

**Understanding online teacherpreneurship through the prism of sellers' and buyers'  
experience on Teacherslab.kz**

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Thesis Dissertation

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This letter now confirms that your research project entitled: “Understanding online teacherpreneurship through the prism of sellers’ and buyers’ experience on Teacherslab.kz” has been approved by the Graduate School of Education Ethics Committee of Nazarbayev University.

You may proceed with contacting your preferred research site and commencing your participant recruitment strategy.

Yours sincerely

Mir Afzal Tajik

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On behalf of Zumrad Kataeva

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### **Abstract**

The teacherpreneurship phenomenon is a comparatively new and under-researched concept in education. It has a hybrid nature expressed in combining teacher leadership with entrepreneurial approaches. Teacherpreneurship may expand teachers' opportunities and introduce new professional pathways for their development. The purpose of the current study was to explore how users of the online marketplace for educators understand this teacherpreneurship and the advantages and disadvantages of it.

The study employed a mixed-method approach using an online survey and qualitative online interviews as the data collection tools. Overall, one hundred twenty-nine users of the Teacherslab.kz platform participated in the online survey, while three registered teacher-sellers took a part in the interviews. In addition, the research was guided by the teacher agency theoretical framework, which explains how teachers could participate in and lead educational changes and introduce innovations and reforms.

The research revealed that the current understanding of teacherpreneurship is mainly related to its financial side and opportunities to generate additional income. Moreover, the study results indicated that teacherpreneurship is at the initial stage of development in the CIS region. In addition, teachers who practice teacherpreneurship mostly reported a positive attitude towards teacherpreneurship and considered it a beneficial approach for teachers. In conclusion, decision-makers, teachers, and education leaders will benefit from the study's recommendations on developing teacherpreneurship and be aware of possible implications. The research findings will help teachers and school leaders understand who teacherpreneurs are, as well as their practices, possible risks and challenges, and contributions to improving the field of education.

*Keywords:* teacherpreneurship, marketplace, teacher-sellers, teacher-buyers, Kazakhstan.

### Аңдатпа

Педагогикалық кәсіпкерлік – білім беру саласында салыстырмалы түрде жаңа әрі аз зерттелген құбылыс. Ол гибридті сипатқа ие және педагогикалық көшбасшылықпен кәсіпкерлік тәсілдерді ұштастыру барысында көрініс табады. Педагогикалық кәсіпкерлік мұғалімдерге кәсіби даму үшін жаңа мүмкіндіктер аша алады. Ағымдағы зерттеудің мақсаты: мұғалімдерге арналған онлайн-маркетплейсті пайдаланушылардың педагогикалық кәсіпкерлік феноменін, сондай-ақ оның артықшылықтары мен кемшіліктерін қалай түсінетінін зерттеу.

Бұл жұмыста деректерді жинау құралы ретінде онлайн-сауалнама мен сұхбат негізінде аралас зерттеу әдісі қолданылды. Онлайн-сауалнамаға Teacherslab.kz платформасының 129 пайдаланушысы, ал сұхбатқа платформаға тіркелген үш мұғалім-кәсіпкер қатысты. Бұл зерттеу педагогтердің білім беруді реформалау, өзгерістерді басқару және инновациялық шешімдерді енгізу үдерісіне қалай қатыса алатынын түсіндіретін мұғалімдер агенттігі теориясына негізделген.

Зерттеу нәтижелеріне сүйенсек, педагогикалық кәсіпкерлік феномені ТМД елдерінде дамудың бастапқы кезеңінде, ал мұғалімдер бұл іске оң көзқараспен қарайды және оны негізінен қосымша табыс алу құралы ретінде қабылдайды. Бұл зерттеудің нәтижелері мұғалімдерге, мектеп әкімшілігіне, сондай-ақ шешім қабылдаушыларға педагог-кәсіпкерлердің кім екенін, олардың немен айналысатынын, педагогикалық кәсіпкерлікті дамытумен байланысты ықтимал тәуекелдер мен мәселелерді, сондай-ақ мұғалімдердің білім беру саласын дамытуға қосатын үлесін түсінуге көмектеседі.

*Түйінді сөздер:* педагогикалық кәсіпкерлік, маркетплейс, мұғалім-кәсіпкер, мұғалім-сатып алушылар, Қазақстан.

### Аннотация

Педагогическое предпринимательство – относительно новое и малоизученное явление в сфере образования. Оно имеет гибридный характер, выражающийся в сочетании педагогического лидерства с предпринимательскими подходами.

Педагогическое предпринимательство может открыть перед учителями новые возможности для их профессионального развития. Цель текущего исследования: изучить, как пользователи онлайн маркетплейса для учителей понимают феномен педагогического предпринимательства, а также его преимущества и недостатки.

В данной работе применялся смешанный исследовательский подход с использованием онлайн-опроса и интервью в качестве инструментов сбора данных. Всего в онлайн-опросе приняли участие 129 пользователей платформы Teacherslab.kz, в то время как в интервью приняли участие трое зарегистрированных учителей-продавцов. Данное исследование опиралось на теорию агентства учителей, которая объясняет, как учителя могут участвовать в реформировании образования, руководить изменениями и внедрять инновационные решения.

Результаты исследования показали, что феномен педагогического предпринимательства в страна СНГ находится на начальном этапе развития, а учителя относятся к нему довольно позитивно, хотя и воспринимают в основном как инструмент для получения дополнительного дохода. Результаты данной работы могут помочь учителям, администрации школ, а также лицам принимающим решения понять, кто такие педагоги-предприниматели, чем они занимаются, возможные риски и проблемы связанные с развитием педагогического предпринимательства, а также потенциальный вклад таких учителей в развитие сферы образования.

*Ключевые слова:* педагогическое предпринимательство, маркетплейс, учителя-продавцы, учителя-покупатели, Казахстан.

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **Introduction**

This chapter introduces a brief historical background of the teacherpreneurship phenomenon and its current development within the international and CIS context. Moreover, the introduction includes the statement of the problem and presents the study purpose and research question leading that thesis dissertation. Finally, in this chapter, I discuss the significance of the current study for different stakeholders in the education field and outline the structure of the thesis.

### **International Context**

The teacherpreneurship originated from the USA but is already widespread in European and other western countries, becoming an international phenomenon. The current understanding of teacherpreneurship is based on educators' practice from those regions where it became popular. So, it is necessary to give a short overview of its emerging and development processes within the global context. However, the current study focuses on the CIS region, where teacherpreneurship is at the initial development stage and lacks practical evidence from teachers engaging in it. Therefore, the international context helps build the foundation for further investigating this phenomenon within the CIS context. Since the practical implementation of teacherpreneurship requires the availability of specific online platforms that allow teacherpreneurs to promote and share their products, the following paragraphs also give a short overview of such international platforms. It is vital because the Teacherslab marketplace served as a research site for that study created as a CIS analog of those online services.

Berry (2010) highlighted that in the year 2030, US teachers will have a great level of autonomy, partner with outside learning companies, and sufficiently increase their incomes from sharing their professional experience. In fact, one can observe how these predictions are

coming true today in 2022 not only in US but internationally. The development of online education and emergence of successful and profitable private educational companies open new perspectives and opportunities for teachers.

Online teacherpreneurship as a phenomenon started to spread from the USA after the emergence of the first digital marketplaces such as Teacherspayteachers.com (TpT) in 2006, where teachers can sell and buy educational products (Shelton & Archambault, 2019). At this time, there were already successful online platforms such as eBay and iTunes, which used the internet for sales in other fields. While eBay helped the regular people to become entrepreneurs, using a similar approach TpT aimed to transform teachers who create original educational materials into teacherpreneurs so that content created by teacher-sellers could serve as an alternative for traditional publishing companies ("Think:lab" , 2006). Soon after its launch, the TpT became popular because many educators liked the idea of using teacher-made materials in their lessons. More than 4000 teachers had registered on the platform during the first four months of its official start (Dalton, 2006). Today, more than 7 million teachers are using TpT worldwide (We're the World's, n.d.). The success of TpT led to the emergence of other similar services within the USA and beyond. Gomes (2015) reports that EdSurge survey identified nine online marketplaces for teachers in 2015. Shelton et al. (2021) report that now there are several big players in this field competing with each other, including TpT and Amazon Ignite on the U.S. market, TES (Times Educational Supplement), Twinkl, and Lehrer Marktplatz in Europe. Nevertheless, teacherpreneurs activities are not limited to selling educational resources through online marketplaces. Teachers and educators involved in teacherpreneurship also share professional expertise in the format of online courses, consultations, blogging, tutoring, and others through online platforms. The teacherpreneurship approach became the subject of debates among educators and broader society because of the ethical and practical issues related to teaching. These issues include

intellectual property protection, plagiarism, teaching materials quality, and correspondence of the learning resources to state educational standards. The U.S. Department of Education even launched the #GoOpen campaign to support the use of openly licensed educational resources, which educators could use, reuse, modify, and share free of charge (Thomas, 2017). There are also both negative and positive views about teacherpreneurs among educators and researchers (Keyhani & Kim, 2020).

For a long time teacherpreneurship phenomenon, education marketplaces, and users registered on such platforms were outside the focus of academic researchers. However, the influence of teacherpreneurs on school education and teachers was growing year by year. For instance, Opfer et.al. (2016) report that 87% of elementary teachers and more than half of secondary teachers use the education resources from TpT, which, in turn, led to the emergence of specific teacherpreneurial culture and communities that are of great interest for academic studies. The number of studies in that field is increasing but still insufficient, especially in the CIS and Kazakhstani contexts.

### **CIS Context**

At the time of designing and conducting the current study, there was no any academic study investigating the teacherpreneurship in the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent Countries) region, particularly in Kazakhstan. Historically, after the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), one could find mostly a negative attitude towards entrepreneurial activities in the education field. Therefore, the term ‘teacherpreneurship’ is considered unauthentic by education communities, teachers.

Nevertheless, it does not mean that this phenomenon does not take place here in the CIS region. It is at the initial stage of its development and mostly happens through different social media platforms. Some of the teachers develop their original online courses and master-classes for peers and promote them on social media and messengers such as

Instagram, Facebook, Telegram, and WhatsApp. Teachers who actively collaborate online tend to trust their colleagues and support them by buying their educational products. I was personally convinced of this idea when my team and I started selling an online course called “Teacher Survival Kit.” As a result, we got fifty paid orders from teachers following us on Instagram. Moreover, social media is a robust platform that allows teachers and educators to become education influencers with tens of thousands of subscribers (Gegel, 2018; Oraz, 2021; 6 TikTok Teacher, 2021). It also allows those teachers to monetize their blogs by advertising their own and other teachers’ educational products.

However, the most common option for CIS teachers remains working as a private tutor or collaborating as a freelancer with online education platforms such as SkyEng, Uchi.ru, Foxford, OnlineMektep, DarynOnline, and others. There is a lack of online platforms that are orientated toward teacherpreneurs giving them opportunities to act independently and represent themselves, as in the case of TpT, Amazon Ignite, and TES, instead of the interests of private educational companies. One of the first attempts to replicate the experience of western analogs is Teacherslab.kz online teacher marketplace launched in 2020 to attract the market in the CIS countries. This online marketplace allows teachers to sell, buy and share their original educational resources. Although this initiative is in its infancy, it has the potential to contribute to developing CIS teachers’ autonomy, collaboration, leadership, and creativity. However, not much is known about teachers’ views about this initiative in the CIS region. Therefore, there was a genuine need to conduct the current study, which aimed to investigate the CIS teachers’ understanding of teacherpreneurship, its advantages and disadvantages.

### **Statement of Problem**

Teacherpreneurship is a comparatively new concept in academic research. Even though the term teacherpreneurship has emerged in the USA and some researchers have investigated it, it

remains underexplored even in Western countries. For instance, Google Scholar finds only 344 results for the keyword of teacherpreneur. Moreover, Keyhani and Kim (2021) reported that they had analyzed 489 articles about teacher entrepreneurship. However, only 39 of them were chosen for their systematic literature review as closely related to the topic of teacherpreneurship. At the same time, the TpT website reports millions of teachers involved in teacherpreneurial activities every day (We're the World's, n.d.). Therefore, it raises the question of whether the academic community overlooks the emergence of this new phenomenon spreading quite fast among teachers worldwide?

Moreover, there is still a high level of uncertainty regarding what it means to be a teacherpreneur and what they do? For instance, Shelton (2018) reports that the available definitions of this concept differ from one author to another, some of them emphasizing the leadership aspect of the teacherpreneurship, others on business outcomes. Furthermore, there are debates around who could be considered a teacherpreneur. For example, is it only schoolteachers or other educators, tutors, and consultants?

Currently represented international research about teacherpreneurship is often limited by the small samples of the research participants. Moreover, while teacherpreneurial activities imply the presence of sellers and buyers, the vast majority of research focuses only on the first group (Riter, 2020). For example, Buckley and Nzembayie (2016), Sawyer et al. (2020), and Shelton and Archambault (2019) commonly focused only on teacherpreneurs themselves because it is much easier to invite them as study participants. At the same time, other educators who do not get involved in teacherpreneurial activities stayed in a shadow.

As evident from the number of previous research studies, there is still a lack of research investigating the teacherpreneurship even in western countries, and almost no studies exploring this theme in the CIS countries. In Kazakhstan, teachers are involved in some entrepreneurship (Atameken, 2021) as they have started selling and buying teachers-

made educational products in the online educational marketplaces such as the Teacherslab.kz. However, only a small number of teachers get involved in it characterizes the early stage of teacherpreneurship development in the CIS context. Nevertheless, it still is essential to investigate what teachers feel about teacherpreneurship, how they see their role in getting involved and promoting it, and in what ways the teacherpreneurship can affect their careers. Therefore, this study examined how teachers in Kazakhstan and Russia perceive, get involved, and contribute to teacherpreneurship. This study helps develop a holistic understanding of teacherpreneurship by investigating the phenomenon through the prism of buyers and sellers in the teacherpreneurship group.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore Teacherslab users' understanding of the online teacherpreneurship — a phenomenon that is gradually developing in Kazakhstan, Russia, and other countries in the CIS region. Specifically, this study investigated how platform users, who are actively involved in developing, selling, and buying teaching materials and other educational products and services, perceive the online teacherpreneurship and its advantages and disadvantages in their professional careers.

### **Research Questions**

For the purpose of this study, the following main questions were explored: What do Teacherslab.kz users understand by, and how do they get involved in, online teacherpreneurship?

Sub-questions:

- What do Teacherslab users understand by teacherpreneurship?
- What are these users' attitudes and perceptions about the advantages, disadvantages, opportunities, and challenges of the online teacherpreneurship?
- How do Teacherslab users get involved in online teacherpreneurship?

**Significance of the Research**

This study offers valuable insights and implications that may be relevant and useful for many stakeholders, including the research participants, school leaders, educators, and policymakers in Kazakhstan and beyond.

***Significance of the Study for the Research Participants***

This study investigated Teacherslab users' understanding of the teacherpreneurship phenomenon from sellers' and buyers' perspectives. Thereby, it potentially may contribute to further development and improvement of the Teacherslab platform to make it a more comfortable and useful place for its users. Moreover, research findings could help sellers better understand their customers' pains, needs, and interests. On the other hand, buyers will get an opportunity to explore the teacherpreneurial experience of their peers who have already become teacherpreneur and successfully sell educational products on the marketplace that could motivate them to learn more about the teacherpreneurship and start to involve in it.

***Significance of the Study for Other Teachers in Kazakhstan and CIS Region***

This study shares valuable insights about the early stage of teacherpreneurship development in Kazakhstan and the CIS region. Therefore, it may help other teachers get familiar with this growing phenomenon. While reading this study report, the teachers may learn how to become a teacherpreneur and get involved in the Teacherslab platform as sellers and/or buyers. They can also establish collaboration with other teachers from different CIS countries by contacting them through the platform or Teacherslab's official social media pages.

***Significance of the Study for School Principals and Administrators***

Teacherpreneurship could be considered a new approach to teacher leadership (Shelton & Archambault, 2019). The development of the teacher leadership is one of the main priorities of the school principals and administrators. However, nowadays, Kazakhstani teachers lack time for professional development, lack of experience and lack of high-quality educational

resources, so they spend their time searching for teaching materials on the internet (Kanayeva, 2019). All this together obviously obstructs teachers from professional development and effective collaboration. Teacherpreneurship may be a powerful instrument to solve these problems because it enacts teachers to become creators and share their professional experience contributing to the professional development of their peers. Thereby, it was essential to study how teachers understand this phenomenon and their perceptions and attitude toward it. Moreover, investigating the teachers' understanding of the teacherpreneurship is vital because the teacherpreneurial mindset could both positively and negatively influence teachers. So, school leaders need to be aware of how this phenomenon could affect their teachers.

#### ***Significance of the Study for the Ministry of Education and Science and Policymakers in Kazakhstan***

Teacherpreneurs are commonly proactive teachers and innovators who can lead educational reforms. Research findings could help policymakers to see how they can involve teacherpreneurs in the decision-making process (Berry, 2015). These teachers have practical experience working within the existing education system; they have a better understanding of its advantages and disadvantages. In addition, their activism and publicity help to hear teachers' voices while implementing reforms. Consequently, teacherpreneurs could serve as community connectors between the pedagogical community and policymakers.

#### ***Significance of the Study in Terms of its Contribution to the Literature on Teacherpreneurship***

This study, arguably, is one of the first that explores the phenomenon of teacherpreneurship within the Kazakhstani and CIS context. Thereby, it is likely to expand the current knowledge about CIS teachers' understanding of the teacherpreneurship, the characteristics of teachers involved in it, their perceptions about the benefits and challenges of teacherpreneurial

activities, and their user experience as active members of the online marketplace for teachers. Moreover, it will also complement previous studies by findings from teacher-buyers who use resources developed by teacherpreneurs and often stay outside researchers' focus.

### *Significance of the Study for Myself as a Researcher and Educator*

The current research also may influence my professional development as a researcher and educational entrepreneur. I likely will improve my research skills by collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data, investigating previous academic studies about teacherpreneurship, and reporting it in an academic writing style. In addition, this study may positively influence my professional goals as an educational entrepreneur because due to my work projects, I often work with the teachers' audience and collaborate with them on commercial and social projects. So, the findings from this thesis dissertation may provide me with valuable insights about teacherpreneurs, their characteristics, customer behavior, and perceptions.

### **Outline of the Thesis**

This thesis dissertation consists of six chapters: introduction, literature review, methodology, findings, discussion, and conclusion.

The first chapter briefly introduces the readers to the teacherpreneurship background and its current development and presents the purpose of this research.

The literature review provides the foundation of knowledge on teacherpreneurship and shortly explains how this phenomenon is related to the broader concept of entrepreneurship. In addition, this chapter discusses western and CIS teachers' perceptions of the teacherpreneurship to immerse the readers into the research context.

The following methodology chapter presents the research site and design, data collection tools, reports the sampling methods used, and describes study participants. The process of data analysis and ethical considerations are also included in this chapter.

The findings chapter summarizes and combines the data collected through the online survey and qualitative interviews. I used descriptive statistics to report survey results in text and tabular form, complemented by qualitative evidence from the interviews.

In the discussion chapter, I expand and assess the research findings as well as discuss their importance and consequences. I compare and contrast the data collected from both groups of users: teacher-sellers and teacher-buyers. In this chapter, I demonstrate how the research findings pertain to the literature review and research goals by making the argument to support my conclusions.

Finally, in conclusion, chapter I state my final judgment on the current research by answering research questions, summarizing study results, and discussing possible future research in that field.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I present the review of existing literature on the topic, explaining how the teacherpreneurship relates to the broader context of entrepreneurship. Further, I introduce an understanding of the teacherpreneurship reported in previous studies, highlight the existing controversies on the topic and describe western and CIS teachers' perceptions of teacherpreneurship supported by the findings from previous research. Finally, I present the teacher agency theoretical framework through which I will analyze study results and make conclusions.

### **Entrepreneurship**

One of the first definitions of an entrepreneur dates back to 1700 and states that it is a person, who acts rationally, takes up the risks, and manages the company (Kilby, 1971 as cited in Carland et.al., 1984). This definition formed the basis for the classical understanding of the entrepreneurship phenomenon (Cunningham & Lischeron, 1991). However, Cunningham and Lischeron (1991) claim that there are many controversies among academics and researchers considering what should we assume by the term entrepreneurship. Dollinger (2008) states that entrepreneurship is the management and allocation of resources to create an innovative organization that will ensure financial profit or growth. As we can see from that definition, financial gains are not always the main purpose of entrepreneurship, which makes this term more complicated than just a business, which focuses on generating income. The author states that innovation is one of the main characteristics of entrepreneurship that distinguishes it from a traditional business so that it always implies an innovative approach and the creation of some new value. Consequently, entrepreneurial behavior is something that could characterize various activities, which assume risk-taking and innovation, and do not depend on the size of the venture. Within that paradigm, even small businesses or individuals could

implement entrepreneurial approaches while some large businesses do not. Such characteristics of entrepreneurship made it possible to spread this use of the term in various spheres of society. For instance, there are a social, serial, scalable startup, feminist, and other entrepreneurship types. Moreover, people often combine the word entrepreneurship with other terms to highlight the specific area where entrepreneurial behavior occurs—for example, ecopreneurship, intrapreneurship, edupreneurship, teacherpreneurship, and so on. Further, I focus on the last type of entrepreneurial behavior because it is the present study's central concept.

### **Teacherpreneurship**

Teacherpreneurship is a term that combines two concepts, school teacher and entrepreneur. There is still a high level of uncertainty and controversies between researchers regarding the definition of the teacherpreneurship concept. As this study aimed to investigate teachers' understanding of the teacherpreneurship, it is important to analyze the current perceptions of this concept among the academic community.

