process a participatory, reflective, and group-based procedure. More than that, principals of the schools share their experience with the staff and therefore strive to build open, learning communities comprising both teachers and administration. Another sound example of professional accountability is Japanese educational systems. Educators take turns in presenting lessons, and then the lessons are critiqued in group settings (Williams & Engel, 2012).

Organizational accountability results from the individual approach of each school to design its teacher motivation process. Every school is an individual in compelling teachers to implement its wishes. For example, some schools create sophisticated rubrics according to which teachers are promoted, others invite external experts, and some estimate teacher efficacy based on the achievements of the students (Stecher, Garet, Holtzman & Hamilton, 2012). Proof of this is the existence of the New Mexican performance-based salary and bonus system originated in 2006 (Martínez, Schweig & Goldschmidt, 2016). The method exceeded its expectations as it led to fair opportunities to all: higher-scoring teachers are the ones who are the most effective. Overall, in the scope of a country, such a system resulted in a higher decentralization, which is a habitual phenomenon for the Mexican context.

Another accountability model to be discussed in this thesis is parental/community accountability. This bottom-up, informal method varies across countries and cultures, as families with high social-economic status require high accountability and therefore want to participate in the teacher-evaluation process (Tucker, 2011). Parental existence in the procedure may present as a part of the holistic approach or as an independent tool to measure teacher's success. Finland, Korea, Japan, and Singapore are the flagship examples of the countries where parental accountability is an effective instrument of the whole teacher appraisal system.

While teachers look for ways to be included in their evaluation system (Martínez, Schweig, & Goldschmidt, 2016), professional, organizational and parental accountability models demonstrate how schools around the world organize the process to promote, motivate, and support their pedagogues. Some schools enforce collective learning, some school administrations

engage parents into teacher attestation procedures, but all strive to design one system that would be both effective and trustworthy.

Definition of Teacher Appraisal System (TAS)

As has been discussed in the previous chapter, Kazakhstan has been smoothly shifting towards a unique and teacher-oriented system of teacher promotion within the past three years. Nonetheless, due to the existence of manifold names for the phenomenon, local educators face difficulties with labeling it so the term can be used ubiquitously (Radinger, 2014). Some of the offered names are teacher attestation, teacher evaluation, teacher certification, teacher appraisal, and teacher promotion. Finally, in 2003, the phenomenon was given its conclusive definition and got the name “teacher attestation.” According to MES (2016), “Attestation of teachers and persons equated to them—is the order of successive actions for the assignment (confirmation) of the qualification category, which determines the professional competence of teachers and persons equated to them, which is necessary to perform professional activities.”

Despite the brevity of the definition of “teacher attestation” within the context of Kazakhstan, the international arena proposes heated discussions on the topic. By the same token, international scholars hesitate to call the phenomenon under one recognized term due to the lack of precedence to one name. More than that, different countries call it differently. For example, the educational system of New Zealand when discussing the process through which Boards of Trustees ensure that teachers are meeting their teaching, school-wide, and management responsibilities, refer to “teacher appraisal” (Sinnema, 2005). In the same fashion, the system of education in the United Kingdom strengthens the usage of the word “appraisal” by purporting

two ensuing words: appraiser and appraisee. In particular, the appraisal has generally been of value to both the appraisee and the appraiser (Kyriacou, 1997). Some African countries like Botswana, believe that one of the tools to regulate and change the behavior of the employee to facilitate productivity is teacher appraisal (Monyatsi, 2002). In Finland, teacher evaluation is “the systematic assessment of a teacher’s performance and/or qualifications concerning a professional role and some specified and defensible institutional purpose” (The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 2009, p. 27).

While several countries are convinced that teacher appraisal is the right term for the process, Howard (2010) tried to alleviate the controversies that were surrounding these concepts in Australia by presenting definitions to each and highlighting the specificity of each. The following paraphrases are Howard’s (2010) definitions:

- Evaluation is a common definition to depict any performance of the institution where the quality of provision is a product of a linear and systematic study;
- An appraisal is a process of producing qualitative judgments about performance, individual or an institution;
- Assessment implies grading based on the list of criteria (p. 234).

Despite a wide range of both names and interpretations of the process when teachers are first evaluated, and second, promoted either by position or salary, in my thesis, I will use the definition given by AEO Nazarbayev Intellectual schools (2013): Appraisal is a procedure that is carried out periodically to determine the degree of professional and qualification training of teachers to establish the level of pedagogical skills of teachers and those equivalent to them.

The choice is not the conclusion of a random approach instead after deliberated analysis of the aforementioned term “appraisal” and this definition is the best fit for this thesis as it brings to life its purpose.

Conclusion

The review of the existing literature contributed to our understanding of what functions a TAS performs globally and for an individual teachers, what are the criteria that educational systems around the world use in order to evaluate pedagogue’s effectiveness, who are the people who conduct evaluations and how the procedure of teacher attestation takes place. Subsequently, I have outlined a plethora of definitions and names for the process of evaluation of effectiveness and further promotion of teachers and strived to define the one that will be used in this study. After a deliberate scrutiny, it was posited that teacher appraisal system (hereinafter TAS) is the term that will be used within the scope of this study as it directly communicates the purpose of this study.

A deliberate scrutiny of the reviewed literature has made bare the issue that educational scholars experience complexity in defining relevant criteria by which teachers should be assessed. While one cohort of scholars insist on considering students’ performance when judging pedagogues’ effectiveness, others conflict with this opinion by articulating teachers’ independence in such procedures. Nevertheless, analysis of the literature in the theme of criteria of effective TAS defined its brevity that this research will attempt to fulfill.

Likewise, an in-depth analysis of the literature has identified the fact that although most countries strive to design effective TAS that addresses local teachers’ needs, and, in the best manner, ensure that the TAS fits its context and pedagogues, there is a lack of one universal

system that will reveal each teachers' true competence. Finland, Korea, Singapore, Japan, Belgium, Slovenia, Portugal, Poland, France and some other flagship countries attempt to realize some educational goals via its TAS, however fail to recognize teachers' voices that play major role in bringing to life these goals (Stecher, Garet, Holtzman, & Hamilton, 2012). Therefore, in the following chapters, I will attempt to fill this gap and stress on the voice of teachers on par with their overall perception of TAS in Kazakhstan.

Chapter III: Methodology

The previous chapter depicted the related literature in response to the declared research questions. In this chapter, I disclosed and provided a rationale for the methodology that was used to conduct this study. This research intended to examine secondary school teachers' experiences in teacher appraisal processes in Kazakhstan. The research questions to address this intention were as follows:

- What are teachers' understanding of the teacher appraisal system in one NIS school?
- What are the experiences of individual teachers of TAS in one NIS school?

This chapter demonstrates “how the problem was investigated and why particular methods and techniques were employed” (Bell, 2005, p. 13). Therefore, sections are presented as follows:

- Research design and rationale,
- Research site,
- Sampling,

- Data collection instruments,
- Data collection procedures,
- Ethical concerns and risks of research,
- Limitations.

Research Design and Rationale

While attempting to create a full picture of the current state of TAS in one NIS, I explored the experiences of teachers in teacher appraisal processes by seeking to get very in-depth insights and bind them together. Ritchie (2003) describes that qualitative approach “offers the opportunity to 'unpack' issues, to see what they are about or what lies inside, and to explore how they are understood by those connected with them” (p. 27). Therefore, the quantitative approach, which focuses its attention on numeric data that examines the relationship between tendencies (Creswell, 2014), is not applicable in this case. Henceforth, it is considered to be irrelative for achieving my research purpose. More than that, since the research was designed to investigate a specific case, a qualitative case study was employed to conduct the research. Several studies agree that a case study attempts to understand various interactive processes in an organization and reveals how the quality of the implementation of those processes affect the way an organization functions (Bell, 2005; Yin, 2012). Some earlier papers strengthen this point by adding that a case study may help an organization tackle some contemporary phenomena existing at the moment (Robson, 2002). In the hope that this case study would overtly discuss current practices of TAS in NIS schools by binding the opinions of several teachers, it would

therefore reveal and propose the organization of how these schemes of TAS are and could be implemented.