One of the most cited authors who researched this topic is Professor Barnett Berry. He describes teacherpreneurs as teachers who combine teaching in a classroom with spreading their professional expertise and pedagogical and policy ideas for the benefit of their colleagues and students (Berry et al., 2013). Feriady and Santoso (2020) believe that teacherpreneurship does not have to include the business elements such as buying and selling educational products. They suggest viewing teacherpreneurs as teachers who are very passionate about their work and committed to promoting it. However, these definitions in some way lose the contribution of the “entrepreneurship” concept that makes this term different from the well-known teacher leadership concept. Moreover, such understanding of the teacherpreneurship narrows it only to classroom teachers, excluding other possible roles of teacherpreneurs in education. Sofyan et al. (2017) tries to avoid controversies around the

entrepreneurial part of the definition by stating that being a teacherpreneur firstly implies the presence of entrepreneurial spirit and does not automatically turn the teachers into business people. However, this explanation is very broad and does not explain what the authors mean by this entrepreneurial spirit. On the other hand, Keyhani and Kim (2020) suggest perceiving teacherpreneurs as social entrepreneurs whose primary goal is to address social problems and needs through their innovative approaches. As it can be seen from the research cited above, most of the debates around teacherpreneurship definition concern its entrepreneurial aspect because in many countries, the education field, especially secondary education and teachers, is traditionally distanced from the business approaches.

There are also researchers who do not ignore the entrepreneurial side while defining the teacherpreneurship concept. According to Shelton and Archambault (2019), teacherpreneurs are the current or former teachers who develop and sell their original educational products while pursuing the same goals stated before in Barnett Berry's definition. Lasekan et al. (2021) support that understanding by claiming that teacherpreneurs promote and sell their professional talents and expertise through creative solutions to the existing problems in education. Moreover, they also state that online private tutoring can also be considered a form of teacherpreneurial activity. These definitions probably are more inclusive because they imply that teacherpreneurs are a very diverse cohort of educators that includes classroom teachers, tutors, and other experts from the education field. At the same time, those approaches also admit that the business aspect is also the core characteristic of the phenomenon. Further, in this research, I will use the definition from Shelton and Archambault (2019) when referring to the teacherpreneurship concept.

To better understand the different forms of teacherpreneurship, Epler (2019) classified teacherpreneur models into three distinct types such as classroom, consultant, and business teacherpreneurial models. The classroom teacherpreneur model refers to the current

schoolteachers who, besides their teaching responsibilities also involved in close collaboration with other teachers. These teachers could be asked by the school administrators to conduct workshops and professional development training to become mentors or supervisors for their less experienced colleagues. That model is very close to the definition that was given by Berry et al. (2013) because the main emphasis is on teachers' willingness to share professional expertise with peers and students. In those cases, profiting from additional income does not consider the main goal of a teacherpreneur; however, they could have some additional privileges from the school such as reduced classroom hours, financial grants, increased salary, and more free time for their additional duties, research, and partnership with other schools and outside companies or agencies. The consultant teacherpreneur model is one that, more than others, gives the opportunity to increase the financial income and is closer to Shelton and Archambault's (2019) understanding of teacherpreneurship. It does not exclude the opportunity to combine classroom teaching, often as a part-time employee, with additional teacherpreneurial activities, including private consultations for teachers, schools, companies, selling online courses, original teaching resources, promoting their personal brand using social media, conferences, and publications. The third business teacherpreneur model is something that was not fully covered by the definitions reviewed above because it is less common and focuses not on making a profit or benefiting other teachers but on teaching entrepreneurial classes in school for students. During these classes, business teacherpreneur help students understand how to become business owners, make products, and conduct market research after they finish school. For instance, in Kazakhstan, the elective course "Fundamentals of Entrepreneurship and Business" was introduced into the school curriculum in 2019 (Atameken, 2021) so that teachers who teach these classes fit a business teacherpreneur model (Epler, 2019).

### **Western Teachers' Perceptions**

Most of the previous research focuses on the characteristics of teacherpreneurs and their motivation. Buckley and Nzembayie (2016) state that the spread of online teacherpreneurship is one of the reasons leading to the destruction of traditional education because teachers involved in teacherpreneurial activities will probably leave their schools, preferring to work as independent educators. However, Shelton and Archambault (2019) report that only 30% percent of their online survey respondents find the teacherpreneurship activities more interesting than teaching in a traditional classroom, which contradicts the opinion of Buckley and Futonge. The findings from Shelton and Archambault (2019) seem to be more reliable due to the fact that their research covered 412 teacherpreneurs, while Buckley and Nzembayie (2016) conducted in-depth interviews with only three participants, so their results probably will not be generalizable to the whole community of teacherpreneurs. Keyhani and Kim (2020), in turn, conducted single unit case study research with only one participant. Most of their findings align with Shelton and Archambault (2019). For instance, they similarly describe some common traits of teacherpreneurs such as motivated, collaborative, knowledgeable, and innovative teachers. However, Shelton and Archambault (2019) concluded that most teacherpreneurs are risk-takers, while Buckley and Nzembayie (2016) and Keyhani and Kim (2020) did not report that this characteristic is inherent for teacherpreneurs. These contradictions highlight that the large-scale research findings can be very different from those with a limited number of participants.

While all the studies above mostly focused on the personal traits of different teacherpreneurs, Sawyer et al. (2020) investigated the reasons underlying the popularity of some teacherpreneurs, they narrowed the research to the successful online mathematics teacherpreneurs on TpT. Moreover, they explored TpT sellers' belief in what characteristics customers value in teaching resources when buying them on a platform. For instance, the

most highly rated out of eleven characteristics were easy to use, alignment with standards, and fitting a need. On the other hand, they did not ask the teacher buyers' opinions. It will be very useful to check if these two sides have the same look on what makes educational products valuable and how teachers could benefit from using these resources. Carpenter and Shelton (2021) addressed this gap; their survey revealed three main reasons why educators use TpT resources; these are helping students to understand concepts weakly addressed by the common curriculum, making the learning process more fun, and giving additional practicing materials. Interestingly, Sawyer et al. (2020) interviewed sellers who had uploaded 500 free most popular resources; however, the price of the materials is another variable that should be taken into account while conducting research about teacherpreneurship. For example, teachers, in most cases, are more satisfied with the quality of the paid materials than free resources on TpT (Carpenter & Shelton, 2021).

It is also important to remember that the participants of the research analyzed above were mostly teachers from the US and Canada, where entrepreneurial values and behavior are widely accepted by society and even the education system. For instance, Shelton and Archambault (2019) state that the average additional income of participants involved in teacherpreneurship was \$ 3091 US dollars per month, which is probably an unrealistic additional income for teachers from the CIS region given the low socio-economic indicators and low paying capacity of teachers. In addition, Carpenter and Shelton (2021) claim that TpT users spent an average of \$189 per year buying educational materials from that marketplace. However, the authors also admit that they had no opportunity to check how honestly these answers were because it was a self-reported survey.

Overall, there is still a high level of uncertainty regarding the questions of what it means to be a teacherpreneur and what they do. These are crucial questions, especially in the CIS context where teacherpreneurship is a new phenomenon. In addition, previous

researchers commonly focused only on teacherpreneurs themselves because it is much easier to invite them as study participants. At the same time, other educators who do not get involved in teacherpreneurial activities stayed in a shadow. In order to develop a more holistic understanding of that field, there is a need to investigate the perceptions of both the buyers and sellers in the teacherpreneurship group. The present research will address this gap and contribute to a broader understanding of teacherpreneurship.

### **CIS Teachers' Perceptions**

In the context of the post-Soviet countries, social attitude plays a crucial role in the teacherpreneurship development because after the collapse of the USSR, there formed mostly negative attitudes toward entrepreneurial activities in teaching. Teachers are generally considered to be selfless people who are often expected to do all the services free of charge. For example, Silova (2009) reports that the practice of imposing private tutoring in schools and unofficially charging some additional fees from parents had negatively influenced the perception of the teaching profession in the post-Soviet region. Moreover, Silova (2009) claims that the market forces and entrepreneurial identity became reasons why some teachers engaged in shadow business activities and unethical practices in order to increase their incomes. Obviously, these kinds of conclusions could form a negative attitude towards the teacherpreneurship phenomenon because teaching is viewed as a holy profession and teachers are seen as pure and pious, while entrepreneurship is associated with money-making, often through unfair means. These are the kind of perceptions about teaching, teachers, and entrepreneurship in the CIS region. These perceptions are held mainly because of the absence of knowledge and lack of understanding about the ethical ways of engaging in entrepreneurship activities. Therefore, the current study aimed to develop an understanding of how teacherpreneurship can be done in a professional and ethical manner.

Overall, the previous research had some limitations regarding participants sampling and often did not include the participation of teacher-customers who use products developed by teacherpreneurs. Moreover, the teachers from the CIS region did not participate in any past research exploring the teacherpreneurship phenomenon within the local context. Therefore, the present research aims to address this gap and contribute to a broader understanding of teacherpreneurship.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The current study looks at the teacherpreneurship phenomenon through the lens of teacher agency. According to Hadar and Benish-Weisman (2019), the idea of agency implies that individuals do not just respond to and repeat certain practices but can act autonomously and purposefully transform their lives, including changes in the professional field. Furthermore, Imants and Van der Wal (2020) highlight that agentic people tend to act proactively rather than reactively or passively. Moreover, such individuals are characterized by such features as self-reflection, self-organization, and self-regulation (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003, as cited in Molla & Nolan, 2020). Therefore, teacher agency refers to the teachers' capacity to recognize and take advantage of opportunities they already have or can create by themselves, acting in the direction of positive changes in education (Anderson, 2010, as cited in Molla & Nolan, 2020).

According to Cong-Lem (2021) the crucial role of teacher agency in the education system and reforms is explained by the fact that educators could not only implement but also adapt or resist newly established policies and initiatives. In addition, Snow (2015, as cited in Severance et al., 2016) states that some of the education reforms could face resistance from the teaching community because they limit their autonomy and, in a top-down manner, decide what teaching and learning processes should look like. However, Parker (2016) claims that despite existing freedoms, the ongoing de-professionalization of the teachers caused by

overcontrolling and oppressive testing regimes has damaged their ability to exercise agency. Nevertheless, there is an increasing trend of teachers being empowered to act as change agents. (Priestley et al., 2015).

Teacher agency refers to many aspects of the teaching profession and education. One of them is an agency in curriculum change (Brown, 2011; Jenkins, 2020; Priestley et al., 2015; Severance et al., 2016). The teacherpreneurial approach is closely linked with the concepts of teacher agency for curriculum change and implementation because one of the primary tools of teacherpreneurs is their initiatives in developing curriculum resources. Even though teacher agency refers to many aspects of the teaching profession and education, this chapter aims to review the existing literature investigating teacher agency for curriculum development as it closely coordinates with the teacherpreneurship phenomenon.

Teacherpreneurs develop and exchange (sell and buy) materials that are used in teaching to better explain concepts based on the prescribed curriculum. Therefore, teacherpreneurship and teacher agency in curriculum development and implementation are closely intertwined.

### ***Teacher Agency in Curriculum Change and Implementation***

Jenkins (2020) states that teachers often are seen as the link between the official state curriculum and the curriculum implemented in the classroom. The author lists three behavior models describing the teacher agency towards curriculum change. The first is proactive agency when teachers independently decide to introduce their curriculum vision or improve and adapt the prescribed curriculum. The second is a reactive agency when teachers are involved in curriculum change because of requests from the administrators and other stakeholders. Finally, the third model is a passive agency when teachers oppose curriculum reforms without active participation in the change process. At the same time, it may seem that they already supported or agreed with curriculum reforms and changes. However, Severance et al. (2016) report that the existing order of curriculum reforms sufficiently limits the teacher

agency because it is largely influenced by officials, expert curriculum creators, publishers, and sometimes researchers more than classroom teachers. It happens because the teachers' field experience and professional wisdom are often underestimated compared to the decision-makers' vision and educational research findings (Bryk et al., 2015, as cited in Severance et al., 2016).

In its turn, Brown (2011) explains how teachers could interact with curriculum materials in their daily classroom experience. The author names this process as a teacher-tool relationship that demonstrates the teacher's agency for curriculum implementation within the classroom in its close to ideal form. According to the researcher, there are five ways teachers interact with educational materials:

1. Teachers select the resources they want to use. These may be materials required by the formal curricular or additional resources the teacher decided to use.
2. They interpret these teaching resources based on their experience and the education context.
3. Teachers balance their views of the expected outcomes with their aspirations and abilities, as well as the setting's limits.
4. They consider their pupils' talents, interests, experiences, and limits providing continuous feedback and changing their methods to individual and group performance.
5. Teachers frequently deviate from the original concept by adding their additions, modifying original resources, or skipping some elements that do not interest them.

Previous research suggests different approaches to enacting teacher agency in curriculum change by developing school-based curriculum, introducing the collaborative

design, and rethinking the whole process of teachers engaging in those processes. For instance, Sinnema and Aitken (2013, as cited in Poulton, 2020) claim that countries such as Finland, Singapore, Scotland, and New Zealand allowed the schools to complement formal directives with their own curriculum that, in its turn, gave more freedom for teachers making them able to determine what content they want to use. However, the author also states that teacher autonomy within such reforms should be carefully considered to avoid controversies in curriculum change.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I reviewed how the concept of teacherpreneurship relates to the wider context of entrepreneurship, introduced current understanding and perceptions of the teacherpreneurship in western and CIS contexts, and presented the teacher agency theoretical framework that guides the present study.

The literature highlights that focusing on innovations and creating new values is the characteristic that differs the entrepreneurial approach from the traditional business concept, which pursues mainly financial results. Moreover, according to the literature, the entrepreneurial spirit could be spread to other fields of society, including education, leading to the rise of new concepts based on entrepreneurial behavior. So teacherpreneurship illustrates how entrepreneurial values and approaches could be applied by teachers in education. For instance, literature shows that teacherpreneurs could conduct training, sell original educational resources, collaborate with other teachers on social media, and promote personal brands. Teachers who position themselves as teacherpreneurs often are motivated, knowledgeable, and innovative educators. However, the vast part of the literature review was based on studies conducted in the US, while minimal information within the CIS context was reported. Some indirect evidence stated that entrepreneurial behavior in the education sector, especially among teachers less positively perceived in the CIS region, but this claim should

be carefully addressed due to the lack of previous research and discussions about the topic. Finally, I introduced the teacher agency theoretical framework in this chapter that highlights how agentic teachers could influence curriculum change, professional development, and collaboration among teachers. This framework allows looking at teacherpreneurship through the lens of the already developed and widely known concept of agency.

## **Chapter Three: Methodology**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I discuss the research design and methodology used to conduct this study. I explain the mixed-methods design employed to construct a more complete understanding of the phenomenon by addressing the research questions through the perspectives of buyers and sellers engaged in teacherpreneurship in Kazakhstan and the CIS region. I also discuss the research site, sampling strategies, participants, data collection methods, data analysis, and ethical considerations taken into account throughout this study.

### **Research Design**

This research employed a mixed-methods approach involving quantitative survey and qualitative in-depth interviews. The reason for using a mixed-methods design was to construct a more complete understanding of the phenomenon by exploring the participants' perspectives through different methods (Doyle et al., 2009). In the current research, I implemented an explanatory design starting from the quantitative part in the form of a survey to reach out to a large number of respondents. Since I aimed to explore Teacherslab users' understanding of the teacherpreneurship, I wanted to see if there is a common perception of that phenomenon among the teachers or if their views differ a lot from each other. That goal was addressed by implementing a quantitative survey. The online survey included subscales that addressed different sides of teacherpreneurship, such as teachers' readiness to engage in teacherpreneurship, stereotypes, compatibility with education values, and others. Almalki (2016) states that within the explanatory design, quantitative findings strengthen the qualitative data as the findings from the online survey were used for developing the qualitative interview questions in order to cover those aspects that were not addressed by the survey. I conducted semi-structured online interviews with the participants selected from the Teacherslab platform. The qualitative part was based on an interpretive approach because the

researcher wanted to understand the participants' personal experiences and perceptions of the teacherpreneurship (Creswell et al., 2006). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003, as cited in Khan, 2014), the interpretive approach also depends on the researcher's perspective. It was crucial in further data analysis because I used my professional expertise as an educational entrepreneur to explain the study findings clearly and understandably. The qualitative interviews allowed me to deeply discuss teacher-sellers' personal experiences about practicing teacherpreneurship, including their attitudes, emotions, and challenges. For example, I asked interviewees why some of them do not consider themselves teacherpreneurs despite the fact that they do demonstrate teacherpreneurial behavior. That discussion required many clarifying questions that an online survey could not address. Moreover, when I asked questions, sometimes I referred to the online survey results to explore how participants' opinions confirmed or contradicted them.

### **Research Site**

The research site was the Online Teacherslab Marketplace ([www.teacherslab.kz](http://www.teacherslab.kz)), which has approximately 2500 registered members from Kazakhstan and other CIS countries. The platform was officially launched on September 29, 2020. On the marketplace, users can buy and sell original educational resources by analogy with the well-known Teacherspayteachers.com website located in the United States of America. Most of the users of the Teacherslab platform are schoolteachers; however, some of the users also work in kindergartens, colleges, universities, and private education companies and engage in private tutoring. There are two user roles available on the platform, first is a teacher-seller, those who have an account where they can upload their original teaching resources for sale or share them for free, the second role is a teacher-buyer for those users who want to buy paid materials or download free resources from the platform. At the moment when this research

was conducted, the number of Kazakhstani users on the platform was approximately 900 people.

### **Sampling and Participants**

The target population for this study is educators from the Teacherslab online marketplace user base. The approximate number of users registered on that platform is 2500 people. Since the total number of users was not that big, I decided not to do sampling but invited all users to participate in the first stage of this research which is an online survey. The recruitment letter (see Appendix C) and survey link were emailed to all users of Teacherslab through the corporate email; it was a group email that did not show individual members' identities. Since I am an active member of the Teacherslab, I have access to the group email. I put the email in blind carbon copy (BCC) so that the participants could not see each other's emails ID. These people are teachers and educators directly involved as sellers and buyers in teacherpreneurial activities since 2020, when the project was first started. The response rate was 5.16% of the total number of users; the final sample included 129 people. These people shared valuable insights about the phenomena from both sellers' and buyers' points of view. For the second stage, which consisted of online interviews, I used a purposeful sampling strategy to recruit the three most popular teacher-sellers from the Teacherslab user-base to participate in-depth interviews. Then, I sent them a recruitment letter (see Appendix D). According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, as cited in Palinkas et al., 2015), purposeful sampling allows inviting participants who are particularly informed or experienced about a research subject. The choice of teacher-sellers is justified by the fact that they have much more teacherpreneurial experience than teacher-buyers do. These sellers were able to share very valuable insights during the interviews. The selection criteria included the number of the approved downloads in their seller account, which was no less than fifty downloads at the moment when the data was collected. In other words, these three participants had the maximum downloads and sales

in their accounts. The reason for selecting only three of them was to have in-depth discussions with them about their views and experiences of teacherpreneurship within the limited time available for this study.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

There were two data collection instruments used during this study: an online survey and online one-to-one interviews. The online survey was chosen as a data collection tool to invite for participation as many Teacherslab users as possible in order to get a broad picture of how teachers and educators perceive teacherpreneurship. In addition, Teacherslab users represented different countries of the CIS region, including Kazakhstan and Russia, so online instruments allowed addressing them all, not depending on their location. Moreover, an online survey did not distract research participants from their daily work routine because it could be taken whenever it was comfortable for them (Lefever et al., 2007). Prior to starting the process of data collection, the pilot version of the online survey was distributed among three Teacherslab users. The feedback received from these users was used to make adjustments to online survey questions, their order, and wording. Some of the survey questions were adapted from Shelton (2018), Shelton and Archambault (2019) and divided into three main sections: the first section included common questions for all participants such as teacher background; demographics; general understanding of the teacherpreneurship; perceptions, and attitudes; advantages and disadvantages of teacherpreneurship. The second and the third sections were purposefully constructed for sellers and buyers, respectively; these sections mostly focused on the participants' personal experiences and practices of involving in teacherpreneurial activities. The online survey consisted of several closed-ended questions of Likert-type items and a few open-ended questions requiring descriptive answers. Some of the Likert-type items were adopted from the survey developed by Shelton (2018) to assess survey respondents' personal perceptions and attitudes towards a studied phenomenon.

For instance, it is one of the sample Likert-type items from the online survey:

"Teacherpreneurship inspires me to introduce unique ideas in my classroom.". Please see Appendix E for the full version of the survey.

The semi-structured interviews were chosen as a data collection tool for the second stage of the research. The reason to choose this type of data collection is that it allowed the researcher to directly interact with the participants, analyze their verbal and non-verbal communication, guide the interview and ask probing questions. The interviews were conducted online in one-to-one format by using the Zoom software. The interview outline consisted of four main parts such as background information, general understanding of the teacherpreneurship phenomenon, teacherpreneurial experience, and controversies. The interview participants were asked about their practice of teacherpreneurship, including such questions as "What do you think are the factors that influence customers' decision to buy/download your teaching resources?" Please see Appendix F for the full version of the interview protocol.

### **Data Analysis**

The online survey answers were recorded in Qualtrics, and all of the calculations of descriptive statistics were done automatically on this platform. The qualitative interviews were digitally recorded through the Zoom platform, transcribed, and analyzed. The quantitative and qualitative results were translated into English from the Russian language. The study findings were reported in three parts, which addressed one of the research sub-questions. First, the data gathered from the Likert-style questions were illustrated in tables and listed from highest to lowest average rating. Second, the answers from the open-ended questions were grouped and analyzed for similarities and differences, frequency of responses, and repeated patterns and reported in percentages, text, and diagrams according to the research questions. Third, the identified contradictions and similarities between research

results were highlighted. Fourth, the quantitative results were complemented by qualitative evidence from the interviews. In other words, the interview transcripts were read, and relevant segments were highlighted and coded. The codes were then grouped and organized into themes for further interpretation.