Research Site

Those schools in Kazakhstan that are under the governance of the Autonomous Educational Organization (hereinafter, AEO), “Nazarbayev Intellectual schools”, are considered to be models for mainstream schools where the experiences are disseminated to (AEO NIS, 2013; Shamshidinova, Ayubayeva, & Bridges, 2014). According to MES (2016), the existing national appraisal system operating in mainstream schools in Kazakhstan is no longer active and is establishing new rules for the attestation of pedagogues. For this reason, one NIS school pertinent for this study will serve as a research site. For the purpose of retaining the role of the participants confidentiality, neither the location of the school nor its trends will be disclosed in this paper. Indeed, the text of the paper is well-conceived, so the promise of confidentiality is well kept.

Sample

Due to the fact that the participants were chosen based on the criteria in order to explicitly fulfill the research purpose (Creswell, 2014), in this research I employed purposeful sampling. It is assumed that usage of purposeful sampling in the application of qualitative method provides uniqueness for exploring individual, groups of individuals, or phenomenon (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). With the aim to make the research more aligned with the aims and patterns inherent to this study, maximal variation purposeful sampling was applied throughout sampling procedures. Creswell (2014) suggests that maximal variation purposeful sampling implies

working with participants that have different features from each other to get various perspectives of central phenomenon. In particular, the central phenomenon of this paper was the teacher appraisal system, and teachers who had different characteristics would contemplate over this process in one particular school.

The first and major criterion for the maximal variation purposeful sampling in this study was teacher-practitioners who had already undergone the appraisal procedures within the system of NIS throughout the past three years. Three years is a period when teachers still have fresh memories about the procedures and hence the process did not anyhow force participants to remember events, which had happened a relatively long time ago. Secondly, I interviewed secondary school teachers, which implies the teachers of grades six to ten as this research aimed to explore an understanding and experience of the secondary school teachers. Thirdly, English speaking participants were chosen for the interviews, since the data were not to be translated and therefore misinterpreted.

Although each researcher has personal expectations and standards for establishing the number of participants required to address the research questions and hence purpose (Guest et al. 2006; Morse and Niehaus 2009; Padgett 2008), I expected to interview six participants. Yin (2012) suggests that on average six participants can meet the desires of a qualitative researcher in a case study of a different nature.

Data Collection Instrument

Another crucial concept to be considered on this stage of the research is data collection instruments. Bell explains that while collecting data, a researcher develops a full picture of the

research (Bell, 2005). Under these circumstances, with the aim to produce a multi-dimensional picture of TAS in NIS schools, semi-structured interviews were employed in this research as a data collection instrument. Semi-structured interviews are found to be effective tools to get to know “thoughts, values, prejudices, perceptions, views, feelings and perceptions” (Wellington, 2000, p. 71). In particular, by employing semi-structured one-on-one interviews with open-ended questions, I was able to obtain the real perceptions of the interviewees towards TAS in NIS schools. Due to the fact that semi-structured interviews maintain a qualitative nature and heavily rely on flexibility (Edwards & Holland, 2013), I supposed that a set of prepared and several follow-up questions might assist me to direct the flow of the discussion to maximize the magnitude of my achievement of the research purpose. Assuming one-on-one interviews, which imply only one participant is interviewed at a time (Creswell, 2014), allow for full immersion into the process of interviewing, I considered that the process would be enjoyable for both participants including me. Finally, open-ended questions were also included as they are expected to significantly escalate the feeling of comfort of the participants, so that they share experiences regarding TAS with no concerns and inconveniences.

Data Collection Procedures

- Firstly, I contacted the school administration by emailing the consent forms (informing the details of the potential research) to conduct data collection procedures in the school and by employing local teachers. In addition, I attached a letter of permission from NUGSE to conduct the research. This helped me to assure that the data collection process is well-informed and did not violate any rules.

- Secondly, I made an appointment for a face-to-face conversation with the school administrators. Major details of the research, the dates for data collection procedures, and interviewing ethicality and confidentiality rules were discussed during the meeting. Markedly, school authorities were asked to shortlist those secondary school teachers who had undergone assessment through the teacher appraisal system within the past three years.
- Thirdly, once ethical clearance was granted for emailing teachers to participate in the research, I emailed secondary school teachers by informing them of the voluntary nature of participation, anonymity issues, the right to withdraw any time, possible risks and benefits of participation and asked them to sign a consent form while assuring them about their ability to remain anonymous.
- The data collection procedures started as soon as the consent forms were signed by all of the participants, which determined the ethical nature of the research. On a daily and mutually-agreed upon basis, I interviewed each participant about their personal perceptions and experiences of appraisal procedures.

Ethical Concerns and Risks of Research

In order to be considerate about the research, I tried to evaluate all the potential risks that may arise throughout the research execution period. One of the probable risks which could emerge is unavailability of the participant/s on a scheduled time and/or for a period of time. In this case, the appointments were supposed to be rescheduled on an agreed upon basis. Another risk to which the research could be exposed to is negative experiences of the participants of the teacher appraisal procedures. In order to tackle this potential issue and due to the voluntary

nature of the interview, the participants could retain their right to skip specific questions in case of embarrassment or confusion. More than that, interviews were conducted in such areas of the school where there is a provision of a quiet and calm atmosphere. It helped participants to keep anonymity from the rest of the school members. Finally, open-ended questions were expected to reduce feelings of discomfort significantly escalating the feeling of comfort of the participants, so that they could share experiences regarding TAS with no concerns and inconveniences.

Limitations

The understanding and experiences of teachers from one NIS school towards the teacher appraisal system may vary from those, for instance, in other NIS schools. Besides, this thesis was aimed at exploring the understanding and experiences of teachers from NIS schools, which are located in urban areas, so the results of the thesis did not uncover the understanding and experiences of teachers from schools situated in rural areas. Apart from the aforementioned limitations, the participants who participated in the interviews had gone through the teacher appraisal processes one time only, thus, the perceptions of educators who underwent it more than ones may vary a lot.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the rationale for the research methodology, including research design, data collection, analysis methods, instruments, sampling procedures, and the description of the research site to investigate the understanding and experiences of NIS teachers toward teacher appraisal system in one NIS school in Kazakhstan. In addition, this chapter presented the

ethical concerns and risks of research and the limitations of the study. The following chapter will display the data analysis and the findings based on the analysis.

Chapter IV: Data Analysis and Findings

This chapter serves a twofold purpose: to present the data analysis and to present the findings based on the analysis. The purpose of this study was to understand the ways the national appraisal system works in one Nazarbayev Intellectual School (NIS) in Kazakhstan. The study specifically explored these understandings and experiences of six teachers who had gone through appraisal procedures at the one NIS school. Semi-structured interviews revealed educators' experiences and the challenges that they faced. The two research questions guiding the study included: (1) What is teachers' understanding of the teacher appraisal system in one NIS school, and (2) What are the experiences of individual teachers of TAS in one NIS school?

The following sections of the chapter are organized into two major sections: Data Analysis and then Findings. In the first section, Data Analysis, I will explain the process of identifying the participants, interviewing, coding, and will present the limitations of this study.

Data Analysis

In this section, I will present the process of identifying the participants, interviewing, coding, and I will present limitations of this study.

Process of identifying participants. The process to identify participants included the following. Apart from unveiling thoughtful insights into the Kazakhstani teacher appraisal processes, the choice of interviewing six teachers opened an opportunity for me to study responses to the research questions from different perspectives. To clarify, six teachers from one NIS school were engaged in the semi-structured face-to-face interviews with open-ended questions. All the interviews were conducted in English.

Invitations were sent to five women and one man with ages varying from 25 to 55 years old. They each taught a different subject and had between five and 11 years of experience in NIS. If a teacher had from one to three years of NIS experience, I categorized him as a “novice” teacher, from four to eight years represented an “apprentice”, and from nine to 11 represented an “expert”, accordingly. As they all spent different time in NIS, and the level of certification that they applied for was different as well. Among all secondary school teachers, who had gone through TAS, six educators agreed to participate in the interviews. Among those six interviewees, five attended interviews.

Interview process. The interviews were conducted in the settings, which were planned to be employed for interview processes. More specifically, there was a room in the school that had an option to be locked down. In order to establish a more secure setting and atmosphere for the interviews, I locked the door during the interviews. The participants were all with a high competency in English, therefore the interviews were conducted in English. On average, each interview was about 35 minutes long and each interview was recorded on my phone via the Dictaphone option.

The transcription process took longer than it was planned. Hence, instead of spending six days for transcribing one interview, the whole process took me about two weeks. More specifically, one interview required almost three days for me to transcribe. I transcribed it word-by-word using my personal laptop and Microsoft Word. I did it word-by-word since I knew that in this case the meaning would not lose its authenticity (see Figure 1 for an example of transcription).

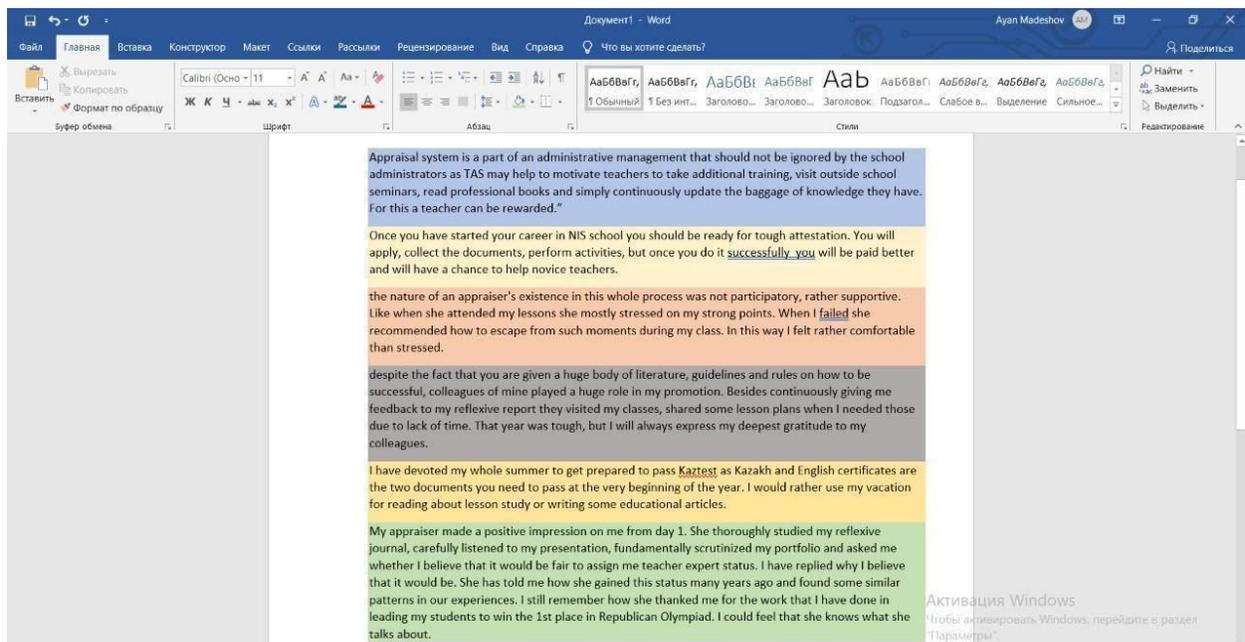


Figure 1. Transcribing of Interview Paragraphs in Microsoft Word. This figure shows the way how I transcribed interviews in a Microsoft Word.

Then I organized each interview by answers. Since I had nine earlier developed questions, I organized each interview into nine paragraphs. The answers, which were unplanned, were put into separate paragraphs, hence the number of paragraphs in each transcribed interview varied.

By reading one paragraph of a transcribed interview, I tried to assign a code, which best described the meaning of a sentence or the whole paragraph. Next, after coding one interview, I applied the generated codes to other interviews. However, each interview contained several unique codes that were not repeated in a previous or the subsequent interview.

Data analysis process with coding. As the transcription process took longer than expected, I started learning about the MAXQDA program. This program is relevant for both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Cresswell (2012) proposes the list of computer programs for the data analysis. One of the programs offered by Cresswell was MAXQDA. I checked the official website of this program, www.maxqda.com, and it said that the full version required the key to install, therefore I downloaded the trial version, which allowed me free usage of this program for 14 days. It appeared that this time was enough for me to code all six interviews. The first thing that I did was upload all six transcripts to the program. Then, I duplicated the codes from the Microsoft Word document to the program, which I made manually. The MAXQDA program then managed to find 38 “unique” codes and 64 in total. I copied the codes of each interview to the program manually. The numbers of unique and total numbers of codes varied, since the initial number of codes in each interview varied (see Figure 2 for an example of coding).

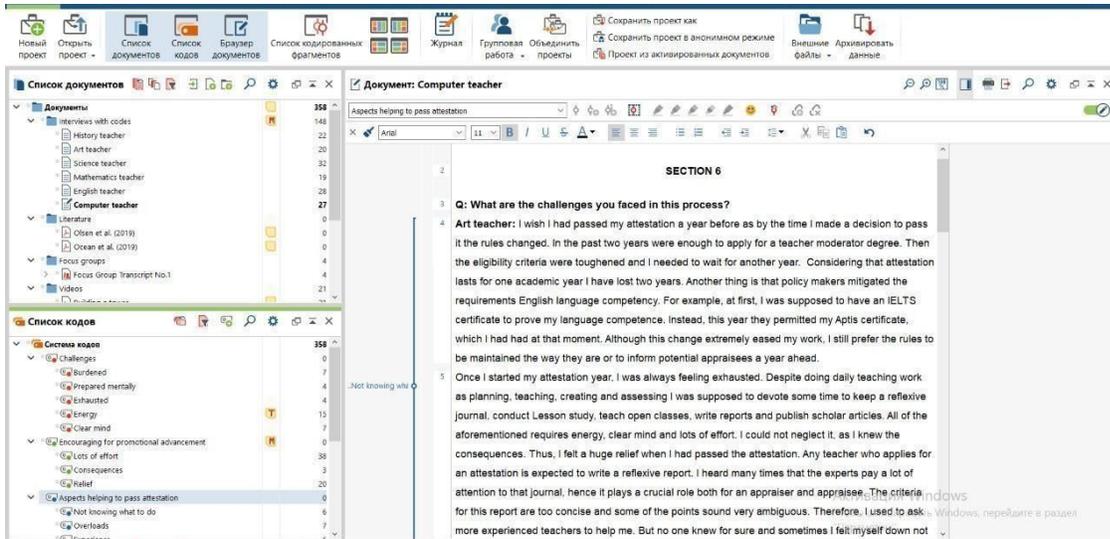


Figure 2. Coding of Interview Paragraphs in MAXQDA Program.

Note. This figure demonstrates how I coded the transcripts in MAXQDA program.