### **Ethical Considerations**

In order to ensure the anonymity of the participants of the online survey, no contact information of the research participants, such as phone numbers, email, or names of the participants, were not requested. In addition, the questions in the online survey did not require participants to mention the specific names of educational materials, employers' names or addresses, courses they sell or buy, and other data that could allow them to be identified. Participation in the online interview was not anonymous; audio recordings were done during the interview. However, all interviews were conducted in a one-to-one format; no one except myself and my supervisor has access to these records. All interview data were kept confidential in an electronic folder on the researcher's password-protected computer. I assigned pseudonyms (Interviewee 1, Interviewee 2, Interviewee 3) to data from interviews to ensure the confidentiality of individual participants; their real names were not recorded during the interviews. Confidentiality was guaranteed to the participants to the extent possible and allowed by the law. The same measures as discussed above will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of the participants and data in any presentation and publication made from this study.

Some of the survey questions might have reminded participants of their negative experience of engaging in teacherpreneurial activities and causing psychological discomfort. However, this discomfort was unlikely to be greater than those ordinarily encountered in their daily life. Interview participants could also felt psychological discomfort when they were asked about their motivation to become teacherpreneurs, especially the financial aspect and

its role in their decision to engage in teacherpreneurship. In order to mitigate those risks, the researcher reminded the participants of confidentiality procedures that were implemented in the study. The online survey was anonymous and was hosted on Qualtrics, with a design that did not allow me to trace out an individual respondent. Interview and survey participants were asked to sign the informed consent forms (see Appendix A, B); they were informed that participation in that study is voluntary, and they could refuse to participate in the study at any moment they wanted. The participants were reminded of their rights and freedom to skip a question or discontinue the interview if they felt uncomfortable. They were reminded of all the measures I took to ensure confidentiality.

### **Summary**

This chapter described the methodology of the current research. I decided to use a mixed-method design and implement an online survey as a quantitative data collection tool and interviews to gather the qualitative data. The online marketplace Teacherslab.kz was chosen as a research site, and all the users of the platform users were invited to participate in an online survey. The sampling procedures were not implemented regarding the survey respondents due to their comparatively small number. However, interview participants were selected using a purposeful sampling strategy that allowed to invite the three most popular sellers registered on the marketplace. The study implemented an explanatory design where the online survey served as the primary data collection tool while interview results complemented quantitative findings with qualitative evidence.

## **Chapter Four: Findings**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I report the data findings of my thesis dissertation. I have organized this chapter into two main parts. The first part provides general information about the study and participants' demographics. In the second part, I present descriptive statistical results dividing them into three sections: a general understanding of the teacherpreneurship, the advantages and disadvantages of the teacherpreneurship, and the users' experience of engaging in teacherpreneurship. In addition, I illustrate each section with tables and complement these results with evidence from the interviews.

### **General information**

My study explored teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards online teacherpreneurship through the prism of Teacherslab.kz users, who are directly involved in teacherpreneurial activities by buying and selling self-made original educational resources on the marketplace. This practice has a potential influence not only on teacherpreneurs themselves but also on their colleagues, students, and other education system stakeholders (Shelton, 2018). However, since this phenomenon is comparatively new in education, it is relatively under-researched in academia, especially in the Kazakhstani and CIS contexts. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore Teacherslab users' perceptions and attitudes towards online teacherpreneurship. In this study, I implemented a mixed-method approach. The online survey was a primary data collection tool. At the same time, interviews were a secondary data collection tool. First, all Teacherslab.kz users were invited to participate in an online survey. After that, qualitative results from the interviews with the top three successful teacher-sellers were used to supplement the survey findings by a more depth explanation of teacherpreneurs' practices. Both data collection tools were used to address the following research questions:

1. What do Teacherslab users understand by teacherpreneurship?

2. What are these users' attitudes and perceptions about the advantages, disadvantages, opportunities, and challenges of online teacherpreneurship?
3. How do Teacherslab users get involved in online teacherpreneurship?

Because the mixed-methods design was used, further in this chapter, I combined the quantitative survey results with the qualitative data and reported them together to highlight and strengthen the findings.

### *Participants*

Out of the 2500 registered users of the teacherslab invited to participate in the online survey, only 129 completed the survey, and another three participated in the one-to-one semi-structured interviews. Table 1 presents the general information about the interview participants, their demographics, experience, and education.

**Table 1**

#### *General Information about Interview Participants*

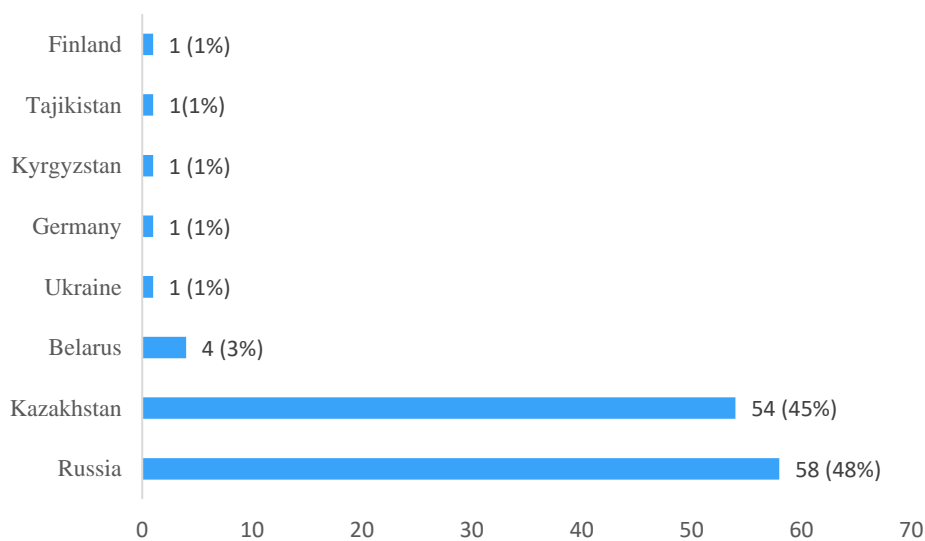
<b>Participant</b>	<b>Current Employment Status</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Current Region</b>	<b>Highest Degree Earned</b>	<b>Teaching Experience</b>	<b>User Experience</b>
Interviewee 1	Deputy director at school	F	North Kazakhstan	Master's degree	13 years	14 months
Interviewee 2	Head of the department of vocational education and management of the Institute for Advanced Training of Pedagogical Workers	F	Russia	Candidate of technical sciences	15 years	14 months
Interviewee 3	Deputy director at school	F	South Kazakhstan	Bachelor's degree	24 years	14 months

### *Demographics*

The online survey participants had mainly represented two countries of the CIS region: Kazakhstan ( $n = 54$ , 45%) and Russia ( $n = 58$ , 48%). (Figure 1). The other respondents reported living in Belarus, Ukraine, Germany, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Finland.

**Figure 1**

*Number of Online Survey Respondents by Country*



Survey respondents ranged in age from 18 – 69 years, with an average age of 35.88 years,  $SD = 9.88$ . Most respondents were women ( $n = 111$ , 91%); however, men were also represented in the sample ( $n = 11$ , 9%); the remaining seven respondents preferred not to disclose their gender.

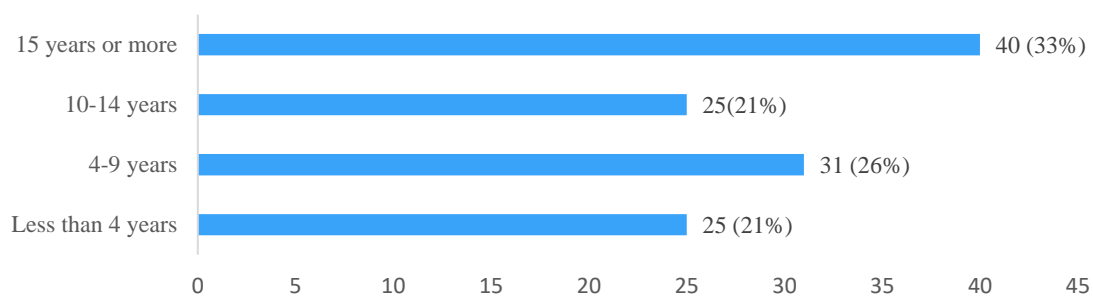
Almost all respondents reported that they had a higher education degree. The vast majority of participants had a bachelor's ( $n = 68$ , 56%) or master's degree ( $n = 50$ , 41%). Moreover, two respondents had a Ph.D., and only one respondent did not have a university degree.

**Teaching Background**

Respondents reported diverse teaching experiences ranging from undergraduate students with no teaching experience to 38 years with an average of 12 years of teaching experience ( $SD = 9.41$ ). Figure 2 demonstrates the frequency of respondents by years of teaching experience.

**Figure 2**

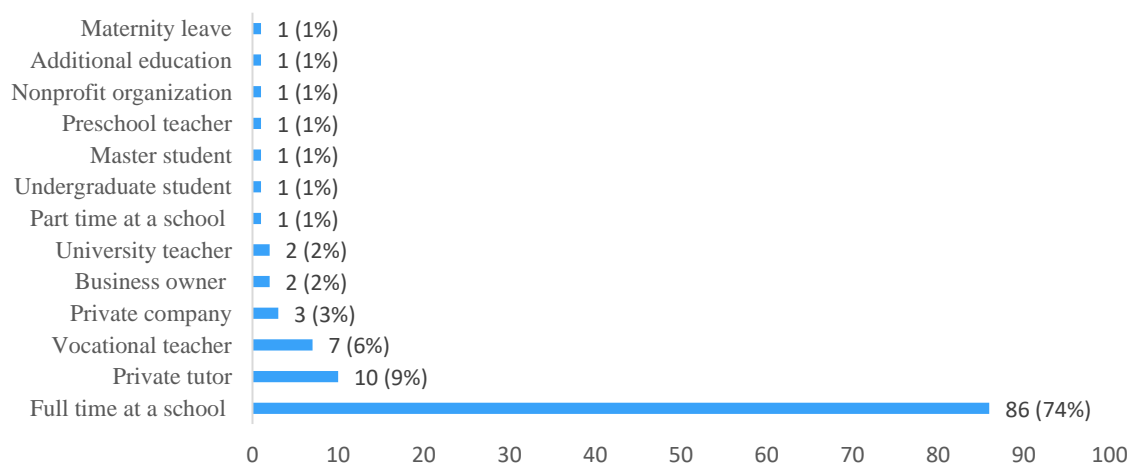
*Frequency of Respondents by Years of Teaching Experience*



In addition, respondents were asked to report their current employment status most of them work as full-time school teachers ( $n = 86, 74%$ ), private tutors ( $n = 10, 9%$ ), and vocational teachers ( $n = 7, 6%$ ). Figure 3 illustrates all respondents' answers regarding their current work position.

**Figure 3**

*Frequency of Respondents by Current Employment*



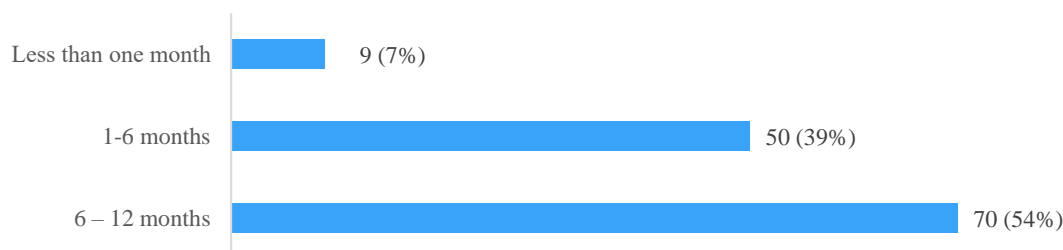
### *User Experience*

Respondents reported experiences as users of the Teacherslab.kz platform. The online marketplace was officially launched on September 29, 2020. At the time the research data was collected the marketplace had already existed for 15 months. Figure 4 illustrates the number of months the study participants had been registered on a platform. The larger half of participants had 6-12 months of experience of using the platform ( $n = 70$ , 54%).

In addition, respondents were asked to report their user roles on Teacherslab.kz. There are two roles available on the platform: teacher-seller and teacher-buyer. The vast majority were teacher-buyers ( $n = 95$ , 74%), while teacher-sellers were the minority ( $n = 34$ , 26%).

### **Figure 4**

*Frequency of Respondents by Months of User Experience*



### **Descriptive Statistical Results and Qualitative Evidence**

Starting from this part, in addition to open-ended and close-ended questions, the survey included Likert-type items to identify participants' attitudes towards teacherpreneurship and its aspects, grouped under the thematic subscales. The general understanding of the teacherpreneurship subscales included conditions, stereotypes, compatibility with education values, and readiness (see Appendix G). The sub-topic addressing advantages and disadvantages of the teacherpreneurship had the same named subscales for Likert-style questions (see Appendix H). Next, for exploring how users become involved in online teacherpreneurship there were two blocks of Likert-type items for teacher-sellers that were included following subscales: creating resources, collaborating with online teacherpreneurs,

entrepreneurship, and collaborating with teachers for the first block of items, and teaching practice, leadership, professional stress for the second (see Appendix I). Finally, the teacher-buyer subscales comprised readiness, level of trust, and buyer's experience (see Appendix J).

For ease of comparison, the following categories were summed and reported together:

'strongly agree' with 'mostly agree', 'all the time' with 'often', 'strongly disagree' with 'somewhat disagree', and 'rarely' with 'never'. This formatting was used for all tables with Likert-style items. Moreover, Likert-type items were listed in the tables from the highest to lowest average rating.

## **General Understanding of Teacherpreneurship**

### *Defining the Term*

The first subsidiary question in this study was about the participants' understanding of the term 'teacherpreneurship'. Therefore, the survey included three closed-ended and one open-ended question as well as ten Likert-type items identical for both teacher-sellers and teacher-buyers, addressing the first subsidiary question. According to the survey responses, more than the half of the participants ( $n = 69$ , 58.47%) answered that they were familiar with the term 'teacherpreneurship', while the remainder ( $n = 49$ , 41.53%) reported that they did not know what the term actually meant. Table 2 illustrates the participants' definitions of the term. Interestingly, most respondents ( $n = 104$ , 88.14%) chose one that corresponds with the definition given by Shelton and Archambault (2019), which was taken as a standard in that study.

**Table 2**

### *Identifying the Most Suitable Definition for the Term Teacherpreneur*

<b>Definition</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Teacherpreneurs are private tutors who provide one-on-one and group educational assistance to school students or to adults.	12	10.17
Teacherpreneurs are former teachers who have their own educational	2	1.69

business such as private kindergarten, school or educational center.

Teacherpreneurs are current or former teachers who create products, services frequently sharing and profiting through the use of digital platforms.	104	88.14
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Moreover, respondents were asked to give their own definition of the term online teacherpreneur. Note that only 88 participants answered this open-ended question in a survey. The top three most frequently mentioned features of teacherpreneurs included the creation of unique educational materials ( $n = 51, 58.95\%$ ), receiving additional income ( $n = 46, 52.27\%$ ), and using various online services, platforms, apps, and digital technologies ( $n = 18, 20.45\%$ ).

### ***Identifying Teacherpreneurs and their Characteristics***

When the participants were asked whether all Teacherslab authors who sell their resources on the platform could be called teacherpreneurs, 28% respondents ( $n = 33$ ) disagreed with the statement. Moreover, some interview participants were unsure if they could call themselves teacherpreneurs. For instance, one of the interviewees stated “No, I most likely would disagree; if the previous year, yes, I would still call myself that, because yes, I actively posted materials, then this year, due to time constraints, I do not have enough time to upload materials”.

Interestingly, this participant also compared herself with other teacher-sellers when she was trying to explain why she does not consider herself a teacherpreneur; she stated, “Well, in my understanding, if I now called myself a teacherpreneur, and in comparison, with those teachers who actively lead their sellers' account, it seems that it would be wrong, well, it would be dishonest”. Instead of using the term ‘teacherpreneur’, this participant described her as an enthusiastic teacher. Another participant also shared a similar point of view by saying “Well, at this time, I still think I will not wholly agree with this because I have very little time to spend on it. My main job is at school, and I have very little time left for a teacherpreneurship [related work]”.

Furthermore, yet another interviewee argued that the term teacherpreneurship has some legal implications that should be taken into account:

In my understanding, a person who designates himself as a small business entity must have a certain level of income, specifically from business, since the law specifies a certain level of income, well, I can say about myself that I still do not have such a level of income.

However, the second interviewee also stated that from the moral perspective and positioning herself publicly, she would call herself a teacherpreneur. Similarly, interviewee 3 stated that she would use the term ‘beginner teacherpreneur’ for herself.

Additionally, the survey respondents ( $n = 14$ , 15.91%) listed some personal characteristics of teacherpreneurs. According to their answers, teacherpreneur should understand the basics of entrepreneurship, engage in self-development, develop a personal brand, be experienced, responsible and modern. Finally, a small number of participants ( $n = 13$ , 14.77%) highlighted that the target audience of teacherpreneurs is other educators and students since they buy and use teacherpreneurs’ products. Nevertheless, three respondents also stated that the target population could be broader and not limited to these two categories.

According to the participants, the teacherpreneurs are those who actively engage in personal and professional development. They provided the following two examples to further explain who teacherpreneurs actually are:

1. Teacherpreneurs are teachers who blog on social networks, constantly practice teaching, improve, undergo various training, and are always aware of new trends in education. Teacherpreneurs are persons who engage in self-development and teach others using their experience. They know how to monetize their knowledge; they know how to use marketing tools.

2. Teacherpreneurs are, firstly, teachers. They connect the bulk of their working time with classes. When they are free from lessons, teacherpreneurs act as business persons. As teacherpreneurs they may create programs, resources, and services that may be an additional source of income.

In addition, the interview participants similarly described their understanding of the teacherpreneurs highlighting that they are educators who create original educational products, share their professional experience and earn additional income by monetizing their intellectual labor. Moreover, interviewee 1 stated that a teacher could not be considered a teacherpreneur unless he/she gets some kind of financial profit from selling his/her work/products. Interviewee 2 also added that teacherpreneurs are not limited to schoolteachers; they could also be teachers-psychologists and mentors who offer private and group teacher consultations.

Descriptive statistics for the Likert-style items were also calculated to demonstrate participants' general understanding of the teacherpreneurship phenomenon divided into four subscales: conditions, stereotypes, compatibility with education values, and readiness. Table 3 shows the item-level descriptive statistics that summarize respondents' general understanding of the phenomenon under study. As can be seen from results for the conditions subscale, almost half of the respondents ( $n = 56, 48.27\%$ ) believe that currently, there are enough online services available to teachers to earn additional income in the field of education. However, fewer respondents ( $n = 43, 37.07\%$ ) agree that society and colleagues react positively when teachers monetize their professional skills. For instance, interviewee 3 had raised the issue of teachers' reaction to her requests not to share her paid resources for free, she stated:

Being a member of different WhatsApp groups, I see the resources I uploaded on Teacherslab.kz for sale are being shared there for free. I always write to colleagues to

tell them to respect my copyrights and not to share my products for free. Some of the colleagues understand and respect my copyrights, but others do not. They insist that I must share my work for free.

Finally, less than one-third ( $n = 34$ , 29.31%) agreed that it is easy for a teacher to start engaging in online teacherpreneurship.

Items addressing stereotypes about teacherpreneurship concept show that about 79.31% ( $n = 92$ ) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that ‘teachers should share their copyrighted resources with other colleagues for free’, which indicates a high level of approval of teachers' entrepreneurial activities. However, interviewee 2 stated that certain stereotypes still exist in society, as she stated “When someone tells me that a teacher cannot take money for his work, this annoys me because this is a stereotype that needs to be addressed”. The response to the item in the survey “Teacherpreneurs should not use their work hours at school to develop their paid products” also showed a reverse pattern. Approximately half of the participants ( $n = 56$ , 48.28%) chose ‘strongly disagree’ or ‘somewhat disagree’ to this. Moreover, about one-third of the respondents ( $n = 36$ , 31.30%) believed that teacherpreneurs are often involved in plagiarism. The last statement was partially confirmed by interviewee 2 when she stated, “It is not in vain that regularly appears the information that someone's resources were bought, and then sold ten times more expensive, let us be honest, this also happens to us, and in the pedagogical community too”.

It is also evident from the results that most respondents ( $n = 91$ , 79.82%) disagreed that entrepreneurial values are incompatible with educational values. Moreover, almost half of the participants ( $n = 55$ , 47.42%) believed that entrepreneurial skills can help improve their teaching performance. For example, interviewee 2 claimed:

For me, the experience as a teacherpreneur had a strong influence on the development of teaching skills because each experiment improves not only promotion and

interaction skills but also pedagogical skills because I always want to improve. I want my product to be something original and exciting.

However, items addressing teachers' readiness to engage in teacherpreneurial activities show that most educators consider that their current skills and competencies are not enough to engage in teacherpreneurship.

The data is also visualized in the following table depicting the participants' answers to the items related to conditions, stereotypes, compatibility with education values, and readiness of teachers.