Limitations. One of the limitations of this study can be that I conducted the interviews in English. Since the English language is not the mother tongue of the recruited participants, then some of the ideas and thoughts were not represented and communicated fully. Another limitation of this study could be the fact that I had worked in NIS as an administrator and, therefore, teachers did not want to say negative things about the school.

Findings

In this section I will first introduce the participants and will outline two other major subsections, which address the answers for the two research questions:

Subsection 1. Teachers' Understanding of the Teacher Appraisal System in NIS.

Subsection 2. Experiences of Teachers in Teacher Appraisal System in NIS.

In Subsection 1, and through the analysis of the interview transcripts, I present two major themes relating to the RQ1:

- Theme 1: Motivation for growth professionally.
- Theme 2: Encouragement for promotional advancement.

And, in Subsection 2, encompassing the answers for RQ2, I present the following four themes:

- Theme 3: Aspects for helping to pass attestation.
- Theme 4: The role of appraisers.
- Theme 5: Criteria teachers evaluated by.
- Theme 6: Challenges teachers face.

The findings presented here will be elaborated in a greater depth in the following Discussion chapter, where I will draw a connection between the themes and previous literature on the topic.

Introducing the participants. I will introduce each participant individually.

The History Teacher. The History Teacher had a mild number of years of experience in working at the NIS school. She was aged between 40 and 45 and had the position of a teacher moderator at the time of the interview and the position of a teacher before the attestation.

The Art Teacher. The Art Teacher had a medium number of years of experience in working at the NIS school. She was aged between 25-30 and had the position of a teacher moderator at the time of the interview and the position of a teacher before the attestation.

The Science Teacher. The History Teacher had a medium number of years of experience in working at the NIS school. He was aged between 30-35 and had the position of a teacher moderator at the time of the interview and the position of a teacher before the attestation.

The Mathematics Teacher. The History Teacher had a medium number of years of experience in working at the NIS school. She was aged between 35-40 and had the position of a teacher expert at the time of the interview and the position of a teacher moderator before the attestation.

The English Teacher. The History Teacher had a considerable number of years of experience in working at the NIS school. She was aged between 50-55 and had the position of a teacher expert at the time of the interview and the position of a teacher moderator before the attestation.

The Computer Teacher. The History Teacher had a considerable number of years of experience in working at the NIS school. She was aged between 45-50 and had the position of a teacher researcher at the time of the interview and the position of a teacher expert before the attestation.

Table 1

Characteristics of Participants

Pseudonym of the participant	Work experience	Subject	Gender	Age range
History Teacher	Novice	History	Female	40 - 45
Art Teacher	Apprentice	Art	Female	25 - 30
Science Teacher	Apprentice	Science	Male	30 - 35
Mathematics Teacher	Apprentice	Mathematics	Female	35 - 40
English Teacher	Expert	English	Female	50 - 55
Computer Teacher	Expert	Computer	Female	45 - 50

Answering Research Question 1: teachers' understanding of the teacher appraisal system in one NIS school. Teachers were first asked to share their understanding of the TAS. In particular, opinions were sought on the major functions that an effective teacher appraisal system should perform. They were also asked their opinion about whether they believe their school level TAS performs these functions.

Theme 1: Motivation for growth professionally. According to the six participants, they found that an effective teacher appraisal system is primarily a tool to measure one's real competence in a subject he or she teaches and to assign to someone a level based on that competence. The Art Teacher delineated functions of TAS and said:

Teachers may visit each other's classes, give constructive feedback, plan collaboratively, and grow professionally but it does not make a difference if there is no official way to measure and assign to one a reward for his hard work and expertise.

The Science Teacher elaborated on that by saying:

An appraisal system is a part of administrative management that should not be ignored by the school administrators as TAS may help to motivate teachers to take additional training, visit outside school seminars, read professional books, and simply continuously update the baggage of knowledge they have. For this a teacher can be rewarded.

The Science Teacher explained that the school management team may benefit from designing a qualitative TAS by facilitating teachers to maintain self-development and learning. Educators who have prominent experience in education also referred to TAS as a mechanism that may sharpen the horizons of any teacher as it enables them to study, self-develop, reflect, and study again. Hence, the English Teacher dwelled upon what was said by the Science Teacher: "...teaching is a fascinating journey that always requires replenishment, but effective TAS may assist in stabilizing this journey as for growing professionally you will grow by position and salary." This was further elaborated by the History Teacher: "...teachers not only gain new knowledge by going through attestation but they also disseminate that knowledge with others by raising meaningful discussions." To clarify, the History Teacher was explaining that if one is undergoing the teacher appraisal processes then he or she spreads the knowledge and the skills acquired in these processes with other colleagues.

The following excerpts from the interviews with the other two participants illustrate similar tendencies toward positive functions of TAS. For example, the Computer Teacher said, "One can

self-develop even without TAS, but TAS is a huge push to do so.” In this quote, Computer Teacher is suggesting that TAS creates a useful motivation to develop oneself as a teacher. “The outcome of your hard work in the area you teach and your approaches to teach is being appraised” (Mathematics Teacher).

The responses above address the question of the function of TAS. I found that participants regularly mentioned the facilitation of professional growth, for which teachers may be further appointed to higher positions and hence paid better. Five of the six participants directly stated that TAS was a useful tool to motivate them to learn more. Also, apparently important was TAS as a tool for moving forward with career promotion as noted by three of the participants. Therefore, it may be asserted that teachers perceive effective TAS as a motivational means for professional growth.

Table 2

Functions that the Teacher Appraisal System in NIS Performs

General idea	History Teacher	Art Teacher	Science Teacher	Mathematics Teacher	English Teacher	Computer Teacher
TAS as tool for motivation to learn	+	–	+	+	+	+
TAS as tool to get rewarded for an expertise one possesses	–	+	+	+	–	–

Note. A + denotes instances when the teacher mentioned the general idea.

In the Theme 2, whether or not the functions of NIS's TAS converge with the above will be explored. In other words, once teachers were asked what functions they believe an effective TAS should perform, they were requested to compare whether the NIS TAS carries out them.

Theme 2: TAS as a tool to be promoted by a salary and position. The system of a teacher appraisal at the one school studied seems to aim at raising an individual teacher from one level to another. After analyzing the responses of the participants, it has become clear that the six participants perceive TAS as a motivator for learning more (theme 1 above) and as a method for promotion. Once a pedagogue applies for attestation, it can be surmised that he or she will keep the current status or will be upgraded to the next level. The latter suggestive of a raised salary that corresponds to the relevant level. In other words, when applying for an attestation in NIS schools, one may be elevated from teacher trainee to teacher, from teacher to teacher moderator, from teacher moderator to teacher expert, from teacher expert to teacher researcher, and from teacher researcher to teacher master.

For instance, the English Teacher summarized the function of NIS TAS in the following manner, noting the importance of promotion: "I believe that teachers are rigorous about going through attestation procedures as in case of a positive outcome, a teacher will receive a higher salary." Similarly, the Mathematics Teacher noted the end result of promotion, highlighting the rigor involved in the process:

Once you have started your career in NIS school, you should be ready for tough attestation. You will apply, collect the documents, perform activities, but once you do it successfully, you will be paid better and will have a chance to help novice teachers.

In other words, the Computer Teacher meant that once you have finished the certification with success, then you may count not only on salary, but also on an advance that will give you more authority.

In addition, it was remarked by the History Teacher that: “NIS attestation serves two functions: one, it triggers someone to work hard; two, it pays you.” The following responses were quite similar in meaning. The Science Teacher said: “I will state that in the Kazakhstani educational system is the only fair tool to get paid better.” The Art Teacher stressed more on privileges one can possess if appraised: “Despite the fact that you earn a lot of money, you also share your experiences with other teachers, get involved in research practices, and overall it gives lots of authority within the NIS system.”