**Table 3**

*Descriptive Statistics of Items Addressing General Understanding of the Teacherpreneurship*

Subscale and Item	N	M (SD)	Strongly agree (5) & Mostly Agree (4)		Somewhat agree (3)		Strongly disagree (2) & Somewhat disagree (1)	
			n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Conditions</b>								
Currently, there are enough online services that can help the teacher to have additional income in the field of education.	116	3.40 (1.09)	56	48.27	32	27.59	28	24.14
Colleagues and society are positive about the fact that teachers additionally monetize their professional skills.	116	3.28 (0.97)	43	37.07	49	42.24	24	20.69
It is easy for a teacher to start monetizing their professional skills and become an online teacherpreneur.	116	2.98 (1.01)	34	29.31	43	37.07	39	33.62
<b>Stereotypes</b>								
In my opinion, among online teacherpreneurs, there are very frequent cases of plagiarism.	115	3.22 (0.89)	36	31.30	57	49.57	22	19.13
Teacherpreneurs should not use their work hours at school to develop their paid products.	116	2.80 (1.42)	39	33.62	21	18.10	56	48.28
Educators should always distribute their teaching materials for free to other teachers.	116	1.91 (0.97)	7	6.04	17	14.66	92	79.31

Compatibility with education values								
Entrepreneurial skills can help me improve my teaching performance.	116	3.57 (1.00)	55	47.42	46	39.66	15	12.93
Entrepreneurial values are incompatible with educational values.	114	1.63 (0.90)	5	4.39	18	15.79	91	79.82
Readiness								
My competencies are enough to establish an online sale of my original educational materials, online courses, consultations.	116	2.78 (1.06)	23	19.83	47	40.52	46	39.65
I have enough skills to engage in marketing promotion of my educational products.	115	2.39 (1.00)	13	11.31	35	30.43	67	58.26

### Advantages and Disadvantages of the Teacherpreneurship

The second subsidiary question was about Teacherslab users' attitudes and perceptions about the advantages, disadvantages, opportunities, and challenges of online teacherpreneurship.

Therefore, I present the advantages and opportunities, as well as disadvantages and challenges together in the following lines. However, some of the findings related to challenges are included in the users' experience section as well.

The survey results show that the vast majority of the respondents, from 54.06% to 81.48%, agreed that the teacherpreneurial approach helps teachers in their professional activities and provides an opportunity to increase income ( $n = 88$ , 81.48%). All the interviewees also stated that the additional income is one of the main advantages of teacherpreneurship. For example, interviewee 2 reported, "I've been living for a year now with the fact that I have an account on which money never runs out, it's always nice if you suddenly need something urgently, you can use this money, it's an enjoyable activity".

Teacherpreneurial activities also reduce workload ( $n = 87$ , 78.38%), help develop a personal brand ( $n = 85$ , 77.98%), and motivate educators to use new approaches in teaching ( $n = 81$ , 73.64%). Regarding developing a personal brand, interviewee 3 stated, "The more people know how good your product is, the more people will recognize you, and this

popularity certainly helps in life. When people know that you are a good teacher, it helps you in your work”.

In addition, respondents believed that teacherpreneurs understand the needs of teachers better than educational publishers ( $n = 71, 63.69\%$ ), as well as create unique and valuable educational products ( $n = 71, 63.39\%$ ). For instance, interviewee 3 stated:

I believe that the resources developed by teacherpreneurs are much better than those of different organizations. For example, how many comments were made on textbooks by teachers how many shortcomings there were on various textbooks. People who work at the school still know more than those who sit in various publishing houses.

Moreover, more than half of participants ( $n = 60, 54.06\%$ ) agreed that buying a ready-to-use educational resource is better than developing it by themselves (Table 4). Furthermore, interviewee 1 stated that the teacherpreneurial approach allows teachers to avoid bureaucratic procedures by sharing their original resources directly with other colleagues without a lengthy approval process from education departments. She also stated that engaging in teacherpreneurship motivates teachers to self-educate themselves, prepare the visuals for their learning resources, and potentially inspire the creation of online courses and more. Similarly, interviewee 2 highlighted that teacherpreneurship facilitates the appearance of pedagogic communities where teacherpreneurs interact with each other and share the professional experience. Additionally, interviewee 3 stated that teacherpreneurship could help attract more people to the education field, showing that teaching could also be financially beneficial.

At the same time, the survey results indicate that most respondents disagree that teacherpreneurship phenomenon has disadvantages listed in the survey items. Nevertheless, while discussing the disadvantages of teacherpreneurship for schools, one of the interviewees stated, “If I was sure that I would have a permanent source of income from

teacherpreneurship, then, of course, I would leave my job at school, I would go into this direction entirely”.

Similarly, about 31% (n=36) of participants agreed with the item in the survey stated ‘In my opinion, among online teacherpreneurs, there are very frequent cases of plagiarism’., whereas only 12.73% (n=14) of participants agreed with this statement in the survey, ‘Teacherpreneurs often violate copyrights’.

The following Table presents a summary of the findings related to the advantages and disadvantages of the teacherpreneurship phenomenon:

**Table 4**

*Descriptive Statistics of Items Addressing Advantages and Disadvantages of the Teacherpreneurship*

Subscale and Item	N	M (SD)	Strongly agree (5) & Mostly Agree (4)		Somewhat agree (3)		Strongly disagree (2) & Somewhat disagree (1)	
			n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Advantages</b>								
Teacherpreneurship helps to increase teachers’ income.	108	4.30 (0.88)	88	81.48	16	14.81	4	3.71
Ready to use educational resources help to lessen teachers’ loads.	111	4.21 (0.94)	87	78.38	19	17.12	5	4.50
Teacherpreneurship helps to promote teachers’ personal brand.	109	4.18 (0.89)	85	77.98	20	18.35	4	3.67
Online teacherpreneurs motivate me to try new approaches in teaching.	110	4.08 (0.96)	81	73.64	23	20.91	6	5.46
Teacherpreneurs better understand needs of classroom teachers compare to private publishers and providers.	111	3.85 (1.07)	71	63.96	28	25.23	12	10.81
Teacherpreneurs create unique and useful educational resources for teachers and students.	112	3.88 (0.95)	71	63.39	34	30.36	7	6.25
It is better sometimes to buy an educational material instead of developing it by yourself.	111	3.67 (1.05)	60	54.06	38	34.23	13	11.71

Disadvantages								
Teacherpreneurship may cause a teacher to leave school because he/she started earning more than the school salary	111	3.02 (1.11)	32	28.83	47	42.34	32	28.83
Teacherpreneurship shifts the teachers' focus from the education to income generation.	110	2.61 (1.17)	23	20.91	33	30.00	54	49.09
Teacherpreneurs often violate copyrights.	110	2.62 (0.84)	14	12.73	46	41.82	50	45.45
The education resources developed by teacherpreneurs often a low-quality material.	111	2.62 (0.81)	11	9.91	50	45.05	50	45.05

### **Users' Experience of Engaging in Teacherpreneurship**

The third subsidiary question was about Teacherslab users' involvement in online teacherpreneurship. In order to compose a more holistic understanding of users' experience of engaging in teacherpreneurship, in these parts of the survey I used a branch logic to address different sides of the teacherpreneurship phenomenon for both categories of respondents: teacher-sellers and teacher-buyers. The results are presented separately for both of these groups of respondents.

#### ***Teacher-sellers Experience of Engaging in Teacherpreneurship***

The total number of teacher-sellers who completed this part of the survey was 26 people. According to teacher-sellers' responses to the survey, 84.6% ( $n = 22$ ) do not sell their educational products on other platforms except Teacherslab.kz. Others reported that they market their resources on websites such as Bestbabyclub, Udemy, Smotriuchis, Teacherspayteachers, and Instagram. Moreover, all interview participants also reported that they do not use platforms other than the Teacherslab.kz platform for selling their educational resources. However, half of the participants ( $n = 13$ , 50.00%) claimed to engage in other entrepreneurial activities, not including their accounts on Teacherslab.kz. These activities included private tutoring, conducting masterclasses for teachers, mentoring, blogging, co-

owning a children's development center, and selling eco-products. Qualitative findings also support that teacher-sellers engage in entrepreneurial activities; interviewee 1 reported that she conducted two paid webinars last year. Moreover, interviewee 2 stated that she had been officially registered as an entrepreneur in government bodies and thus has engaged in a wide range of business activities:

I do business on my Instagram. As soon as I registered as a self-employed person, I conducted training, held an intensive course, held a hackathon. Now I continue to conduct mastermind groups for deputy directors. That is, I already have a relatively large range. I experiment every time with the form.

During the qualitative interviews, participants also reported different amounts of income from their activities on Teacherslab.kz. However, their attitude to those incomes also varied. For instance, interviewee 2 stated, 'Well, as if for me the total income on the marketplace for the quarter was so insignificant, it is like a nice bonus.' However, she explained that she perceived the profit made in a marketplace as confirmation of the quality of her work and the resources she developed. In contrast, interviewee 3 stated, 'I do not keep records, but decent amounts came in, probably more than fifty thousand already somewhere like this.'

Overall, the survey items that addressed users' experience of teacher-sellers seemingly demonstrate a low level of collaboration between teacherpreneurs. Moreover, there is the same low collaboration of teacherpreneurs with other teacher-buyers who buy resources from the marketplace. It is confirmed by the high rating of choosing the responses titled 'Rarely' and 'Never' titled responses, in almost all survey items related to collaboration with other teacherpreneurs, with the pedagogical community, and the development of entrepreneurial skills. For instance, the bulk of teacher-sellers ( $n = 21$ , 80.77%) stated that they never or rarely collaborate with other teacherpreneurs in the context of co-creating content for social media and promoting each other. For example, interviewee 1 stated, "As

for the collaboration, I did not interact with anyone, because I honestly did not have such a goal”.

However, interviewees 2 and 3 reported several cases of collaboration with other teacherpreneurs. Interviewee 2 reported the three cases where she was invited as an expert to online events. She described one of the cases as:

Well, as an example, I am sometimes invited to the Teacher Fire marathon. There is a whole team that conducts it. They invited different speakers there, so I was invited twice or thrice; I do not remember how many times exactly. And for participating in the marathon, I was paid a certain amount of money.

Finally, almost half of teacher-sellers reported that they do not do anything special or unique to develop their entrepreneurial skills. The two items in the survey related to teacher-sellers' behavior included:

- “Before I sell my original materials, I put them to the test in the classroom.”
- “I collaborate with my peers in social networks (e.g., Instagram, Facebook and Pinterest)”

As many as 76.92% of respondents chose “all the time”, and 50.00% selected “often” in response to these two statements. The responses were summarized and reported in table 5 divided by subscales: creating resources, collaborating with online teacherpreneurs, entrepreneurship, and collaborating with teachers.

**Table 5**

*Descriptive Statistics of Items Addressing Teacher-sellers Experience*

Subscale and Item	N	M (SD)	All the time (5) & Often (4)		Sometimes (3)		Rarely (2) & Never (1)	
			n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Creating resources</b>								
Before I sell my original materials, I put them to the test in the	26	4.12 (1.15)	20	76.92	4	15.38	2	7.69

classroom.								
I share education ideas on social media (e.g. Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest).	26	2.96 (1.02)	7	26.92	11	42.31	8	30.77
<hr/>								
Collaborating with online teacherpreneurs								
I work with other Teacherslab sellers, teachers-bloggers to create content to share on Teacherslab, blogs, and/or social media.	26	1.77 (0.93)	2	7.69	3	11.54	21	80.77
I work with other Teacherslab sellers to promote each other.	26	1.54 (0.80)	0	0	5	19.23	21	80.77
<hr/>								
Entrepreneurship								
I work to develop my business skills.	26	2.73 (1.19)	7	26.92	8	30.77	11	42.31
I study business strategies.	26	2.42 (1.21)	7	26.92	6	23.08	13	50.00
I'm looking for someone to mentor me so that I can learn more about business.	26	2.31 (1.07)	3	11.54	11	42.31	12	46.15
<hr/>								
Collaborating with teachers								
I collaborate with my peers in social networks (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest).	26	3.42 (1.21)	13	50.00	7	26.92	6	23.08
I facilitate my own online community for teachers.	26	2.04 (1.34)	5	19.23	3	11.54	18	69.23
I communicate with teachers who use my Teacherslab products via email, messages, phone calls, etc.	26	2.04 (1.13)	2	7.69	8	30.77	16	61.54

The participants' responses also indicated that the teacherpreneurship phenomenon positively impacts teacher-sellers' professional activities, helping them introduce unique educational techniques in the classroom and encouraging them to consider education in new ways. Moreover, teacherpreneurs see themselves as mentors ( $n = 15$ , 60%) for other teachers and encourage them to implement new approaches that they find valuable ( $n = 16$ , 59.26%). Only a small number of teacher-sellers agreed with the items addressing the presence of professional stress connected with engaging in teacherpreneurship. For example, no respondent chose 'strongly agree' or 'mostly agree' in response to the item 'Keeping up with the latest trends in online teacherpreneurship is difficult for me.'. In addition, a small number

of participants ( $n = 4$ , 15.38%) reported that they found it challenging to take all the actions that teacherpreneurship involves, such as creating resources, marketing, and using social media. However, during the interview, interviewee 2 gave a detailed explanation of the challenges she is facing as a teacherpreneur: impostor syndrome and teachers' unwillingness to pay for products and services. She described impostor syndrome as:

Teachers are very afraid that what they think is good will not really appeal to others, and they are many products or resources, good quality in general, but they are afraid to monetize it. I think this is a challenge.

In addition, this statement was supported by interviewee 1 who also referred to the impostor syndrome as a factor that limits teachers from engaging in teacherpreneurship. Further, interviewee 2 explained:

So, I feel one of the big challenges is that our audience is not used to paying for educational materials, well, it is just a culture that if someone developed a cool product, a large percentage of the target audience wants to find an opportunity to get this material for free, or the second option is to get this material at a cheaper cost.

Interviewee 3 mentioned that not all teachers could legalize their teacherpreneurial activities; this concern was also shared by interviewee 2 who had to officially registered herself as self-employed with the tax department. Moreover, interviewee 2 stated that before she registered as a self-employed person and created a seller's account on Teacherslab, she often felt uncomfortable taking money for consultations she provided; she even stated that despite following the legal path, she felt like she was committing some kind of a corruption. Overall, one of the major challenges for teacherpreneurs mentioned by interviewees is the lack of time to engage in teacherpreneurship due to their current work responsibilities. For instance, interviewee 3 stated, "Many people write to me to help them develop some projects, some resources, but to be honest, in most cases, I refuse because I literally do not have enough

time". A summary of the opportunities and challenges faced by the teacher sellers is presented in the Table 6 below:

**Table 6**

*Descriptive Statistics of Items Addressing Teacher-sellers User Experience*

Subscale and Item	N	M (SD)	Strongly agree (5) & Mostly Agree (4)		Somewhat agree (3)		Strongly disagree (2) & Somewhat disagree (1)	
			n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Teaching practice</b>								
Teacherpreneurship inspires me to introduce unique ideas in my classroom.	26	4.19 (0.88)	22	92.31	2	7.69	2	7.69
As an online teacherpreneur, I'm always looking for innovative ways to engage my students.	26	4.12 (1.12)	21	80.77	3	11.54	2	7.69
Being an online teacherpreneur motivates me to look on education from a new angle.	26	3.96 (1.06)	18	69.23	6	23.08	2	7.69
<b>Leadership</b>								
I encourage educators to explore teaching methods that I support.	26	4.04 (1.02)	19	73.08	4	15.38	3	11.54
I view myself a counsel to other educators who use my resources and ideas	25	3.88 (1.11)	15	60.00	8	32.00	2	8.00
I want teachers to try new ideas that I value.	27	3.81 (1.02)	16	59.26	8	29.63	3	11.11
<b>Professional stress</b>								
As an online teacherpreneur, I'm worried about the quality of the materials and ideas I share.	26	3.35 (0.96)	9	34.62	14	53.85	3	11.54
I'm concerned about my chances of success on Teacherslab.	26	2.96 (0.98)	7	26.92	13	50.00	6	23.08
I find it difficult to do all that comes with being an online teacherpreneur, such as developing materials, promoting, and using social networks.	26	2.73 (0.86)	4	15.38	14	53.85	8	30.77
Keeping up with the latest trends in online teacherpreneurship is difficult for me.	26	2.08 (0.87)	0	0.00	11	42.31	15	57.69

### *Teacher-Buyers Experience of Engaging in Teacherpreneurship*

Teacher-buyers reported that most of them are satisfied with the quality of the educational products they bought from teacherpreneurs ( $n = 67, 80.72\%$ ). However, a small number of respondents were dissatisfied ( $n = 7, 8.43\%$ ), while only nine respondents stated they did not buy any resource on the marketplace. Table 7 shows what types of educational resources teachers frequently buy through the internet. In addition, only a small number of teacher-buyers ( $n = 11, 14.47\%$ ) reported that sellers connected with them after purchasing the resources to request feedback. This finding correlates with the responses of teacher-sellers ( $n = 16, 61.54\%$ ) who also stated that they ‘rarely’ or ‘never’ communicated with teachers who had bought their products (Table 5). Furthermore, over half of the respondents ( $n = 44, 55.70\%$ ) confirmed that they plan to register a seller's account on the marketplace in the future. Table 7 below presents a list of products / materials and the number of buyers.

**Table 7**

#### *List of Products Teachers Buy on the Internet*

<b>Product type</b>	<b>N</b>
Electronic educational resources (printables, worksheets, tests, etc.)	68
Online courses / master classes	47
Administrative documents (sample plans, reports, etc.)	25
Consultations	11
None of the above	4

Table 8 demonstrates responses of teacher-buyers regarding their user experience on Teacherslab.kz. Their responses demonstrate that in most cases, they agree with the statement that the prices set by teacherpreneurs for their original educational products are most often fair. In addition, more than one-third of the participants ( $n = 28, 36.36\%$ ) consider it quite normal for teachers to spend their own money to purchase additional teaching resources for themselves and their students. However, there is some contradiction between the previous

and the following survey item, which states that schools should pay for additional educational resources, and 40 respondents, or 52.63%, agree with this statement.

The subscale addressing the level of trust towards teacherpreneurs shows that participants support the idea that more teachers should start to engage in teacherpreneurial activities ( $n = 33, 42.86\%$ ). This opinion was also supported by interviewee 2, who stated “The more teacherpreneurs come to the online business, the faster we will find the formats that will allow people to get a good education, no matter where they were born, what school they are attached to, and so on”.

However, the third item illustrates that teachers still trust educational companies more than teacherpreneurs regarding the quality of the educational products; only 17 respondents, or 21.79%, stated that they trust teacherpreneurs more. This finding somehow contradicts the results presented in the first part of the survey where participants ( $n = 71, 63.96\%$ ) reported that teacherpreneurs better understand the needs of classroom teachers compared to private publishers and providers.

Finally, teacher-buyers reported high levels of confidence in using online educational platforms ( $n = 51, 65.38\%$ ); they mainly do not experience difficulties when using such services. It is also confirmed by the fact that teacher-buyers reported that they already use plenty of online services for purchasing various educational products online: Instagram, Teacherspayteachers, Englishmaria, Uchtochka, Worksheets, Vkontakte, Mogu-pisat, Foxford, Multiurok, Nsportal, Coursera, Udemy and Google Play Market. Furthermore, a large number of participants ‘strongly agree’ or ‘mostly agree’ with the statements that they always pay attention to comments and testimonials from other teachers regarding products they buy ( $n = 49, 64.47\%$ ) and often adapted the resources they bought for their individual needs ( $n = 43, 57.33\%$ ). On the other hand, interviewee 3 addressed the last survey item in her interview, noting that teachers do not always adapt and modify the products they buy,

moreover, she reported that in some cases, teachers assign the copyrights for themselves and use purchased resources for participating in teachers' competitions, certifications, and other illegal actions.

**Table 8**

*Descriptive Statistics of Items Addressing Teacher-buyers User Experience*

Subscale and Item	N	M (SD)	Strongly agree (5) & Mostly Agree (4)		Somewhat agree (3)		Strongly disagree (2) & Somewhat disagree (1)	
			n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Readiness</b>								
I believe that in most cases the price of educational materials on Teacherslab is fair.	75	3.81 (1.05)	45	60.00	23	30.67	7	9.33
I believe that the school should pay for the purchase of additional educational resources.	76	3.72 (1.17)	40	52.63	23	30.26	13	17.11
I believe that it is normal for teachers to spend their own money for buying additional teaching resources for students or for themselves.	77	3.05 (1.31)	28	36.36	23	29.87	26	33.77
<b>Level of trust</b>								
I will buy the resources even with simple design if the content will be high quality.	77	4.05 (1.04)	52	67.53	19	24.68	6	7.79
I believe that more teachers should start to sell their educational products.	77	3.43 (1.25)	33	42.86	26	33.77	18	23.37
I trust teacherpreneurs more than educational companies in terms of quality of the products and services.	78	2.92 (0.98)	17	21.79	35	44.87	26	33.34
<b>Buyers' experience</b>								
I do not experience many difficulties in use of educational online platforms, applications and particularly Teacherslab marketplace.	78	3.85 (1.06)	51	65.38	18	23.08	9	11.54
I always read comments and testimonials from other teachers before buying an educational product.	76	3.86 (1.07)	49	64.47	17	22.37	10	13.16

I often modify teaching materials that I buy or download from Teacherslab or other platforms.	75	3.77 (1.00)	43	57.33	24	32.00	8	10.67
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### *Comparison of Teacher-sellers and Teacher-buyers Experiences*

The survey used a branch logic to display different questions depending on the respondent's user role. This part compares the sellers and buyers' views. The motivation to use the Teacherslab.kz marketplace and characteristics of educational materials that users consider important varied depending of the users' role. Table 9 demonstrates responses illustrating the most frequently reported motivation reasons to use the Teacherslab.kz platform. Interview participants, mentioned the following reasons: curiosity, willingness to share with the resources that 'lie dead weight,' and because of recommendations from their colleagues, who already used the platform. Moreover, some of the interview participants stated that one of the reasons to join the marketplace is that it allows teacherpreneurs to delegate part of their responsibilities to the platform such as sales, promotion, paying a tax, and user support.

**Table 9**

#### *Motivation to Use Teacherslab.kz Platform*

<b>Response</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Teacher-sellers</b>			
Receiving additional income	23	11	47.83%
Sharing professional experience	23	7	30.43%
Personal brand development	23	3	13.04%
Professional development	23	3	13.04%
Getting the peer feedback	23	2	8.70%
Curiosity	23	1	4.35%
<b>Teacher-buyers</b>			
Looking for creative and unique ideas	63	24	38.10%
Time saving	63	21	33.33%
High-quality resources	63	9	14.29%
Learn from colleagues	63	5	7.94%
Desire to diversify lessons	63	5	7.94%
Inspiration and motivation	63	5	7.94%
Load reduction	63	4	6.35%
Lack of materials	63	3	4.76%
Free materials	63	3	4.76%

Authenticity and accordance with the program	63	2	3.17%
Material design	63	2	3.17%
Ability to modify and adapt learning resources	63	2	3.17%

Moreover, respondents reported the approximate amount of their earnings and spendings on Teacherslab.kz. The teacher-sellers total earnings ranged from 0₸-30,000₸, with an average of 2708₸ ( $SD = 10851.35₸$ ). At the same time teacher-buyers' spending on a platform ranged from 0₸ -30,000₸ ( $M = 1344₸$ ,  $SD = 4250.92₸$ ). There was a wide variation in the number of resources participants uploaded on and downloaded from the platform. For instance, Teacher-sellers reported uploading a range of 0-30 educational resources, with an average of 5 resources uploaded on a platform ( $SD = 6.77$ ). On the other hand, teacher-buyers had downloaded from the platform from 0 to 23 resources ( $M = 6$ ,  $SD = 6.30$ ).

Furthermore table 10 presents top five characteristics of the educational resources that users mentioned as being most valuable for them

**Table 10**

*Top Five Characteristics of Educational Materials*

Rating	Sellers	Buyers
No	Characteristic	
1.	Quality	Creativity and originality
2.	Creativity and originality	Quality
3.	Visual	Relevance
4.	Demonstrative	Price
5.	Simplicity	Visual

### Summary

In this chapter, I reported my research's quantitative and qualitative findings. I started by describing general information about my study and research participants. Overall, 129 respondents completed the online survey, and three sellers participated in the one-to-one semi-structured interviews. The research results show that teachers most often associate teacherpreneurship with resource creation, income generation, and online platforms. Study

participants tend to agree that teacherpreneurship has different advantages that help educators improve their teaching performance, work-life balance, and financial profit. Respondents, in general, do not consider teacherpreneurial activities as something challenging and stressful. However, participants reported a low level of collaboration between educators involved in teacherpreneurial activities. Moreover, according to the sellers' answers, the vast majority of them do not pay attention to the development of entrepreneurial skills and communication with customers.

I will thoroughly analyze, compare, and contrast the research results in the following discussion chapter. Finally, I will interpret these findings and declare my opinions about how the study results answer the research questions and contribute to the existing research on teacherpreneurship.

## Chapter Five: Discussion

### Introduction

In the previous chapter, I reported the study's results based on quantitative and qualitative evidence obtained from the participants. In this chapter, I discuss the findings in light of available literature showing how the findings support or contradict the literature concerning teacherpreneurship, its advantages and disadvantages, and teachers' involvement in it through the lens of Teacherslav.kz users. The findings are discussed under the same themes and sub-themes as presented in Chapter 4. Finally, the chapter ends with a summary.

### General Understanding of Teacherpreneurship

The participants' notions and understanding of teacherpreneurship were captured by exploring the ways in which the participants defined the term 'teacherpreneurship', and identified teacherpreneurs and their characteristics.

### *Defining the term*

General understanding of teacherpreneurship depends on teachers' personal experience of engaging in teacherpreneurial activities, the values and beliefs they share as members of the pedagogic community, and the way in which they implement it within the existing educational context.

According to the research results, 41.53% of participants ( $n = 49$ ) admitted that they did not know the meaning of teacherpreneurship despite being users of an online marketplace where teacherpreneurs market their original educational resources. Notwithstanding, the vast majority of respondents ( $n = 104$ , 88.14%) consider the definition provided by Shelton and Archambault (2019) suitable to describe that phenomenon. This definition states that teacherpreneurs are current or former teachers who create products, services and often share and sell them through the use of digital platforms. These authors chose the US online marketplace Teacherspayteachers as the research site for their study. Out of several

definitions provided to the participants in the current study, they chose the definition provided by these authors. In addition, the most frequent features of the teacherpreneurship reported by the participants were creating original educational products, generating a financial profit by using digital solutions. This finding was also reported by Shelton and Archambault (2019), who state that teacherpreneurs constantly develop curriculum materials, sell and promote them via social networks and virtual platforms.

### *Identifying Teacherpreneurs and their characteristics*

The research results indicate that the participants are unsure whom they can call teacherpreneurs. For instance, 28% of survey respondents ( $n = 33$ ) disagreed with the statement that all Teacherslab sellers are teacherpreneurs. Therefore, study respondents may suppose that just developing and selling teaching resources is not enough to call somebody a teacherpreneur. Moreover, even the top sellers invited for interviews disagreed with calling themselves teacherpreneurs directly, suggesting to use the term enthusiastic teacher instead. It seems that participants had difficulty finding the balance between the concept of a good teacher and a teacherpreneur. These results reflect those of Keyhani and Kim (2020), who also raise a critical question whether teacherpreneurs are just proactive educators who are passionate about their work or they have some other characteristics? This ambiguity in identifying a teacherpreneur is due to the difficulty of drawing a clear line between motivated and innovative teacher-leaders involved in teacher collaboration, professional development, and teacherpreneurs. In addition, McManus (2018) stated that teacherpreneurship has a hybrid nature combining the work in a classroom with entrepreneurial (profitable creation of value) and intrapreneurial (using entrepreneurial skills to improve the processes within an organization). Epler (2019) tries to avoid this uncertainty by classifying teacherpreneurs within the three models: classroom, business, and consultant, teacherpreneur described in the literature review chapter. While the first two models, by their meaning, are closer to the

teacher leadership concept and imply the presence of entrepreneurial spirit to promote innovative approaches, collaboration, and professional development, the latter focuses more on profiting from offering paid services.

Furthermore, one interviewee stated that she could not consider herself a teacherpreneur because she has the main job at school and spends not enough time for teacherpreneurial activities. Nevertheless, Shelton (2018) reports that most teacherpreneurs who participated in her study were also full-time employed in schools. However, she also agrees that allocating sufficient time for teacherpreneurial activities could be a severe challenge to teacherpreneurs. Another interviewee reported that as a teacher she is entitled to draw a certain amount of salary that determines her income. If she engages in teacherpreneurship and makes more money than her salary-based income, it may have some legal implications for her. This result may be explained by the fact that this interviewee is the only one who reported that she is officially registered in the state bodies as self-employed and pays taxes. Hence, she compares herself to other entrepreneurs and small business entities. However, I did not find the evidence in previous research that confirms or refutes that such understanding is inherent and common for teacherpreneurs.

This study also supports evidence from previous observations (e.g., Shelton, 2018; Shelton and Archambault, 2019) that teacherpreneurs, apart from creating and selling resources, often blog on social media, develop a personal brand, engage in professional development, share their teaching experience and understand the basics of entrepreneurship. On the other hand, one of the interview participants stated that a teacher could not be considered a teacherpreneur unless he/she makes an additional income from selling their resources and services. This finding is contrary to those found by Berry et al. (2013), who argue that financial gain is not a primary and obligatory characteristic of teacherpreneurs. Similarly Neto et al. (2017, as cited in Keyhani, 2020) stated that teacherpreneurs are less

driven by money but motivated more to promoting meaningful changes in schools and education.

In addition, research results indicate that most of teacherpreneurial activities are targeted towards benefiting other colleagues or students. However, previous researchers such as Holland et al. (2014 as cited in Keyhani, 2020) state that teacherpreneurs could also collaborate with outside agencies, policymakers, social institutions, thus expanding their influence on other audiences. Furthermore, interviewee 2 claimed that teacherpreneurs are not limited only to the school teachers but also could be represented by other professionals engaged in educational activities. This finding is consistent with that of Shelton and Archambault (2020), who stated that school leaders and other education stakeholders could also be entrepreneurial educators.

Concerning the subscale of current conditions for engaging in teacherpreneurship the survey respondents ( $n = 56, 48.27\%$ ), stated that there are enough online platforms for educators allowing them to generate supplementary income. However, these data must be interpreted with caution because even in western countries, the number of such platforms is limited to several big players (Shelton et al., 2021). Moreover, 84.6% ( $n = 22$ ) of sellers reported that Teacherslab.kz is the only platform they use for their teacherpreneurial activities, so there is no evidence of a large number of similar platforms in the CIS region and globally.

Furthermore, approximately one-third of participants ( $n = 43, 37.07\%$ ) strongly agreed that other educators as well as the society in general have a positive attitude toward pursuing financial goals by teacherpreneurs. However, about two-third of the respondents did not agree that there is a positive attitude towards teacherpreneurship amongst educators. This finding is aligned with what Moreover, Keyhani (2020) claimed that entrepreneurial activities are often perceived with negative connotations in the field of education due to positioning the

knowledge as a product, students as customers, and teachers as entrepreneurs. In addition, the evidence from the qualitative interviews shows that some of the teachers could ignore the copyrights of sellers and spread paid materials by themselves. Shelton and Archambault (2020) reported a similar problem of confronting teacherpreneurs with ‘copycat’ teachers who share materials copied from them. The results of the current study also indicate that 31.30% ( $n = 36$ ) of respondents believed that teacherpreneurs are often involved in plagiarism. These results reflect those of Shelton et al. (2021), Shelton and Archambault (2020), who also found that their research participants reported cases of copyright violations by teacherpreneurs. Overall, less than one-third ( $n = 34$ , 29.31%) of research participants reported that it is easy to become an online teacherpreneur which could mean that engaging in teacherpreneurship could be a very challenging process.

The next subscale addressed the existing stereotypes regarding teacherpreneurship. The vast majority of respondents ( $n = 92$ , 79.31%) disagreed that teachers should always share their original resources for free. Shelton and Archambault (2020) also agree that asking teacher-sellers to spread their original materials free of charge is unfair. They refer to the teacherpreneurs stating that they invested their time, creativity, and effort to develop resources; these arguments were also supported by interviewee 2. Furthermore, almost half of the participants ( $n = 56$ , 48.28%) disagreed that teacherpreneurs should not use the school work hours for developing their paid resources. However, Clements (2019) stated that in US using the school hours for teacherpreneurial activities might violate school policies that restrict teachers to use work hours for commercial activities.

Third subscale addressed the level of compatibility and demonstrated that overall, study participants believe entrepreneurial values do not contradict education values ( $n = 91$ , 79.82%), and entrepreneurial skills could positively influence their teaching experience ( $n = 55$ , 47.42%). In accordance with the present results, previous studies have demonstrated that

entrepreneurial approaches could contribute to the development of creative educational programs (Hanson, 2017 as cited Keyhani, 2020), motivate teachers to improve education (Riter, 2020), help to develop entrepreneurial skills in students (Peltonen, 2015), and implement innovative teaching methods (Shelton & Archambault, 2020). However, concerning the compatibility of entrepreneurial values with education was criticized by Castner et al. (2017), who stated that the entrepreneurial approach turns educational curricula into a commodity and promotes the culture of rivalry and individualism that contradicts the public value of education.

Finally, the last subscale addressed survey respondents' readiness to engage in teacherpreneurship by asking how they rate their entrepreneurial skills. According to the results, only 19.83% (n = 23) of participants agreed that their competencies are enough to start selling their educational developments. However, even a small number (n = 13, 11.31%) reported they have enough skills to engage in marketing promotions of their educational products. These results corroborate the findings of Riter (2020) who also reported about teachers lacking entrepreneurial skills such as business planning and financial management. On the other hand, the present results contradict Shelton and Archambault's (2020) findings showing that teacherpreneurs were confident that they possessed such skills. This result may be explained by the fact that their participants were more experienced teacherpreneurs. Moreover, the teacherpreneurship phenomenon is already well developed in western countries, particularly in the US.

### **Advantages and Disadvantages of the Teacherpreneurship**

Teacherpreneurship, like any phenomenon, has its advantages and disadvantages as well as providing opportunities and challenges for teachers. In this section, I discuss advantages and opportunities together and similarly disadvantages and challenges combined. However, the

section on ‘users’ experiences’ provides more insights into the challenges they faced in engaging in teacherpreneurship.

The online survey results show that most teachers, from 54.06% to 81.48%, tend to perceive teacherpreneurship positively. For instance, 81.48% ( $n = 88$ ) of participants believe that teacherpreneurship helps to increase their income, which was also supported in previous research (Epler, 2019; Shelton, 2018; Shelton & Archambault, 2020; Shelton et al., 2021). In addition, this study supports evidence from previous observations (e.g., Shelton, 2018; Shelton & Archambault, 2020), demonstrating that participants (78.38%,  $n = 87$ ) also agreed that resources developed by teacherpreneurs help to lessen teachers’ loads, develop a personal brand ( $n = 85$ , 77.98%) to establish more trust with teacher-buyers, and motivate educators to use new approaches in teaching ( $n = 81$ , 73.64%).

The research results also state that most respondents ( $n = 71$ , 63.69%) believe that teacherpreneurs better understand the needs of teachers compared to traditional publishing companies. In previous research, Hodge et al. (2019) claimed that curriculum marketplaces created opportunities for teacherpreneurs to challenge the dominance of publishing companies across school curricula. However, they did not argue that authors of such platforms better understand the needs of teachers. On the other hand, Apple (2013, as cited in Shelton & Archambault, 2020) stated that schools could encourage the use of resources developed by teacherpreneurs instead of buying them from publishers by allocating the budget as a response to misfaith towards a teacher agency. Furthermore, participants ( $n = 71$ , 63.39%) agreed that teacherpreneurs develop unique and valuable educational materials and that it is better to buy resources created by teacherpreneurs than to spend their time developing resources. Carpenter and Shelton (2021) also reported a similar finding stating that three-quarters of TpT buyers also agreed that the content placed on the platform is high quality, while Siedel and Stylianides (2018) reported that time-saving is an important reason

to buy teacherpreneurs products. In addition, the opinion expressed by interview participants that the teacherpreneurial approach allows to avoid bureaucracy procedures of getting approval to spread developed teaching resources among peers expand the previous research findings where that aspect was not addressed. The qualitative evidence from current research also indicates that teacherpreneurship contributes to the development of pedagogic communities and teacher collaboration. Riter (2020) and Shelton and Archambault (2020) also support this view stating that it was common for teacherpreneurs to mentor other teachers and facilitate professional education communities. Moreover, interview participants stated that teacherpreneurship could make education more attractive for school and university graduates. Similarly, McManus (2018), exploring the impact of teacherpreneurism on teachers' career satisfaction, referred to the teacherpreneurs opinion that if schools position teachers as agents of change instead of limiting them, it will help to involve students in the field. However, the statement that teacherpreneurship helps keep educators in schools seems arguable; other evidence contradicts that finding and is discussed in the following paragraph.

Among the disadvantages of teacherpreneurship as indicated by the respondents is the potential risk of teachers leaving schools or compromising with totally immersed in teacherpreneurial projects. This assumption was supported by 28.83% ( $n = 32$ ) of the participant teachers. Buckley and Nzembayie (2016), Epler (2019), Lindqvist and Nordanger (2016, as cited in Riter, 2020) agree that this risk is real and that teacherpreneurs could leave classrooms tired to deal with overcontrolled school culture, working conditions and burnout preferring more flexible independent practices, creating their own projects and saleable products in education. On the contrary, Shelton and Archambault (2020) believe that teacherpreneurial activities increase teacher job satisfaction, thus retaining them in the school. However, researchers admitted that among their participants were both categories of teachers, those who left the classroom and believed it was a good decision, and those who did

not plan to leave the school but continued to combine teacherpreneurship with classroom teaching and enjoyed that. Furthermore, McManus (2018) also reports that teacherpreneurship positively correlates with teacher career satisfaction. However, she explains that her study results did not identify such a correlation with teachers' intent to stay. She states that such relationships could indicate that teacherpreneurs could leave the classroom but stay in education. In addition, one of the participants stated that the only thing that prevents her from leaving the school is a stable salary and a lack of confidence in teacherpreneurial activities that will cover her monthly bills. This finding aligns with Epler (2019), who agreed that the lack of steady income is one of the crucial challenges to consultant teacherpreneurs.

Furthermore, the contradiction of the results regarding the prevalence of cases of plagiarism among teacherpreneurs seems strange. The question about the frequency of occurrence of such precedents was asked to the participants twice. If at the first time, about 31% ( $n=36$ ) of participants agreed that there are very frequent cases of plagiarism among teacherpreneurs. The second time only 12.73% ( $n = 14$ ) participants agreed with the statement 'Teacherpreneurs often violate copyrights'. Perhaps the respondents were confused by using different terms in the question's wording, such as plagiarism in the first case and copyright infringement in the second. However, I find it difficult to name the exact reason for this difference, while in general previous research support that plagiarism is a serious challenge for developing teacherpreneurship (Shelton et al., 2021).

Finally, only 9.91% ( $n = 11$ ) reported that teacher-sellers often create low-quality educational resources, while some of them somewhat agreed, others disagreed. This finding is consistent with the results stated by Carpenter and Shelton (2021), where approximately three-quarters of participants also stated that, in general, the quality of resources uploaded by teacherpreneurs on Teacherspayteachers.com is high. However, Polikoff (2019) also

examined materials from this online marketplace and concluded that the quality of these resources is highly questionable. For instance, he stated that overall, reviewers who participated in the research rated TpT materials as ‘mediocre’ and moderately aligned with educational standards they supposed to follow. On the other hand, his results indicated that most materials had a good design and were free from errors. Furthermore, Sawyer et al. (2019) highlighted that the visual appearance in the case of math resources was often correlated with weaker levels of mental exertion.

### **Users’ Experience of Engaging in Teacherpreneurship**

This part of the chapter discusses the findings within three sub-topics such as sellers experience, buyers experience and comparison of these two users’ groups.

#### ***Teacher-sellers Experience of Engaging in Teacherpreneurship***

The survey findings demonstrated that most of the teacher-sellers, 84.6% ( $n = 22$ ), use only the Teacherslab.kz platform for distributing their developments. At the same time, other websites mentioned by participants were limited to five services, including the famous American marketplace Teacherspayteachers.com. This aligns with the Shelton (2018) study where 65% of respondents reported that they sell created resources exclusively on TpT, an American online marketplace for teachers. However, participants in her study reported using sixteen other websites to sell their materials, including teachers’ personal websites. A possible explanation for this might be that there were more participants than in my research and a greater prevalence of teacherpreneurial projects. In addition, most sellers ( $n = 20$ , 76.92%) stated that they test resources with students before sharing them on marketplace for selling. This finding was also supported by Shelton (2018) who also found teachers piloting their educational products for quality assurance purpose. Furthermore, half of the sellers ( $n = 13$ , 50.00%) in the current study stated that they are also involved in other entrepreneurial activities. For instance, interviewees 1 and 2 reported they conduct paid training, webinars,

and online courses for teachers. This finding correlates with Carpenter et al. (2021), who investigated practices of education influencers and micro-celebrities, stating that they are often involved in commercial activities as paid speakers at events and brand ambassadors. This finding is relevant to the current research cause some teacherpreneurs also education influencers because they blog in social media, promote products and services, and collaborate with outside stakeholders (Carpenter et al., 2021).

Furthermore, top sellers participating in interviews reported different attitudes towards the amount of income they generate from teacherpreneurial activities. For example, if one of them stated that they were insignificant sums of money other claimed that this supplemental income was relatively high, around fifty thousand tenges. However, that findings differ greatly from Shelton and Archambault (2020), who stated that additional earnings of elite teacherpreneurs allow them to take extra vacations or buy offices and apartments. Comparing the earnings of western and CIS teacherpreneurs, it is evident that the latter part earns much less money.

Consistent with the research of Shelton (2018), this study found that teacher-sellers ( $n = 21$ , 80.77%) almost do not collaborate with other sellers in terms of co-creating resources but at the same time collaborate with colleagues through social networks and blogs ( $n = 13$ , 50.00%) and facilitate their own online communities for teachers ( $n = 5$ , 19.23%). On the other hand, the results contradict previous study in terms of communication between sellers and customers who use their resources. While Shelton (2018) reported that 34.63% ( $n = 142$ ) of participants often communicate with buyers, present results indicate that only 7.39% of respondents ( $n = 2$ ) do it. Furthermore, the subscale addressed entrepreneurship showed that approximately half of the participants did not purposefully develop their business skills and did not look for mentor support to improve those skills, contrary to the results reported by Shelton (2018) where participants were more active in seeking those opportunities. A

possible explanation for these results may be that study participants perceive the involvement in teacherpreneurship more as a hobby and do not take it seriously. The next subscales addressed teaching practice, leadership, and professional stress, corroborated with findings from Shelton (2018) and Shelton and Archambault (2020) across all items listed within subscales. For instance, participants stated that online teacherpreneurship motivates them to implement innovative approaches and new classroom techniques, be a mentor for their peers and spread educational ideas they believe in. Similarly, approximately one-third of participants were concerned about the quality of resources they share and the uncertainty of success in a marketplace. What is surprising is that no one of the respondents disagreed that following all the trends in online teacherpreneurship is challenging. The only small number of sellers, 15.38% ( $n = 4$ ), stated that it is difficult to do everything that teacherpreneurship involves, such as promoting products, creating materials, and using social networks. Nevertheless, these two aspects were rated as very challenging by teacherpreneurs participated in Shelton (2018) study. In addition, interviewee 2 mentioned that teachers often look for free materials and are not used to paying for copyright resources. This finding aligns with Koehler et al. (2020, as cited in Shelton et al., 2021), stating that almost 70% of downloads on TpT come from free resources.