Table 3. *Perceptions of Participants of Teacher Appraisal System in NIS*

General idea/identification of the participant	History Teacher	Art Teacher	Science Teacher	Mathematics Teacher	English Teacher	Computer Teacher
TAS as tool to earn more	+		+	+	+	+
TAS as promotion tool		+		+		+

All the responses above demonstrate that there is only one perspective of how NIS teachers percept attestation in Kazakhstan which is that it is an official way to get promoted and therefore be paid better. Answers about TAS's global functions do not coincide with those of the NIS TAS. NIS pedagogues interviewed in this study believe that although the appraisal should be assigned for professionalism and expertise in the specific subject, they state that NIS TAS do not fit these contexts and thus it can be perceived only as a promotion tool. Despite teachers' understanding of effectiveness of TAS in general, their perceptions of the NIS TAS differ and thus they recognize local TAS uniquely as a salary and position instrument. Greater analysis of the functions of TAS will be "presented in the "Discussion" chapter.

Answering research question 2: experiences of teachers in the teacher appraisal system in one NIS school. The participants were kindly asked to share their experiences of TAS. Specifically, they were asked about their thoughts on the things that helped them to pass the attestation; the criteria they were assessed by; the appraisers who participated and evaluated them; and, the challenges they faced.

Theme 3: Aspects helping to pass attestation. It is noteworthy to point out that when we talked about the aspects that eased participants' difficulties when undergoing appraisal, assumptions of educators varied a lot. This should be considered as a natural phenomenon as teachers are from different backgrounds, with diverse sets of skills and talents, and therefore their experiences differ. For instance, the Art Teacher considers that the role of a supervisor was important for her attestation success:

...the nature of an appraiser's existence in this whole process was not participatory, rather supportive. Like when she attended my lessons, she mostly stressed on my strong points. When I failed, she recommended how to escape from such moments during my class. In this way, I felt rather comfortable rather than stressed.

Other teachers also noted that they felt support during their attestation processes. The Computer Teacher indicated that TAS is result of one's individual work but nevertheless it might be eased by colleagues' support:

... despite the fact that you are given a huge body of literature, guidelines and rules on how to be successful, colleagues of mine played a huge role in my promotion. Besides continuously giving me feedback to my reflexive report, they visited my classes, and shared some lesson plans when I needed those due to lack of time. That year was tough, but I will always express my deepest gratitude to my colleagues.

The Science Teacher seconded this opinion about the importance of someone while undergoing attestation. She remarked: "He was very helpful in the beginning by explaining to us the rules and instructions that are written in the attestation guidelines. In spite of this, every teacher should demonstrate strong appeal and work hard to succeed." The following interview extracts show the alignment of the other three teachers opinions' with what is outlined above: "It won't make a huge difference if I made it alone, but moral support is always a good idea, especially if it's from the side of indifferent colleagues" (Mathematics Teacher), "I guess I was appraised because of my everlasting passion that was reassured by the whole school staff" (History Teacher), "...even colleagues of other subjects gave me feedback on my classes and it helped me" (English Teacher).

As can be seen, most of the teachers express their deepest gratitude to their colleagues, the school administration and supervisors who took part in their certification processes. All six participants believe that because of both moral and physical help and support, they could succeed and therefore get appraised.

Table 4. *People Who Helped Participants during Attestation*

General idea/ identification of the participant	History Teacher	Art Teacher	Science Teacher	Mathematics Teacher	English Teacher	Computer Teacher
Support from a supervisor	+		+	+	+	+
Support from a colleague		+		+		+

Theme 4: Criteria assessed by. Along with the teachers' perspectives on appraisers, they were requested to answer some questions about the criteria that they were assessed by. It is important to note that teachers were negative about a specific criterion—the Kazakh language competence. Many of them felt embarrassed about discussing it as Kazakh language was the mother tongue of all participants, however, they do not find it meaningful to establish it as a requirement for non-Kazakh appraisees. The Art Teacher mentioned: “The language of instruction of my school is English. I am competent to teach my subject in English. But I have no idea why I need to be competent in the Kazakh language in order to get a higher position.” This

opinion was repeated by the other three teachers: "... I speak Kazakh very well, but I would rather be appraised for research I have done in education" (Mathematics Teacher), "Criteria are supposed to be easily adaptable to any person and tolerate everyone" (English Teacher). The following excerpt from the interview of the Computer Teacher demonstrates that Kazakh language competence criterion causes a lot of inconveniences to the appraisees:

I have devoted my whole summer to get prepared to pass the Kaztest as Kazakh and English certificates are the two documents you need to pass at the very beginning of the year. I would rather use my vacation for reading about pedagogy? or writing some educational articles.

The responses above outline the misunderstanding of the appraisees on a particular criterion—possession of the certificate of the Kazakh language competence.

Apart from the abovementioned responses from participants, the other two respondents also shared their opinions about the criteria of the NIS TAS. The History Teacher and Science Teacher were also asked about the Kazakh language, however, they were neutral about the criteria. For example, the History Teacher stated: "...I assume that if this criterion is in the requirements list, then this is what was decided by the expert committee." The other participant has also conveyed a neutral perspective on the question: "It does not make any difference to me whether it is a requirement or not."

Instead, the Science Teacher was concerned with another criterion—years of experience in the NIS system. At NIS, the typical model for promotion is years of experience? The Science Teacher noted: "Despite the fact that I had worked in a non-NIS system for almost 10 years, I

was only a “teacher” category. Therefore, I needed to work for another year to apply for the “moderator” category.” The “teacher” category is the lowest level within the promotion scale. This suggests that teachers coming from a different system than NIS system are not considered for promotion within NIS. While the Science Teacher showed frustration with her prior experience not counting for attestation, the History Teacher was the only respondent who asserted acceptance of all the requirements. She said: “I have gone through the attestation and that means that any person can. Hard work and discipline may help one to meet any requirement.”

Table 5. *Criteria in Teacher Appraisal System that Participants Found Invalid*

General idea/ identification of the participant	History Teacher	Art Teacher	Science Teacher	Mathematics Teacher	English Teacher	Computer Teacher
Irrelevance of some portions (e.g., Kazakh language)		+		+	+	+
Not considering the non-NIS experience	+		+			

Theme 5: The role of appraisers. All teachers insisted on the role of appraisers in the attestation processes. Some of participants highlighted appraisers’ competence and professional

preparedness for TAS. For example, the History Teacher noted the professionalism shown to her and how positively she felt about the experience:

My appraiser made a positive impression on me from day one. She thoroughly studied my reflexive journal, carefully listened to my presentation, fundamentally scrutinized my portfolio, and asked me whether I believe that it would be fair to assign me to teacher expert status. I replied as to why I believe that it would be. She has told me how she gained this status many years ago and found some similar patterns in our experiences. I still remember how she thanked me for the work that I have done in leading my students to win the 1st place in the Republican Olympiad. I could feel that she knows what she is talking about.

The English Teacher also posited about the strong preparedness and encouragement of an appraiser: "... she explained to me why some of the criteria has to be in the assessment. Since then I did not have doubts about any of them, but rather devoted my work to gain maximum points in each dimension." The comment above depicts the fact that appraisers know the appraisal guidelines by heart and can use them for negotiation and discussion.

In addition, there were some participants who elaborated on the previous point by accentuating the importance and relevance of the professional qualification of experts and its role for an appraisee. The Mathematics Teacher explained, "He [the appraiser] was a teacher-researcher himself, he was professionally trained to sit on the jury chair and therefore I felt relief. He welcomed me in a kind manner, so I started my presentation without anxiety." This illustrates that the role of an appraiser is enormous and that sometimes it may lead an appraisee to receive positive results.