During interviews, participants twice referred to the impostor syndrome as the limiting factor of engaging in teacherpreneurship. Peltonen (2015) also confirmed this finding stating that teacherpreneurs uncertain about their entrepreneurial skills in teaching despite they consider themselves experienced educators. Several times, participants of the present research mentioned that issues related to the legalization of their teacherpreneurial activity could serve as limiting factors to engaging in teacherpreneurship. Moreover, interviewee 2 stated that she even felt like she was doing some kind of corruption when she charged money for her tutoring and consultations before she officially registered as a self-employed person. Such

feelings and concerns over the legal and ethical aspects of teacherpreneurship activities have been discussed by Shelton (2018). Moreover, she stated that the ethical and legal issues concerning teacherpreneurial activities need to be considered by practicing teacherpreneurs. However, the most common challenge reported by the participants was the lack of time for teacherpreneurial activities due to school work and classroom responsibilities that is also aligns with Shelton (2018) results.

### ***Teacher-buyers Experience of Engaging in Teacherpreneurship***

According to the study results, the vast majority of buyers ( $n = 67$ , 80.72%) were satisfied with the quality of their purchased resources. This finding is partially confirmed by Shelton et al. (2021) reported that the customers highly rated 49.8% of resources on the TpT website. However, Koehler et al. (2020, as cited in Carpenter & Shelton, 2021) stated that such high buyer ratings seem unreliable. Consistent with the literature (Shelton et al., 2021), this research found that the most common products teachers purchase are electronic worksheets and printables. In addition, buyers confirmed that teacherpreneurs rarely connect them after purchasing materials. This finding shows that teacher-sellers do not pay much attention to communication with customers. Interestingly, more than half of respondents ( $n = 44$ , 55.70%) stated they also want to register seller account. These results indirectly confirm that teacherpreneurs are able to motivate other peers to engage in teacherpreneurship. It also complements Shelton's (2018) research demonstrating the possible impacts of teacherpreneurship on other educators. Overall, results withing this sub-topic expand previous research because buyers experience often were out of focus of researchers investigate mostly teacherpreneurs and their practices.

The first subscale in Likert-style questions for buyers addressed the level of their readiness to engage in teacherpreneurship. According to the results ( $n = 45$ , 60.00%), participants agreed that the price for resources on Teacherslab.kz is fair. This question was

not directly addressed in previous research. However, when it came to answering if they suppose that spending teachers' money on digital resources is a normal much smaller number of buyers ( $n = 28, 36.36\%$ ) agreed with it. In contrast, bigger number ( $n = 40, 52.63\%$ ) suggested that schools should allocate budgets for it. Nevertheless, a previous study by (Carpenter & Shelton, 2021) indicated that three-quarters of their participants always paid for the resources with their own money despite the existing TpT School Access program that allows buying materials through school.

The next subscale addressed the level of trust toward teacherpreneurs. Although participants ( $n = 52, 67.53\%$ ) reported that visual design in comparison with quality is not a decisive factor in purchasing resources, previous research (Shelton et al., 2021) demonstrated that the rate of downloads for visual appeal materials is often high on such websites as TpT. In addition, 42.86% of respondents ( $n = 33$ ) and interview participants stated that more teachers should start to involve in teacherpreneurship. Researchers such as Qureshi et al. (2018) even conducted action research to develop teacherpreneurial skills in educators believing it would be helpful for them and the education field. However, a comparatively small number of participants ( $n = 17, 21.79\%$ ) stated they trust teacher-sellers more than traditional publishers. Hodge et al. (2019) support this finding by providing the English Learning Arts subject example where most of implementing curriculum materials came from traditional publishers such as Pearson and others.

Within the last subscale concerning buyers' experience, respondents ( $n = 51, 65.38\%$ ) reported high confidence in using digital educational platforms and listed plenty of websites for purchasing resources. However, previous research mainly addressed that question for teacherpreneurs, while buyers stayed outside the focus. Furthermore, participants ( $n = 49, 64.47\%$ ) stated they often consider reviews of other customers when they decide what materials to buy. This finding collaborates with Shelton et al. (2021) reported that buyers do

not download unrated resources in most cases. Finally, more than half of the buyers, 57.33%, claimed that they usually modify products they buy according to their teaching needs and methods. Polikoff (2019) also reported this finding stated that teachers often adapt downloaded materials and do not use resources as-is. On the other hand, one of the present interview participants disagreed with that statement stating that sometimes teachers do not adapt resources and even pass off teacherpreneurs' materials as their own.

### *Comparison of Teacher-sellers and Teacher-buyers Experiences*

According to the research findings sellers' and buyers' motivation to use the marketplace platform differs a lot. While sellers' main reasons for engaging in teacherpreneurship activities were receiving additional income, sharing expertise, developing a personal brand, and professional development, the buyers find the resources developed by teacherpreneurs as creative, insightful, time saving, relevant, and of high-quality. This also accords with previous observations, which showed that looking for some useful and inspirational ideas (Carpenter & Shelton, 2021), filling instructional gaps and an time saving (Polikoff, 2019) were common purpose for buyers to use online marketplaces. Shelton (2018) also agreed that sharing professional experience, generating supplementary income motivate teacherpreneurs to use such website like TpT.

Furthermore, the sellers' earnings and buyers' spending on Teacherslab.kz were much less than those reported in previous studies. For example, Shelton (2018) stated that teacherpreneurs generate up to \$68 000 US dollars per month with an average of \$3 091. In contrast, Teacherslab sellers stated they earn only up to ₸30 000 Tenges (around \$67) with an average of ₸2708 Tenge, (\$6). Similarly, buyers' spending in the CIS region was much less than those reported by Carpenter and Shelton (2021). These authors stated that TpT users, on average, spent \$189 within 12 months, while Teacherslab.kz users in the same period spent on average ₸1344 Tenge, which was approximately \$3 US dollars. Previous studies did not

report the number of uploads and downloads for individual users. However, according to Shelton et al. (2021), the total number of downloads on TpT is approximately 1.5 billion, while on Teacherslab.kz current downloads rate is approximately 20 000. These results may be explained by the fact that Teacherslab.kz is a new educational startup officially launched in 2020, while the Teacherspayteachers website has been working since 2006.

One of the interesting findings is the differences in characteristics of the products that both categories of users perceive as most valuable. This aspect was partly addressed by Shelton et al. (2021) when they reported that alignment with state educational standards was an important factor for both sellers and buyers, however the current research identified other crucial product characteristics. Three out of five most frequently mentioned characteristics of a good quality material or resource are quality, creativity or originality, and visual. Both sellers and buyers agreed with these characteristics though the rating they assigned varied. However, two characteristics absolutely do not match. For example, teacher-sellers mentioned that resources should be simple and demonstrative, while teacher-buyers preferred relevance and price of the materials. However, interviewee 3 also stated that one of the essential characteristics influencing buyers' purchase decisions is that the price of a product should be reasonable and affordable. Another factor that influences buyers is the reputation and popularity of the authors and branding. According to the participants, some authors / sellers are known for producing good quality products and therefore buyers like to purchase their products / brand. Furthermore, interviewee 3 also stated that the relevance of the material is a crucial factor influencing the purchase decision. She supported her opinion by saying 'I will not buy, let us say, now in the winter the material that I will need for the summer holidays.'

**Summary**

In this chapter, I discussed the research findings, comparing them with the results of previous studies. The first sub-theme addressed the general understanding of teacherpreneurship and revealed that different participants understand and define the term ‘teacherpreneurship’ differently. However, their perceptions of teacherpreneurship closely matched the definition given by Shelton and Archambault (2019). Furthermore, I discussed the advantages and disadvantages the participants identified in relation to teacherpreneurship being a beneficial practice for educators. On the other hand, I also highlighted that previous researchers were unsure about the positive influence of the phenomenon on teachers’ intent to stay in schools, quality of educational resources, and plagiarism issues. Finally, within the users’ experience sub-theme, I showed how sellers’ and buyers’ practices converge and how they differ from those reported by researchers from other contexts.

## Chapter Six: Conclusion

### Introduction

The current research explored the understanding of online teacherpreneurship through the prism of sellers' and buyers' experience on Teacherslab.kz, the marketplace for educators. The quantitative and qualitative data collected through the online survey and interviews allowed me to investigate teachers' understandings, perceptions, and practices of teacherpreneurship. This chapter concludes the study results guided by the main research question: What do Teacherslab.kz users understand by, and how do they get involved in online teacherpreneurship?

The chapter consists of three parts. The first part summarizes the main study findings and conclusions according to the research questions that guided this study. The second part presents the implications and recommendations based on the research results. The third part indicates the limitations of the current research and suggests possible areas for future research. The chapter ends with a final conclusion.

### Summary of Key Findings

The key findings discussed in the previous chapters are summarized below according to the research questions.

#### *Teacherpreneurship is Perceived through the Lens of Business*

The first research sub-question was: What do Teacherslab users understand by teacherpreneurship? The findings discussed in the previous two chapters revealed that a vast majority of respondents perceive teacherpreneurship through the lens of business activities. Although teachers reported that teacherpreneurship includes developing curriculum materials, collaboration, and professional development that is more than just selling educational products. Nevertheless, a predominant look at teacherpreneurship as a source of additional income is also confirmed by identifying that financial benefit is the most common

characteristic and advantage of the phenomenon reported by the current study participants and also mentioned in previous research (Epler, 2019; Shelton, 2018; Shelton & Archambault, 2020; Shelton et al., 2021).

Unfortunately, the previous research lacks teachers' voices in defining the term teacherpreneurship. Instead of drawing upon empirical data obtained from teachers, most authors suggested definitions based on their own points of view as academicians. However, teacherpreneurs from the perspectives of the teachers, who participated in the current study, are those teachers who successfully and regularly develop and distribute their educational resources and services on a paid basis, using various online services and platforms for this. In other words, a teacherpreneur is not just a teacher or educator but he/she is an entrepreneur who develops original teaching materials, uses those materials in his/her own teaching, and sells them to others.

The research findings may indicate that tools through which teacherpreneurial approaches are implemented have a crucial impact on teachers' understanding of the phenomenon. For instance, if teachers engage in teacherpreneurship through the marketplace where the primary activity is selling and buying educational resources, teachers may perceive the financial aspect as the main goal. On the other hand, perhaps, if teacherpreneurial approaches were promoted through training, incubation programs by analogy with startups, podcasts, and other possible tools, it would form another understanding of the phenomenon of teacherpreneurship.

The conclusion that can be drawn based on the evidence found in this study is that the primary goal of engaging in teacherpreneurship activities is to make additional income by selling their self-made curriculum materials. The participants do not seem to understand the benefits of teacherpreneurship for their personal and professional development such as developing entrepreneurial skills, teacher leadership, networking with other educators, and

learning from each other's experiences and expertise. This kind of a business-driven approach to teacherpreneurship can have far-reaching implications for teachers in the CIS region where teachers are not adequately paid. I discuss some of the implications in the section below.

### ***CIS Teachers are Positive about Engaging in Teacherpreneurial Activities***

The second research sub-question was "What are these users' attitudes and perceptions about the advantages, disadvantages, opportunities, and challenges of the online teacherpreneurship"? Although majority of the participants see teacherpreneurship as a business activity, some of them did agree that practicing teacherpreneurship could be highly beneficial for educators, not only in terms of additional income but also in terms of professional gains. Some participants believed that teacherpreneurship, except financial benefits, motivates teachers to implement innovative educational approaches, strengthens teachers' collaboration, and helps to attract bright youth minds into the teaching profession (McManus, 2018; Shelton, 2018). Moreover, research results demonstrated a reverse pattern concerning the common disadvantages of teacherpreneurship reported in previous research showing that study participants consider them minimal. To conclude, the Kazakhstani and CIS teachers' perceptions and attitude towards teacherpreneurship may change as more teachers will engage in this activity and experience its advantages and disadvantages. As the concept of teacherpreneurship is relatively new in this region, only a very small number of teachers have engaged in it either as buyers or sellers. Nevertheless, some of the participants stated that they see a lot of benefits, both financial and professional, and opportunity for teachers to develop their own educational products and services and make them available to other teachers on paid or voluntary basis.

*Teacherpreneurship in the CIS Region is at a Very Early Stage of Development*

The third research sub-question was: “How do Teacherslab users get involved in online teacherpreneurship”? According to the study results, participants were mostly involved in teacherpreneurship by selling and buying resources on the Teacherslab marketplace, social networks such as Instagram, and aggregators of online courses. Moreover, about half of the surveyed sellers, besides being active on Teacherslab, reported their involvement in other teacherpreneurial activities, such as mentoring, blogging, and tutoring to monetize their teaching skills. However, they often do not position and consider themselves as teacherpreneurs. Perhaps, in the public discussion, such practices of teachers have not yet been considered the implementation of teacherpreneurial approaches and remain without appropriate attention and understanding. Therefore, there is no feeling that teacherpreneurship has become an accepted approach to teaching. Overall, it shows that teachers are involved in teacherpreneurship activities in one way or the other, but they do not consider that such activities fall under teacherpreneurship. One of the reasons could be that these teachers are unfamiliar with the term teacherpreneurship, which is not a common term used in day-to-day discussions in schools.

All of the above demonstrate that teacherpreneurship as an educational phenomenon is at the initial stage of development. This point of view is also confirmed by low user awareness of teacherpreneurship, low level of communication between sellers and buyers, lack of entrepreneurial skills, and collaboration among sellers. Moreover, compared with western research, the study participants reported a much smaller number of the projects and digital platforms developed for teacherpreneurs and a small number of teacherpreneurs themselves. The conclusion to be made is that the concept of teacherpreneurship has been introduced very recently in Kazakhstan and CIS region and therefore it is unrealistic to expect teachers to grasp both the financial and professional benefits of this activity. As more

teachers will engage in this activity, the understanding about its many benefits will spread across the country and region.

### **Implications and Recommendations**

As discussed above, the prevailing perception about teacherpreneurship being a business activity only may negatively influence teachers and further development of this educational activity in Kazakhstan and the CIS region. It may deprive teachers of other crucial aspects of the entrepreneurial approach, such as introducing innovative solutions in education, piloting educational projects, facilitating teacher agency, and collaborating with outside agencies, including corporate, governmental, and non-governmental sectors. Moreover, it may form a wrong attitude in the society and professional community towards teacherpreneurs as being money-chasers or financially-driven educators. Therefore, it is very important that teachers, educators and other members of the teaching community must understand the professional benefits and opportunities that teacherpreneurship can offer for finding innovative local solutions to educational problems.

However, the fact that study participants have a positive attitude toward engaging in teacherpreneurship gives the opportunities for further development. It increases the chances of the success of projects and reforms aimed at developing teacherpreneurship, which could motivate educators and decision-makers to pay attention to that concept and deeper study the nature of teacherpreneurship, tools that could be used for its development and values that underlie it.

Nevertheless, being involved in teacherpreneurial activities only in the format of selling and buying educational products may narrow the practice of teacherpreneurship to its entrepreneurial side. Moreover, if teachers do not expand their understanding of teacherpreneurship, develop their teacherpreneurial skills, and improve collaboration with

other teacher-sellers and customers, the teacherpreneurship phenomenon may remain obscure and unpopular approach in education field.

Taking into account the research findings and possible implications I would recommend to take the following steps:

1. The policymakers and schools may develop a comprehensive policy and guidelines to ensure that both sellers and buyers follow a legal and ethical framework while engaging in teacherpreneurship. There must be check-and-balance on the quality, relevance, and prices of educational materials to be placed in the online platform / marketplace.
2. Publicly discuss the essence of teacherpreneurship phenomenon with education community and other stakeholders through social networks, media, blogs by involving practicing teacherpreneurs.
3. Create the concept for the development of teacherpreneurship phenomenon among school teachers on a state level
4. Sponsor teacherpreneurial initiatives such as creation of online courses, development of educational materials, launching educational startups etc. It is also possible to allow schools purchase resources developed by teacherpreneurs in order to cover ordinary teachers' spendings on platforms such as Teacherslab.kz
5. Launch incubation and acceleration programs for teachers who want to join the world of teacherpreneurship by analogue with startup incubators.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

The primary constraint of the current research is the research site and study participants that were represented only by users of the Teacherslab.kz platform. Consequently, all the findings and conclusions about the teacherpreneurship phenomenon were based on the data reported by this limited group of educators. However, with a high probability, many teachers who do

not register on Teacherslab.kz marketplace but involve in teacherpreneurship stated outside the focus of this study.

Furthermore, study participants may be prejudiced towards the advantages and disadvantages of teacherpreneurship because they are directly involved in it through the marketplace and are personally interested in the success of this digital platform, while it is fair to say that this applies to a greater extent to teacher-sellers.

Moreover, the lack of research about teacherpreneurship in the CIS context and internationally limited the number of sources used within literature review and discussion chapters. In addition, the qualitative evidence from interviews was interpreted from my personal views as an educator and researcher. However, it is possible that other researchers may interpret these findings from different perspectives. At the same time, I used only descriptive statistics to report the results of the quantitative part without reliability testing or other methods of analysis.

There are several possible directions for the future research investigating teacherpreneurship in CIS context. For instance, future researcher could explore the influence of teacherpreneurial approaches implemented by teacherpreneurs on their students and teaching performance. Furthermore, future research may expand the current study by addressing broader audience of educators do not limiting it by one particular website. In addition, future researchers could also investigate the quality of resources developed by teacherpreneurs.

## **Conclusion**

To sum up, the study results indicate that in the CIS countries, there is a sufficient number of prerequisites for the development of teacherpreneurship, including an appropriate level of approval from colleagues and society, the desire to practice entrepreneurial approaches, and the belief that teacherpreneurship can positively influence their pedagogical activities.

Despite the fact that the teacherpreneurship concept remains under-researched and little-known among the education community, it has great potential for further development.

Furthermore, the current study also enhanced my understanding of teacherpreneurship as I engaged in constant reflection on the empirical data obtained in this study as well as the review of previous research studies. On a par with this, research findings got me thinking about the pathways for developing teacherpreneurship on existing teacherpreneurial models such as classroom, consultant, and business teacherpreneurship. It seems that the marketplace mechanic separately can serve as a tool for promoting only the consultant model of teacherpreneurship. At the same time, to develop this phenomenon as a holistic concept, there is a need to introduce a diverse set of tools aimed to develop teacherpreneurship, some of which could be seen in the recommendations section. Therefore, after conducting this research, I will diversify my practices to develop teacherpreneurship involving more educators and other stakeholders.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Survey Informed Consent Form

Title of Study: Perceptions and attitudes towards online teacherpreneurship through the prism of sellers' and buyers' experience on Teacherslab.kz

Researcher: Adlet Yeleussov, student in MSc in Educational Leadership program  
Nazarbayev University, Graduate School of Education (NUGSE)

#### **Purpose of Study and Informed Consent**

**Introduction.** You are invited to participate in this Online Survey for a research study being conducted by me. This survey is a first instrument used in this study to explore the perceptions and attitudes of Teacherslab users towards the online teacherpreneurship — a phenomenon that is gradually developing in Kazakhstan, Russia and other countries in the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) region.

**Procedures.** Participation is entirely voluntary. The survey will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

**Risks.** There are no known risks. Completing this survey will have no negative implications for your professional career or your relationships with your employers and your registration and role in the Teacherslab. The survey is anonymous: it will not ask for your name and affiliation. You are also free to skip any question you do not want to answer.

**Benefits.** The main benefit for you will be the opportunity to share your experiences, views, reflections and suggestions on the topic of this study. Your answers will contribute to extending the understanding of the online teacherpreneurship and its possible benefits for teachers' professional development and education in general.

**Compensation.** Participants will not be offered any payment, however all participants of the online survey will get a link to download one paid educational resource free to reciprocate their time. The link will be available on the screen at the end of the survey. A copy of the research results will be made available to the participants upon conclusion of the study.

**Confidentiality & Privacy.** Information obtained during this study will be kept confidential to the fullest extent possible. All efforts, within reason, will be made to keep the survey data confidential. The survey will be anonymous and hosted on Qualtrics. I will NOT ask for any details that can be used to identify participants by name or affiliation. Only the researcher and his supervisor will have access to the Qualtrics data.

**PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS:** If you have read this form and decided to participate in this survey, you understand your participation is strictly voluntary. You have the right to withdraw your consent or stop the survey at any time without penalty or loss of any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions.

**Points of contact.** If you have any questions or comments regarding this project, you can contact me at [adlet.yeleussov@nu.edu.kz](mailto:adlet.yeleussov@nu.edu.kz), +7 707 496 9313, or my thesis supervisor, *Dr. Mir Afzal*, at +7 747 527 6816, [afzal.mir@nu.edu.kz](mailto:afzal.mir@nu.edu.kz). 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 NU Institutional Research Ethics Committee at [resethics@nu.edu.kz](mailto:resethics@nu.edu.kz).

#### **Statement of Consent**

By clicking "I agree" below you are indicating that you are 18 years old or older, have read and understood this consent form and agree to participate in this research study. If you click "I Disagree", this survey will end here.

## Appendix B

### Interview Informed Consent Form

Title of Study: Perceptions and attitudes towards online teacherpreneurship through the prism of sellers' and buyers' experience on Teacherslab.kz

Researcher: Adlet Yeleussov, student in MSc in Educational Leadership program  
Nazarbayev University, Graduate School of Education (NUGSE)

#### Purpose of Study and Informed Consent

**Introduction.** You are invited to participate in the online interview for a research study being conducted by me. This interview is a second instrument used in this study to explore the perceptions and attitudes of Teacherslab users towards the online teacherpreneurship — a phenomenon that is gradually developing in Kazakhstan, Russia and other countries in the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) region. Specifically, this study will investigate how platform users, who are actively involved in developing, selling, buying teaching materials and other educational products and services, perceive the online teacherpreneurship, its advantages and disadvantages in their professional careers.

**Procedures.** Participation is entirely voluntary. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes to complete. The interview will be conducted using the Zoom software. The researcher will be making audio and video recordings of the interview, with prior permission of the participants.

**Risks.** There are no known risks. Participating in this interview will have no negative implications for your professional career, or your relationships with your employers. Some of the interview questions may remind participants of their negative experience of engaging in teacherpreneurial activities and cause psychological discomfort. However, this discomfort is unlikely to be greater than those ordinarily encountered in their daily life are. To eliminate this stress you are reassured that your responses will not be judged or criticized and your personal identity will be protected. Interview participants could also feel a slight discomfort when they will be asked about their motivation to become a teacherpreneurs especially the financial aspect and its role in their decision to engage in teacherpreneurship. In order, to mitigate those risks the researcher will remind the participants of confidentiality procedures that are implemented in the study. The risks will be avoided by using pseudonyms instead of the real name and locations. You are also free to skip any question you do not want to answer and to stop the interview. In that case, no data gathered from them prior to their decision to leave the study will be included in the study results.

**Benefits.** The main benefit for you will be the opportunity to share your experiences, views, reflections and suggestions on the topic of this study. Your answers will contribute to extending the understanding of the online teacherpreneurship and its possible benefits for teachers' professional development and education in general.

**Compensation.** Participants will not be offered any payment, however all participants of the interviews will get a link to download one paid educational resource free to reciprocate their time. A copy of the research results will be made available to the participants upon conclusion of the study.

**Confidentiality & Privacy.** Participation in the online interview will not be anonymous; video and audio recordings will be done during the interview. However, all interviews will be conducted in a one-to-one format, no one except the researcher and his supervisor will have access to these records. All interview data will be kept confidential in an electronic folder on the researcher's password-protected computer. The researcher will assign pseudonyms to data from these interviews to ensure the confidentiality of individual participants; their real names will not be recorded during the

interviews. Confidentiality will be guaranteed to the participants to the extent possible and allowed by the law. The same measures as discussed above will be taken to ensure confidentiality of the participants and data in any presentation and publication made from this study.

**PARTICIPANT’S RIGHTS:** If you have read this form and decided to participate in this interview, you understand your participation is strictly voluntary. You have the right to withdraw your consent or stop the interview at any time without penalty or loss of any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions.

**Points of contact.** If you have any questions or comments regarding this project, you can contact me at [adlet.yeleussov@nu.edu.kz](mailto:adlet.yeleussov@nu.edu.kz), +7 707 496 9313, or my thesis supervisor, *Dr. Mir Afzal*, at +7 747 527 6816, [afzal.mir@nu.edu.kz](mailto:afzal.mir@nu.edu.kz). 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 NU Institutional Research Ethics Committee at [resethics@nu.edu.kz](mailto:resethics@nu.edu.kz).

### Statement of Consent

By signing this form you are indicating that you are 18 years old or older, have read and understood this consent form and agree to participate in this research study.

Name of the participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

### Online Survey Email Invitation

Dear Teacherslab.kz users,

Our colleague and active member of the Teacherslab community – Adlet Yeleussov is a master's student of the Graduate School of Education at Nazarbayev University. He decided to conduct his master thesis study about the online teacherpreneurship in order to discover Teacherslab users' perceptions and attitudes towards it. There is his appeal to you:

More than a year has passed since the launch of the Teacherslab online marketplace that gives all of us the opportunity to sell and buy original educational resources developed by experienced teachers and educators. The concept that underlies the Teacherslab platform is an online teacherpreneurship. This phenomenon started to spread from the US in 2006 when there was launched the first online marketplace for teachers. However, it is still under researched topic in Kazakhstan, Russia, and other CIS countries.

I am reaching out to all of you because you are innovative, outstanding, and creative educators registered in the Teacherslab.kz. Would you be able to help by voluntarily participating in my research? Participation involves taking an online survey only. You will be contributing to an exciting new area of research, as there is limited discussion of teacherpreneurship in academic scholarship to date. This study is going to change that.

**Why Teacherslab users?** You are one of the first teachers who get involved in online teacherpreneurship in CIS countries through the specific online marketplace. I believe you will have particularly unique, thoughtful insights and rich experiences to share. Your survey responses would be kept anonymous. We will not ask for any identifying information, such as your name or any specific details that someone could use to identify you. The results will be shared in my master thesis and may be published as an academic article.

**Ready to participate in the online survey?** Use the link bellow to open the survey page, and please pay attention to the informed consent form that you need to accept in order to participate in a survey (will be showed after you open the survey link).

I know teachers are busy this time of year, so I really appreciate your consideration!

Looking forward to talking with you soon.

Best,

Adlet Yeleussov

## Appendix D

### Interview Email Invitation

Dear [NAME],

My name is Adlet Yeleussov, and I am a master's student of the Graduate School of Education at Nazarbayev University. I decided to conduct my master thesis study about the online teacherpreneurship in order to discover Teacherslab users' perceptions and attitudes towards it.

More than a year has passed since the launch of the Teacherslab online marketplace that gives all of us the opportunity to sell and buy original educational resources developed by experienced teachers and educators. The concept that underlies the Teacherslab platform is an online teacherpreneurship. This phenomenon started to spread from the US in 2006 when there was launched the first online marketplace for teachers. However, it is still under researched topic in Kazakhstan, Russia, and other CIS countries.

I am reaching out to all of you because you are innovative, outstanding, and creative educators registered in the Teacherslab.kz. Would you be able to help by voluntarily participating in my research? Participation involves only a one-time Zoom discussion with me. You will be contributing to an exciting new area of research, as there is limited discussion of teacherpreneurship in academic scholarship to date. This study is going to change that. The study is limited to only 3 participants, so you have been chosen with great care.

**Why you?** Your work as a Teacherslab author is outstanding. I believe you will have particularly unique, thoughtful insights and rich experiences to share. Your interview responses would be kept confidential. We will not use any identifying information, such as your name, Teacherslab store name, or any specific details that someone could use to identify you. The results will be shared in my master thesis and may be published as an academic article.

**Any questions?** I'm happy to chat more before you agree to participate, just shoot me a reply email. Also, check out the study consent form for more details (attached).

**Ready to set up our interview?** Reply with two possible dates and times that are convenient for you, between \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. I know teachers are busy this time of year, so I really appreciate your consideration!

Looking forward to talking with you soon.

Best,

Adlet Yeleussov

## Appendix E

### Online Survey

<b>User profile (2 questions)</b>		
Please indicate the type of your account on Teacherslab.kz	Teacher-seller	Ordinary user
How long have you been registered with Teacherslab?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less than one month</li> <li>• 1-6 months</li> <li>• 6 – 12 months</li> </ul>	
<b>Teacher Background (3 questions)</b>		
How many total years' experience do you have as an educator?	Open-ended	
What best describes your current employment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full time at a school</li> <li>• Part time at a school</li> <li>• Retired teacher</li> <li>• Not currently employed at a school (Please describe)</li> </ul>	
What kind of professional degree or certification do you have?	Open-ended	
<b>Demographics (4 questions)</b>		
What country do you currently live in?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kazakhstan</li> <li>• Russia</li> <li>• Other (please specify)</li> </ul>	
What is your age in years?	Open-ended	
Please indicate your gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Male</li> <li>• Female</li> </ul>	
What is the highest degree you have earned?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less than bachelor's</li> <li>• Bachelor's</li> <li>• Master's</li> <li>• Doctoral</li> </ul>	
<b>General understanding of the online teacherpreneurship (4 questions)</b>		
Are you familiar with the term teacherpreneur (it is a combination of two English words: teacher and entrepreneur)?	Yes	No
Which of these definitions is closer to your understanding of the term 'teacherpreneur'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacherpreneurs are private tutors who provide one-on-one and group educational assistance to school students or to adults</li> <li>• Teacherpreneurs are former teachers who have their own educational business such as private kindergarten, school or educational center</li> <li>• Teacherpreneurs are current or former teachers who create products, services and often share and sell them through the use of digital platforms.</li> </ul>	

All Teacherslab sellers who have uploaded paid resources could be considered as teacherpreneurs	Yes	No			
How do you understand the term online teacherpreneurship, please give your own definition of this term	Open-ended				
<b>Perceptions and attitudes towards teacherpreneurship (10 questions)</b>					
<i>To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?</i>					
	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Mostly Agree	Strongly agree
Currently, there are enough online services that can help the teacher to have additional income in the field of education					
It is easy for a teacher to start monetizing their professional skills and become an online teacherpreneur					
My competencies are enough to establish an online sale of my original educational materials, online courses, consultations					
I have enough skills to engage in marketing promotion of my educational products					
Entrepreneurial skills can help me improve my teaching performance					
Colleagues and society are positive about the fact that teachers additionally monetize their professional skills					
Educators should always distribute their teaching materials for free to other teachers					
Entrepreneurial values are incompatible with educational values					
In my opinion, among online teacherpreneurs, there are very frequent cases of plagiarism					
Teacherpreneurs should not use their work hours at school to develop their paid products and services					
<b>Advantages and disadvantages of the teacherpreneurship (11 questions)</b>					
<i>To what extent do, you agree or disagree with the following statements?</i>					
	Strongly	Somewhat	Somewhat	Mostly	Strongly

	disagree	disagree	agree	Agree	y agree
Teacherpreneurs create unique and useful educational resources for teachers and students					
It is better sometimes to buy an educational material instead of developing it by yourself					
Ready to use educational resources help to lessen teachers' loads					
Teacherpreneurs better understand needs of classroom teachers compare to private publishers and providers					
Teacherpreneurship helps to promote teachers' personal brand					
Teacherpreneurship helps to increase teachers' income					
Online teacherpreneurs motivate me to try new approaches in teaching.					
Teacherpreneurship shifts the teachers' focus from the education to income generation					
Teacherpreneurs often violate copyrights					
The education resources developed by teacherpreneurs often a low quality materials					
Teacherpreneurship may cause a teacher to leave school because he/she started earning more than the school salary					
<b>User experience. Questions for teacher-sellers (7 questions)</b>					
In just a few words, what motivates you to sell educational materials on Teacherslab?	Open-ended				
How many teaching materials have you uploaded on Teacherlab?	Open-ended				
What is your total income on Teacherslab? (in tenge)	Open-ended				
What is the number of free downloads of your resources on Teacherslab?	Open-ended				
Do you sell (or have you sold) your educational materials on websites other than Teacherslab?	Yes (Please list websites)			No	
Do you currently engage in other entrepreneurial efforts (not counting your work on Teacherslab)?	Yes (Please describe)			No	
What characteristics of educational materials	Open-ended				

do you think are important to your customers?					
<b>Practices of teacher-sellers (10 questions)</b>					
<i>Tell us about what you do as a teacher-seller?</i>					
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	All the time
I share education ideas on social media (e.g. Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest).					
Before I sell my original materials, I put them to the test in the classroom.					
I communicate with teachers who use my Teacherslab products via personal email, messages, phone calls, etc					
I collaborate with my peers in social networks (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest).					
I facilitate my own online community for teachers.					
I work with other Teacherslab sellers, teachers-bloggers to create content to share on Teacherslab, blogs, and/or social media.					
I work with other Teacherslab sellers to promote each other					
I study business strategies					
I work to develop my business skills					
I'm looking for someone to mentor me so that I can learn more about business.					
<b>Challenges (4 questions)</b>					
<i>Tell us about your professional challenges</i>					
	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Mostly Agree	Strongly agree
Keeping up with the latest trends in online teacherpreneurship is difficult for me.					
I find it difficult to do all that comes with being an online teacherpreneur, such as developing materials, promoting, and using social networks.					
I'm concerned about my chances of success on Teacherslab.					
As an online teacherpreneur, I'm worried about the quality of the materials and ideas I share.					

<b>Impact (6 questions)</b>					
<i>Tell us how online teacherpreneurship impacts your career</i>					
	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Mostly Agree	Strongly agree
Teacherpreneurship inspires me to introduce unique ideas in my classroom.					
Being an online teacherpreneur motivates me to look on education from a new angle.					
As an online teacherpreneur, I'm always looking for innovative ways to engage my students.					
I view myself a counsel to other educators who use my resources and ideas					
I encourage educators to explore teaching methods that I support.					
I want teachers to try new ideas that I value.					
<b>User experience. Questions for teacher-buyers (9 questions)</b>					
In just a few words, what motivates you to buy/download for free educational materials on Teacherslab?	Open-ended				
What kind of educational products did you buy/download?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online course / master-class</li> <li>• Printable educational resource (presentation, worksheet, tests, etc.)</li> <li>• Administrative document (sample of plans, reports, etc.)</li> <li>• Consultation</li> <li>• Nothing</li> <li>• Other (Please describe)</li> </ul>				
Are you satisfied with most of your purchases?	Yes	No	I did not buy		
How many teaching materials have you downloaded from Teacherlab?	Open-ended				
What is your total spending on Teacherslab? (in tenge)	Open-ended				
Do you buy (or have you bought) educational materials on websites other than Teacherslab?	Yes (Please list websites)			No	
Did any of the sellers on Teacherslab contact you after you bought/download his/her materials?	Yes			No	
Do you plan to register a seller account on Teacherslab?	Yes			No	
What characteristics of educational materials are important to your as a customer?	Open-ended				
<b>Practices of teacher-buyers (9 questions)</b>					

<i>To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?</i>					
	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Mostly Agree	Strongly agree
I trust teacherpreneurs more than educational companies in terms of quality of the products and services					
I do not experience many difficulties in use of educational online platforms, applications and particularly Teacherslab marketplace					
I often modify teaching materials that I buy or download from Teacherslab or other platforms					
I believe that in most cases the price of educational materials on Teacherslab is fair					
I believe that it is normal for teachers to spend their own money for buying additional teaching resources for students or for themselves					
I will buy the resources even with simple design if the content will be high quality					
I always read comments and testimonials from other teachers before buying an educational product					
I believe that more teachers should start to sell their educational products					
I believe that the school should pay for the purchase of additional educational resources					
<b>End of Survey</b>					
Thank you for participating in this survey. There is a link to download free educational resource: ""					

## Appendix F

### Interview Protocol

#### Interview Questions

##### Background:

1. How long have you been registered with Teacherslab?
2. What country do you currently live in?
3. How old are you?
4. What is the highest degree you have earned?
5. Tell me a little about your professional background as an educator - your education, classroom experience, work experience, etc.
6. How many total years' experience do you have as an educator?
7. Did you work as a classroom teacher this last school year (2019-2020)? If so, tell me a little bit about your school, your students, and work duties.
8. What kind of professional degree or certification do you have?
9. If you did not work as a classroom teacher, tell me about your work situation this past school year.

##### General understanding of teacherpreneurship phenomenon:

10. How do you understand the term teacherpreneurship?
11. What is your general attitude towards the teacherpreneurship?
12. Can you call yourself a teacherpreneur? If "no" - How would you describe yourself if someone asks what kind of teacher are you?

##### Teacherpreneur Experience:

13. When did you get started on Teacherslab?
14. Why did you get started on Teacherslab?
15. How you came up with an idea to share your teaching materials with colleagues?
16. How many teaching materials have you uploaded on Teacherlab?
17. What is your total income on Teacherslab? (in tenge)
18. What is the number of free downloads of your resources on Teacherslab?
19. Do you sell (or have you sold) your educational materials on websites other than Teacherslab?
20. Do you currently engage in other entrepreneurial efforts (not counting your work on Teacherslab)?
21. Can you briefly share what you do now as a teacherpreneur?
22. What have been some of your biggest benefits as a teacherpreneur?
23. What have been some of your biggest challenges as a teacherpreneur regarding marketing, materials developing, managing your time and other activities connected with teacherpreneurship?
24. How teacherpreneurship influence teachers and school education overall?
25. Could you describe your feelings or emotions when other teachers download your materials?
26. What do sales and buyer feedback mean for you as a teacherpreneur?
27. What kind of feedback did you receive concerning your materials?
28. How do you think what are the factors that influence customers' decision to buy/download your teaching resources?
29. How did you get competencies and skills to develop and sell original teaching materials?

##### Controversies:

30. One concern about teacher-created materials is that they lack consistent quality. Can you speak to this?

31. Another concern is that teacherpreneurs are profiting from fellow teachers. What do you think about this? How do you personally feel about charging the money from colleagues for teaching materials?
32. Can you talk about your experience with collaboration and competition among your teacherpreneur peers?
33. Overall, how has your teacherpreneur experience influenced your career goals and trajectory as an educator?

**Appendix G**

**Diagrams. General Understanding of the Teacherpreneurship**

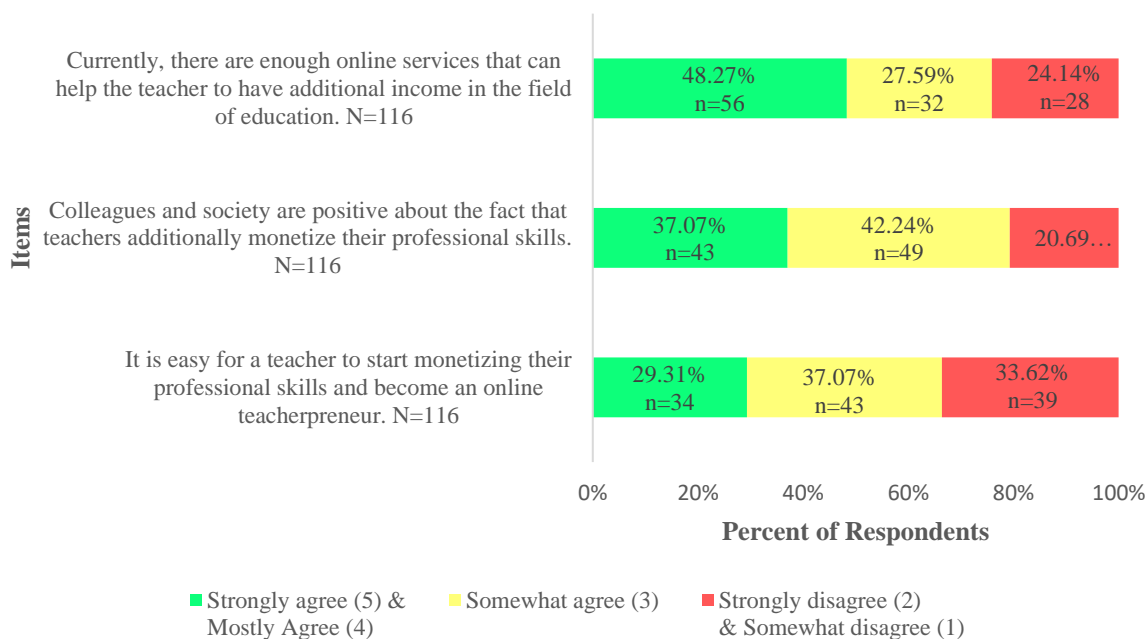


Figure G1. Percentage of respondents by ratings of items addressing conditions

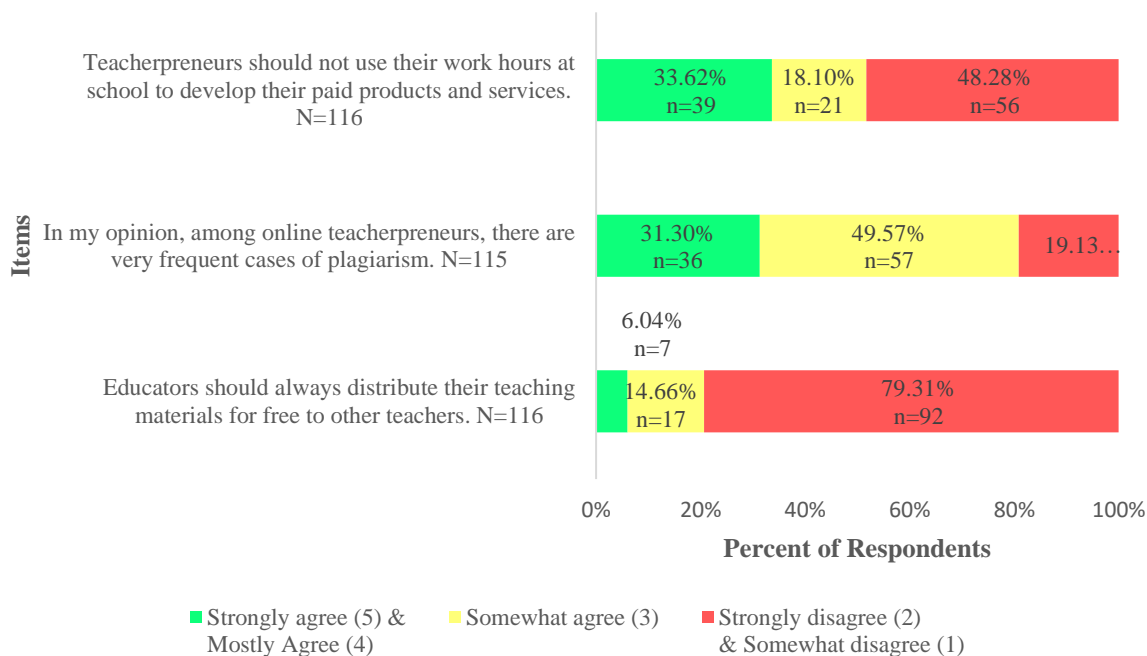


Figure G2. Percentage of respondents by ratings of items addressing stereotypes

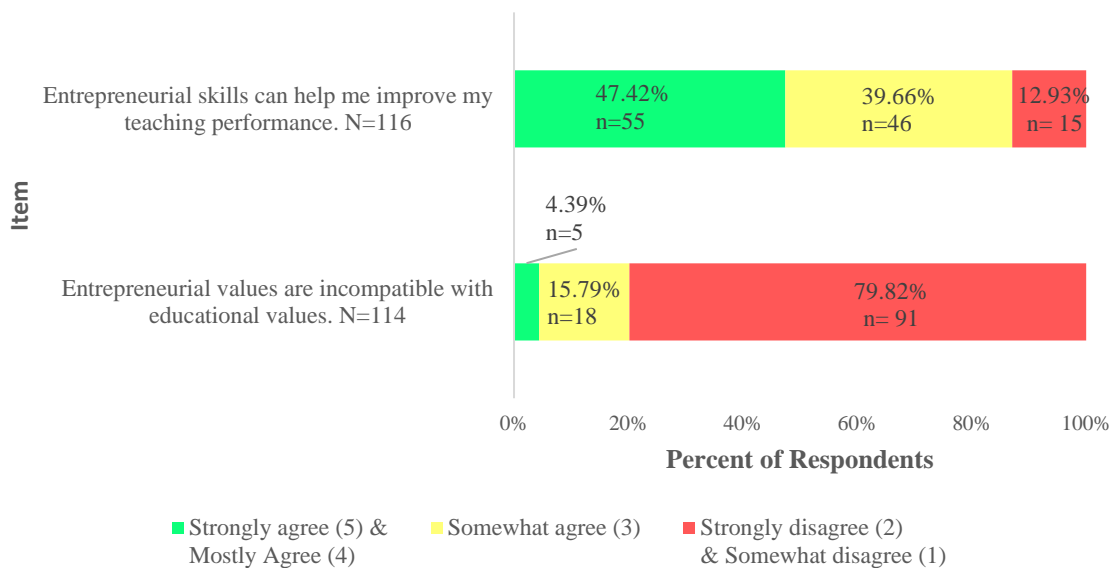


Figure G3. Percentage of respondents by ratings of items addressing compatibility with education values