The same opinions were reiterated by the three other participants. For example, The Science Teacher communicated the benefits of having an experienced expert. He said: “I was lucky to have this appraiser as she gave me very constructive feedback on my presentation right after I finished it.” The Art Teacher interpreted it on her own: “My presentation took 15 minutes as it was supposed to take. Effective time management is the merit of the expert.” The last supporter with an analogous view, the Computer Teacher, said: “The jury member asked very specific questions about my teaching. I understood that she studied my portfolio very well, which made me feel that my work was being evaluated.”

Table 6. *Qualities of Appraisers, which Helped during Appraisal Processes*

General idea	History Teacher	Art Teacher	Science Teacher	Mathematics Teacher	English Teacher	Computer Teacher
Appraiser is a highly competent and qualified jury member		+	+	+	+	+
Appraiser is a supporter	+			+		

All the responses above demonstrate that teachers were positively impressed by the appraisers’ expertise, preparedness, and qualification. All six participants mentioned different

points about how this qualification was noticed but all of them believed that it greatly affected their attestation experiences.

Theme 6: Challenges teachers face in their attestation periods. In this study, to better understand teachers' experiences of attestation, I asked them about their challenges. For example, I asked, What did you find difficult in your attestation? What do you think could be different? What could help you to mitigate those challenges? The respondents were very meticulous in sharing their experiences on such a delicate topic. They provided useful insight into how the challenges could be negotiated or avoided.

Despite having primarily positive attitudes toward the NIS TAS, teachers have pointed out some distinguished moments about their personal experiences. For instance, the English Teacher indicated,

Once I started my attestation year, I was always feeling exhausted. Despite doing daily teaching work such as planning, teaching, creating, and assessing, I was supposed to devote some time to keep a reflexive journal, conduct lesson study, teach open classes, write reports, and publish scholarly articles. All of the aforementioned activities require energy, a clear mind, and lots of effort. I could not neglect it, as I knew the consequences.

Thus, I felt a huge relief when I had passed the attestation.

What does this quote mean? To put in such effort, to have such profound consequences if you don't do it? To feel such relief?

Having listened to the teachers' insights about the difficulties they were met with, it was clear that many participants felt burden and exhaustion because of an expanded workload that

they did not expect. The Science Teacher explained that due to a high load during appraisal, an educator is recommended to get prepared mentally: “Our school runs different projects, therefore besides a standard workload, my shoulders were burdened by supervising several projects.... I recommend teachers who plan to apply for it to get prepared mentally.” The Computer Teacher elaborated on what was said by the Science Teacher and gave his perspective about it by explaining that if the criteria are designed in the way that considers teachers’ workload, then it will make the attestation process more comfortable for educators. The Computer Teacher noticed that the major reason for the high load on pedagogues is the irrelevant and ill-conceived approaches in TAS: “Teachers perform responsible work on a daily basis as we educate the nation. I hope that one day we will be heard by policy makers that TAS criteria should be reconsidered.”

On par with a perspective that the NIS TAS criteria should be rereviewed, pedagogues wish that school administrators would express more understanding towards potential appraisees. The History Teacher: “I wish the school principal, vice deans, and the department heads provided more instructions on the rules of attestation.” The next comment also illustrates the same obstacle that NIS teachers encountered while being certificated:

I wish I had more explanatory seminars on the criteria we were assessed by. For instance, the appraisal guidelines textbook is written in an official style, therefore I had some difficult times in identifying what this or that meant. Although we had a general instructive meeting at the beginning of the year, that was definitely not enough for me (Mathematics Teacher).

The Computer Teacher supports a similar idea by providing the following example:

Any teacher who applies for an attestation is expected to write a reflexive report. I heard many times that the experts pay a lot of attention to that journal, hence it plays a crucial role both for an appraiser and appraisee. The criteria for this report is too concise and some of the points sound very ambiguous. Therefore, I used to ask more experienced teachers to help me. But no one knew for sure and sometimes I felt myself down not knowing what to do.

These comments demonstrate that more instruction on criteria is recommended to ease some pedagogues' attestation practices.

Apart from instructions and an increased workload, one of the appraisees mentioned amendments in both eligibility criteria and requirements for a particular level. The Art Teacher said:

I wish I had passed my attestation a year before as by the time I made a decision to pass it, the rules changed. The past two years were enough to apply for a teacher moderator degree. Then the eligibility criteria were toughened and I needed to wait for another year. Considering that attestation lasts for one academic year, I have lost two years. Another thing is that policy makers mitigated the requirements of English language competency. For example, at first, I was supposed to have an IELTS certificate to prove my language competence. Instead, this year, they permitted my Aptis certificate, which I had had at that moment. Although this change extremely eased my workload, I still prefer the rules to be maintained the way they are or to inform potential appraisees a year ahead.

The Art Teacher conveyed the idea that constant change of the requirements may bring a lot of inconveniences for those who apply for an attestation. Although this comment was not

duplicated by other participants, it is an important point to consider, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

Table 7 presents an overview of the challenges categorized into the three main themes: increased workload, constant change of attestation criteria, and the desire for clearer instructions and consistency.

As seen from the table above, the three participants found their appraisal experiences as increased workload. One participant noted that constant change of attestation criteria can deter one from success. And several teachers wished for clearer instructions and consistency in appraisal criteria.

Table 7. *Challenges Teachers Faced during Appraisal Processes*

General idea/ identification of the participant	History Teacher	Art Teacher	Science Teacher	Mathematics Teacher	English Teacher	Computer Teacher
Increased workload			+		+	+
Constant change of attestation criteria		+				
Desire for clearer instructions and consistency	+			+		+

On the whole, the above section illustrates the challenges teachers faced in their TAS experiences as falling into two categories: the desire for clear instructions and workload.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to present the data analysis of the findings of the study. The findings were organized into the two sections: analysis and findings. Each section contained several subsections or themes that were shown in quotes and summarized in table format. Six of the interviewed teachers find TAS experiences as positive events that should take place in each teacher's pathway. The next chapter will interpret the findings in relation to the reviewed literature on the topic of teacher appraisal system.

Chapter V: Discussion

The previous chapter focused on the presentation and analysis of the main findings extracted from participants' interviews. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss these findings in relation to the reviewed literature. In other words, this part of the thesis attempts to expound the answers for the research questions that lead this study. To do so, the discussion is composed in a way so it represents the answers for the two research questions: the (1) understanding, and (2) experiences of the six NIS teachers about Teacher Appraisal System in one Nazarbayev Intellectual School. Overall, the chapter comprises the two major sections that possess inner subsections. Accordingly, section one will mostly focus on educators' perspectives on functions

of TAS, and section two on teachers' perceptions of criteria of NIS TAS and the role of appraisers in the whole appraisal process.

Teachers' Understanding of the Teacher Appraisal System in one NIS School

In this section, I will outline the findings of this thesis in relation to the topic of functions of the teacher appraisal system in one NIS school and its alignment with the literature. The first interview questions were designed in a way so they convey teachers' understanding of the NIS TAS system. Educators were generally describing what functions the NIS TAS performs, hence all the responses were composed in one major theme "Function of the NIS TAS." Overall, the findings suggested that teachers delineate two main functions of TAS: first, TAS as a motivation tool for professional growth; second, TAS as an encouraging instrument for professional promotion.

Teachers, who participated in interviews, primarily perceive NIS TAS as an administrative tool that not only leads one to professional growth but may also provide the school with a professional school faculty. The study of Murphy, Hallinger, and Heck (2013) also suggested that a well-conceived TAS motivates educators to participate in seminars, workshops, courses, which improves a school's overall status and performance. This coincides well with what was discussed in the study of Close and Amrein-Beardsley (2018), who pointed out that effective TAS is expected to encourage educators to grow on a continuous basis. This aligns well with the viewpoints of the interview participants, who mentioned that TAS is supposed to sharpen and extend the horizons of an individual teacher by exposing him/her to an ongoing learning process and professional development. Overall, the literature review demonstrated that if the TAS is

teacher oriented, it will unconditionally provoke him/her teacher to grow professionally and that this was greatly supported by the NIS teachers who perceive the NIS TAS as a motivation tool. Apart from these points, educators mentioned that once the TAS facilitates teachers who run their appraisal process and they learn, study and advance their teaching skills, this affects other school teachers as well. This opinion was shared by Darling-Hammond (2015) who explained that this happens since educators under appraisal raise heated discussions on valuable topics and, therefore, engage the rest of the teachers in these discussions. As a result, it leads to useful discussions and, thus, teachers inhabit an educational friendly environment in the school.

Although both the teachers and the literature review appeared aligned on the theme of “Motivating for growth professionally”, the findings distinguished another theme “Encouragement for promotional advancement.” Teachers mentioned that NIS TAS performs the function of an official tool to get promoted. To clarify, teachers perceive NIS TAS as the only way to get a professional promotion, thus, if one wishes to get a higher salary and hold a higher position, he or she needs to apply for an appraisal. While this was only raised by local teachers and was not mentioned in a literature, I still believe it is important to mention because it suggests that teachers abroad do not conceive TAS as a promotion instrument, while NIS teachers find TAS as the only official way to get promotion. In addition, this finding revealed the issue of a lack of promotional tools, as teachers sometimes are forced to apply for an appraisal as it is the only way to be legally promoted.

Experiences of Teachers of TAS in One NIS School

This section, mainly, focuses on the teachers' perceptions of TAS criteria and the role of the appraiser in relation to the reviewed literature. In general, NIS educators expressed their satisfaction and comprehension of the NIS TAS criteria. They assume that the NIS administration could develop valid criteria, which enhanced the credibility of the whole appraisal system.

Interestingly, all the interview participants expressed their misunderstanding about the language criterion. The pedagogues could not articulate the relevance and the fit of knowledge of the Kazakh language to their expertise. Although this theme does not resonate with the literature, I found it important to mention, as it shows that there is no such issue for teachers in other countries and they do not feel any confusion about language barriers. Instead, the study of Archer (2019) points out that teachers are reluctant about the use of other criteria, specifically, "Students performance." His study focused on the interconnection between teacher appraisal and students' performance. Although this point clashes with the viewpoints of Brookhart (2009) who insisted on the interdependence of teachers' appraisal and student effectiveness and productivity, my study did not reveal any of these aspects. However, NIS teachers did raise some other aspects that bother local teachers, which will now be discussed?.

The NIS experience is another criterion which caused an ambivalent attitude among teachers. In particular, the NIS system only considers the experience that an educator acquired within the system of NIS. Pedagogues who came from other teaching backgrounds with some prominent experiences of more than 10 years struggled to take the position of a teacher trainee or a teacher moderator. These pedagogues were expected to work for NIS for two or three years to

be eligible to apply for a higher position as a teacher expert or a teacher-researcher. Reviewing these criteria from the point of reviewed literature, Glazermanetal et al. (2011) argued for its non-universality, as it does not work for all teachers. This concept was highly correlated with what was remarked by the NIS teachers. The study of Braybrook (2019) provided some pieces of evidence on this notion. He noted that such an approach would leave no room for fresh teachers to be appraised and then rewarded. The same was connected to NIS teachers as they believe that educators should be appraised and promoted for factual expertise and competence rather than biased factors, which do not guarantee anything. Although the aforementioned point was endorsed by only two teachers, who taught History and Science, the corroboration between local teachers and literature shows that this aspect resonates a lot for both local and foreign educators, and, hence, should not be overlooked.

Among other criteria, which NIS teachers distinguished as a separate aspect, is the role of an appraiser in the whole teacher appraisal system. Five out of six teachers expressed their satisfaction towards appraisers' expertise and competences and how it affected their appraisal processes. Interview participants pointed out that apart from knowledge and understanding of the appraisal criteria, appraisers could express their professionalism, preparedness, and qualifications in some other aspects, such as constructive feedback, process management, and the establishment of a friendly atmosphere. While local teachers articulated their fulfillment towards appraisers, debates in the literature cohere with the above and add some more aspects to be considered. The study of Taylor and Tyler (2012) strived to investigate the professional preparedness of the appraisers, which refers to the participation of an appraiser in specialized professional training. Weisberg et al. (2009) extended this area by mentioning that this is not an

asset but rather a must that the educational authorities should require from appraisers. This was stated by the participants as well and they could define what it gives to the whole appraisal process. Specifically, teachers pointed out that a qualified appraiser sets an appraisal friendly environment that motivational and supportive, and serves as a progress driver rather than a regressive cause. This is highly reflected in the study of Dixit (2002) and Sahlberg (2011).

It is remarkable to mention that educational administrators abroad concentrate a lot on this and set specific requirements for appraisers. Although my study does not explore the necessary conditions for appraisers, rather the role in the appraisal processes for teachers, it is significant to mention that NIS teachers were not provided with the information about appraisers. All the perceptions were based on individual observations while the studies reviewed in the literature demonstrate the awareness of the requirements for appraisers in other countries.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the main findings revealing teachers' understanding and perception of the teacher appraisal system in regard to the function of TAS, criteria for TAS, and the role of the appraiser in appraisal processes. This study showed consistency with other researchers' findings considering: (1) TAS as a motivation tool; (2) the role of appraisers in the appraisal processes, including their competencies, qualifications, and expertise; and (3) experience of teachers. There was a finding, which did not resonate with the aspects found in the literature review: (1) language criteria. Lastly, there was an aspect, which was reflected in the literature review, however, it was not triggered by the teachers: (1) criterion referring to students' effectiveness and productivity and its role in teacher appraisal. In the next chapter, I will

summarize the whole study, outline the implications for further research, and present the recommendations.

Chapter VI: Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is to generalize and summarize this study on the understanding and perception of the Teacher Appraisal System in one NIS school by the six NIS teachers who had gone through appraisal procedures. This chapter is comprised of three sections: the summary of the study, limitations of the study, and recommendations and implications for further study. The first section is organized in a way so as to represent the answers to the two research questions. The second section outlines the limitations of the current study. The third chapter provides implications for further study and sets recommendations for the interested stakeholders.

Summary of the Study

As teachers remain one of the major elements of an educational system, Kazakhstani educational authorities strive to form conditions for teachers to grow professionally. A teacher appraisal system is one of the ways that aims at teacher growth and advancement. Currently, the Kazakhstani educational system intends to transfer the experience of Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools to mainstream schools in regards to the teacher appraisal system practices. Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore how the appraisal systems work in one NIS school in Kazakhstan. Specifically, this paper explored the viewpoints of the six NIS teachers. The main research questions that guided this study were: What is teachers' understanding of the teacher appraisal system in one NIS school? What are the experiences of individual teachers of TAS in NIS schools?

An exploratory qualitative case study research design was used to answer the research questions. The six participants were recruited for this study through purposive sampling that was on a voluntary basis. The data was collected via face-to-face semi-structured interviews with the participating teachers. The interview findings were analyzed in several stages: audio transcription, organization of the transcripts, crediting the codes in the MAXQDA program, and definition of the themes.

The findings of this research were organized into six major themes: (1) Motivating for growth professionally, (2) encouraging for promotional advancement, (3) aspects helping to pass attestation, (4) the role of appraisers, (5) criteria teachers are evaluated by, and (6) challenges teachers face. The research findings were analyzed with regards to the equivalent themes outlined in the literature review chapter. While the study revealed some major correlations between the findings and literature, it disclosed some mismatches as well.

Overall, the study acknowledged the positive perceptions of NIS teachers towards the teacher appraisal system. Educators clearly outlined the ways in which they perceive the current TAS: (1) TAS as a motivation tool to grow professionally, and (2) TAS as an instrument to get promoted by salary and position.

Apart from that, teachers also shared some concerns about appraisal criteria by which applicants are assessed. Specifically, they expressed their misunderstanding of Kazakh language competence for teachers who teach in English. Educators also demonstrated their worry about expectations that the current appraisal system sets in terms of prior experience and its equivalency for a specific appraisal level. The factors that affected positively on teachers' success during the appraisal system were expertise and competence of their appraisers.

In addition to the aforementioned points, teachers mentioned factors which may limit them from achieving success during appraisal: (1) increased workload, (2) constant change of assessment criteria, (3) need for clearer instructions and consistency.

Ultimately, while there were some alignments with the reviewed literature, there were some findings that deviated from the same concepts in studied research. For instance, the most compelling evidence was that NIS teachers find TAS as a promotion tool, while this concept was not identified in the reviewed studies.

Limitations of the Study

Despite the fact that the set research questions were addressed and answered, there were a few limitations, which need to be addressed in future research related to this topic. Since this study was conducted in one NIS school, teachers' understanding and perceptions of the NIS TAS may not coincide with those of the teachers from other NIS schools around the country. Next, the given study was conducted under unexpected circumstances, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, which led the government to announce and set a period of lockdown in the country. As this happened very urgently and unexpectedly, teachers were encouraged to sit at home without an opportunity to go out and teach online. These consequences could affect the moods and perceptions of interviewed teachers towards a wide range of things including TAS. Finally, as the research could recruit only six teachers, this limited the number of people involved in interviews meaning that the research questions were addressed from a narrower scope.

Implications for Further Study and Recommendations

This section presents recommendations to address the concerns perceived by NIS teachers during appraisal. The following recommendations incorporate the opinion of teachers involved in this study, the researcher who conducted this research, and the reviewed literature; these recommendations apply to NIS school administrators, policy-makers, and school teachers who plan to apply for appraisal.

One of the prominent factors which may deter one from success during appraisal is the increased workload. Although teachers agreed that the workload is manageable, they wished that the school administrators consider the teachers who run the appraisal and do not encourage them to participate in activities beyond appraisal. As for another recommendation that teachers would like to give to potential applicants, it is to get prepared morally for an increased workload and employ effective time management techniques.

Another recommendation to be proposed via this research would be concerning the consistency of the appraisal criteria. Participants would like to be informed about the change of the criteria beforehand rather than in an actual appraisal year. Therefore, a preliminary and well-conceived approach with the alteration of the criteria would be relevant to address this issue.

Lastly, teachers shared their concerns about instructions. Specifically, they would like criteria to be explained in the form of instructive seminars. Hence, the school administrators are highly encouraged to consider this while managing appraisal in the school.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Informed Consent

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Teacher appraisal system in one Nazarbayev Intellectual School in Kazakhstan: Secondary school teachers' perceptions and experiences.

DESCRIPTION: You are kindly invited to take part in the **research** that is entitled “Teacher appraisal system in one Nazarbayev Intellectual School in Kazakhstan: Secondary school teachers' perceptions and experiences.” You are one of the six participants. You were invited to participate in this study due to three reasons: you are a secondary school teacher, you have undergone NIS appraisal processing in the last three years, and you are an English-speaking person. This form is part of a process known as informed consent and allows you to understand this study before deciding whether or not to take part in it.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Your participation will take approximately 30 minutes.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: One of the probable risks, which may emerge is unavailability of the participant/s on a scheduled time and/or for a period of time. In this case, the appointment will be rescheduled on a agreed basis. Another risk to which the research may be exposed to is negative experiences of the participants of teacher appraisal procedures. In order to tackle this potential issue and due to the voluntary nature of the interview the participants will retain their right to skip the question in case of embarrassment or confusion. More than that, interviews will be conducted in such areas of the school where there is a provision of a quiet and calm atmosphere. It may help participants to keep anonymity for the rest of the school members. Finally, open-ended questions are expected to reduce feelings of discomfort significantly escalate the feeling of comfort of the participants, so that they may share experiences regarding TAS with no concerns and inconveniences.

Teacher appraisal system in Kazakhstan is the concept that has a place to be practiced for decades, however is not overtly discussed both among teachers and school administrators. Hence, the outcomes of this study may serve as a practical handbook for the pedagogues who have not undergone appraisal procedures as it will compile some real experiences of the teachers. Besides, participants are expected to share their viewpoints on advantages, disadvantages, some challenges and successes of the current NIS TAS.

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS: If you have read this form and have decided to participate in this project, please understand your **participation is voluntary** and you have the **right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. The alternative is not to participate.** You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. The results of this research study may be presented at scientific or professional meetings or published in scientific journals.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Questions: If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research, its procedures, risks and benefits, contact the Master's Thesis Supervisor for this student work _____

Independent Contact: If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a participant, please contact the NUGSE Research Committee to at gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz

Please sign this consent form if you agree to participate in this study.

- I have carefully read the information provided;
- I have been given full information regarding the purpose and procedures of the study;
- I understand how the data collected will be used, and that any confidential information will be seen only by the researchers and will not be revealed to anyone else;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason;
- With full knowledge of all the foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

The extra copy of this signed and dated consent form is for you to keep.

According to the law of the Republic of Kazakhstan an individual under the age of 18 is considered a child. Any participant falling into that category should be given the Parental Consent Form and have it signed by at least one of his/her parent(s) or guardian(s).

Appendix B: Interview Questions (semi-structured interviews)

Thank you for agreeing to complete this interview. I appreciate the time you are taking to help me with my research. If at any time you would like to skip a question, take a break or stop the interview you just need to inform me about this.

- How do you understand the term “Teacher appraisal system”?
- How would you describe the teacher appraisal system in Nazarbayev Intellectual School you work at?

- How would you describe an effective teacher appraisal system?
- What do you think are the major functions of the teacher appraisal system?
- Does the teacher appraisal system that you have gone through perform these functions?
Yes? No? why?
- What helped you throughout your teacher appraisal process?
- What criteria would you like to change or omit in the teacher appraisal requirements in Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools?
- What can you tell about the appraisers who participated in your teacher appraisal process?
- What are the challenges you faced in this process?

Appendix C: Transcript sample

The screenshot displays the MAXDictio software interface. The top menu bar includes options like 'Начало', 'Импорт', 'Коды', 'Заметки', 'Переменные', 'Анализ', 'Смешанные методы', 'Визуализация', 'Отчеты', 'Stats', and 'MAXDictio'. Below the menu is a toolbar with icons for 'Новый проект', 'Открыть проект', 'Список документов', 'Список кодов', 'Браузер документов', 'Список кодированных фрагментов', 'Журнал', 'Групповая работа', 'Объединить проекты', 'Сохранить проект как', 'Сохранить проект в анонимном режиме', 'Проект из активированных документов', 'Внешние файлы', and 'Архивировать данные'.

The main window is titled 'Документ: History teacher'. It features a left sidebar with two panes: 'Список документов' (Document List) and 'Список кодов' (Code List). The 'Список документов' pane shows a tree view of documents, with 'History teacher' selected. The 'Список кодов' pane shows a list of codes with their respective counts. The main editing area displays the text of the 'History teacher' document, which discusses the importance of a teacher appraisal system and the challenges teachers face. The text is partially obscured by a watermark 'Активация Windows'.

Code	Count
Prepared mentally	4
Exhausted	4
Clear mind	7
Encouraging for promotional advancement	0
Energy	15
Lots of effort	38
Consequences	3
Relief	20
Aspects helping to pass attestation	0
Not knowing what to do	6
Overloads	7
Experience	6
Support	6
Competence	6
The roll of assistants	17