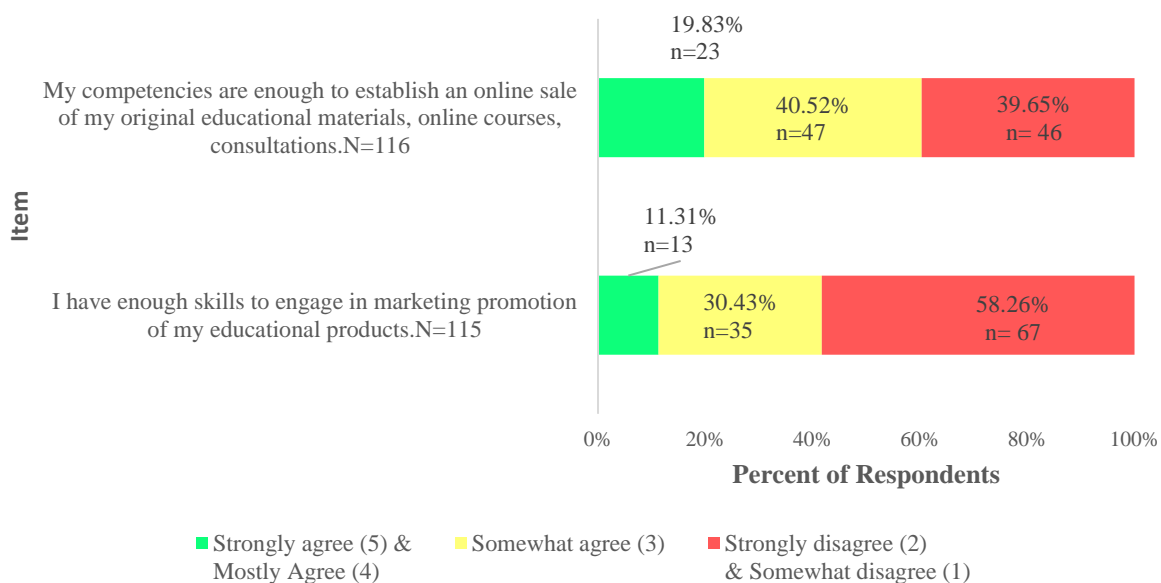


Figure G4. Percentage of respondents by ratings of items addressing readiness

**Appendix H**

**Diagrams. Advantages and Disadvantages of the Teacherpreneurship**

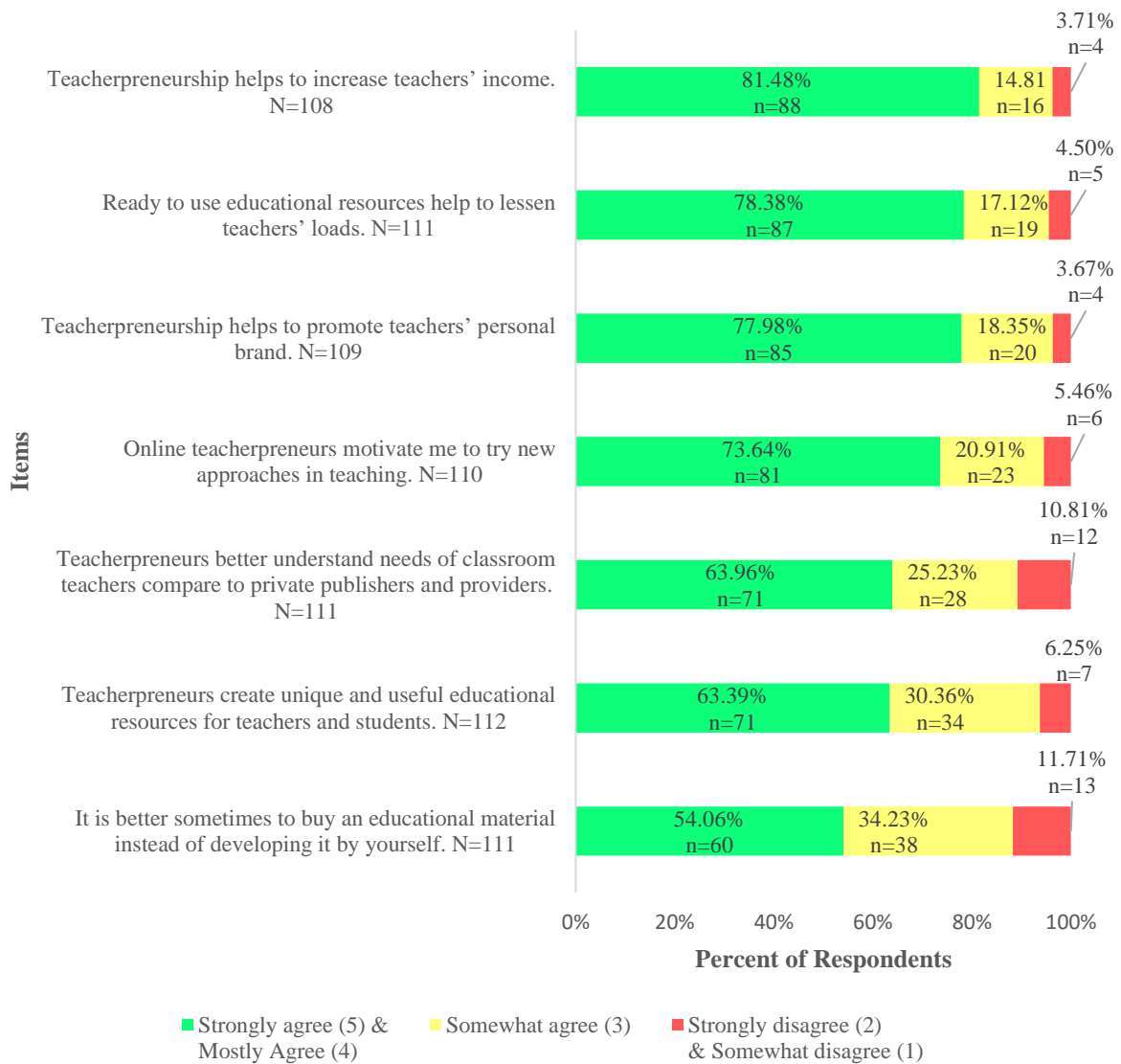


Figure H1. Percentage of respondents by ratings of items addressing advantages

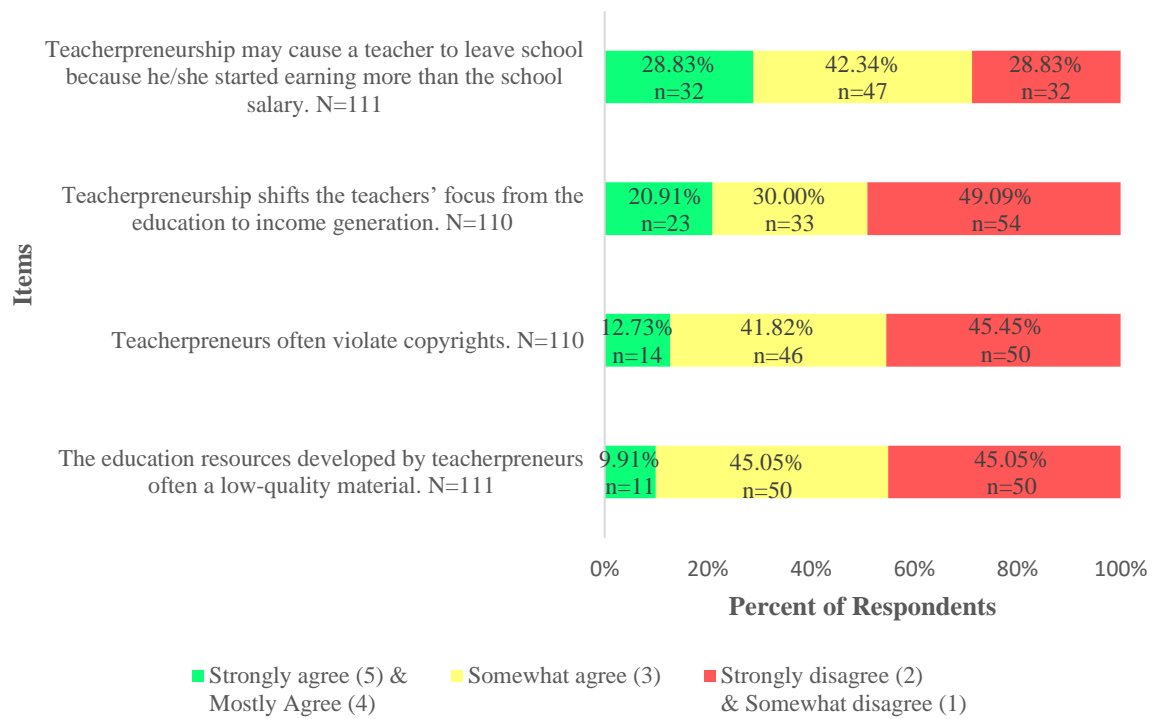


Figure H2. Percentage of respondents by ratings of items addressing disadvantages

**Appendix I**

**Diagrams. Teacher-Sellers Experience of Engaging in Teacherpreneurship**

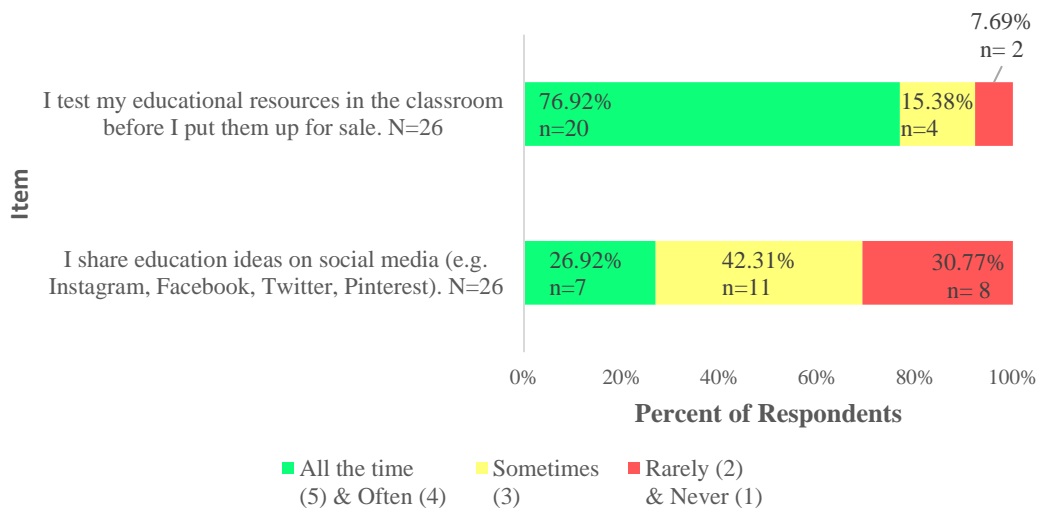


Figure I1. Percentage of respondents by ratings of items addressing creating resources

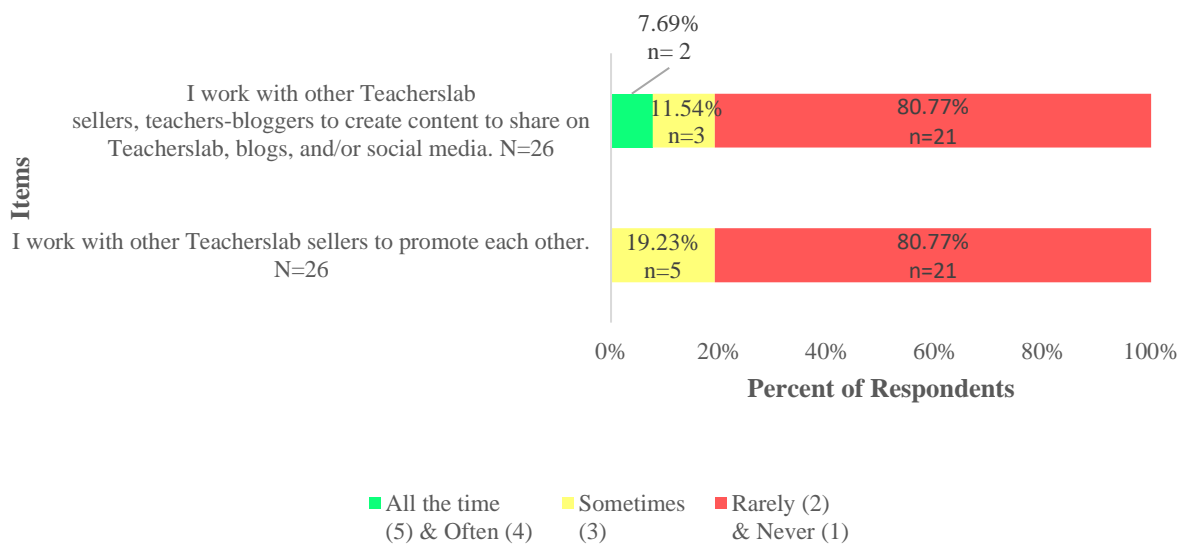


Figure I2. Percentage of respondents by ratings of items addressing collaborating with online teacherpreneurs

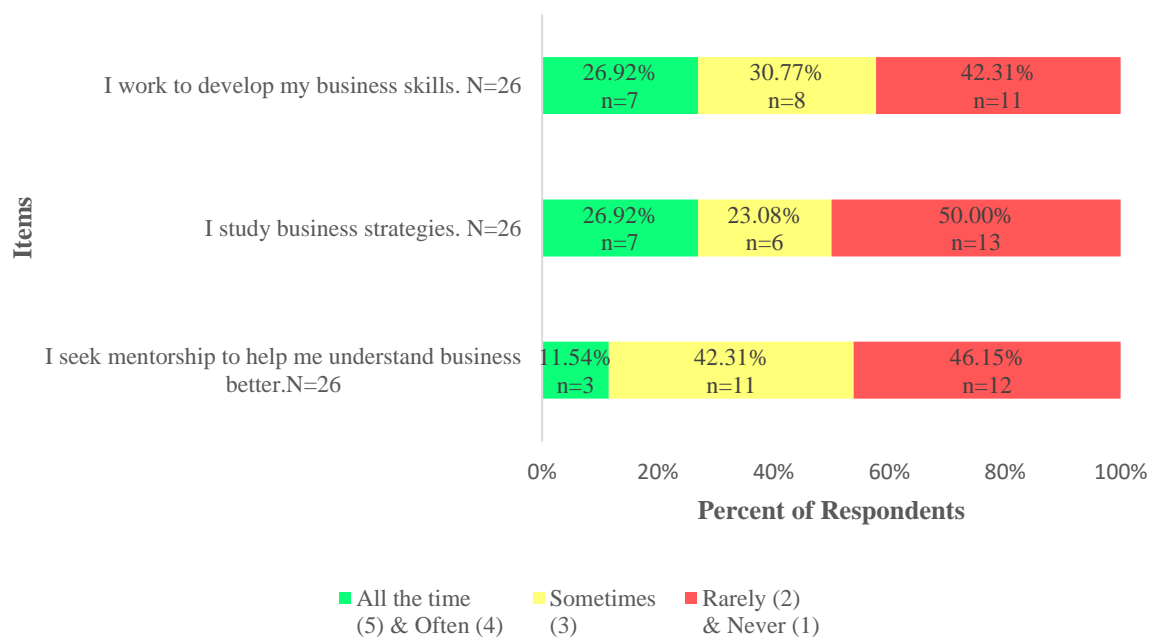


Figure I3. Percentage of respondents by ratings of items addressing entrepreneurship

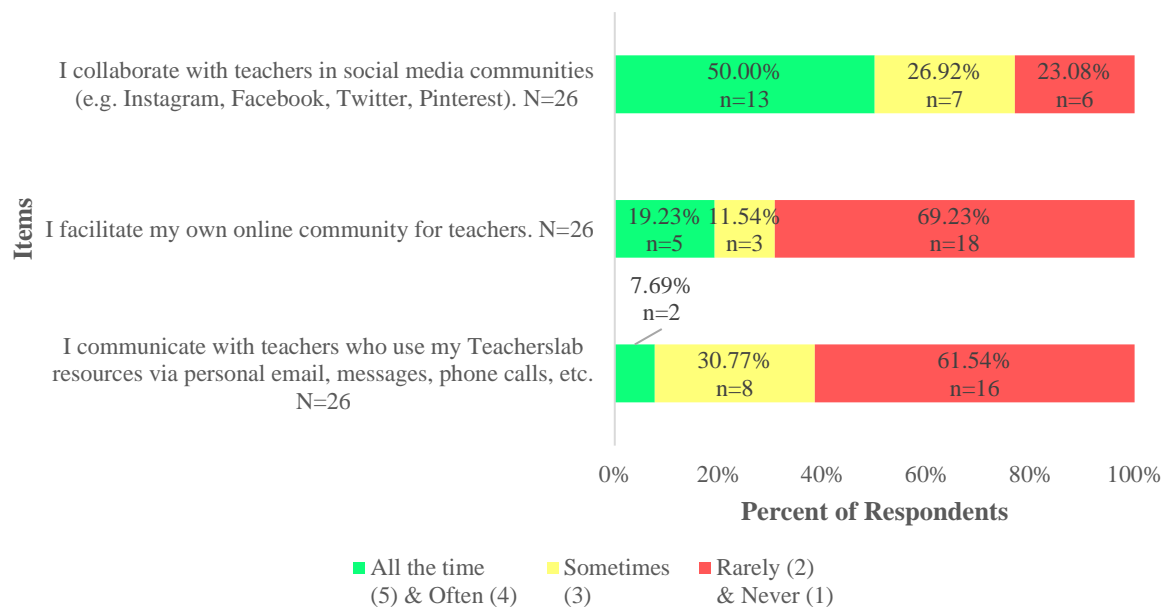


Figure I4. Percentage of respondents by ratings of items addressing collaborating with teachers

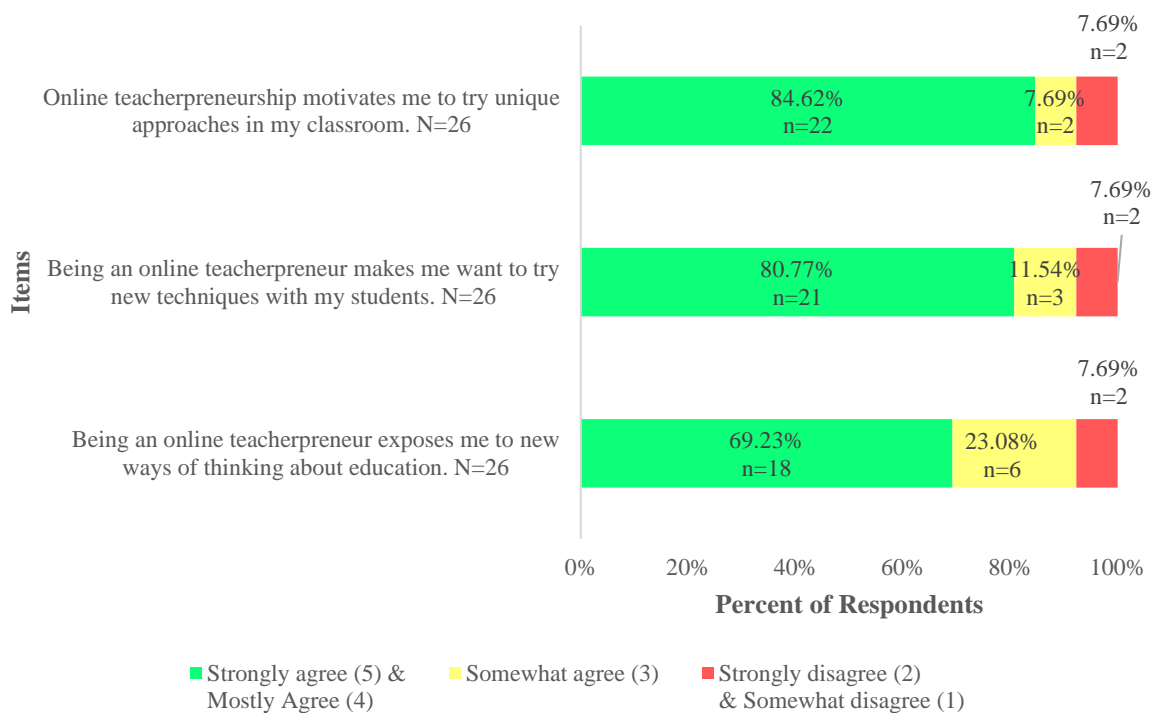


Figure I5. Percentage of respondents by ratings of items addressing teaching practice

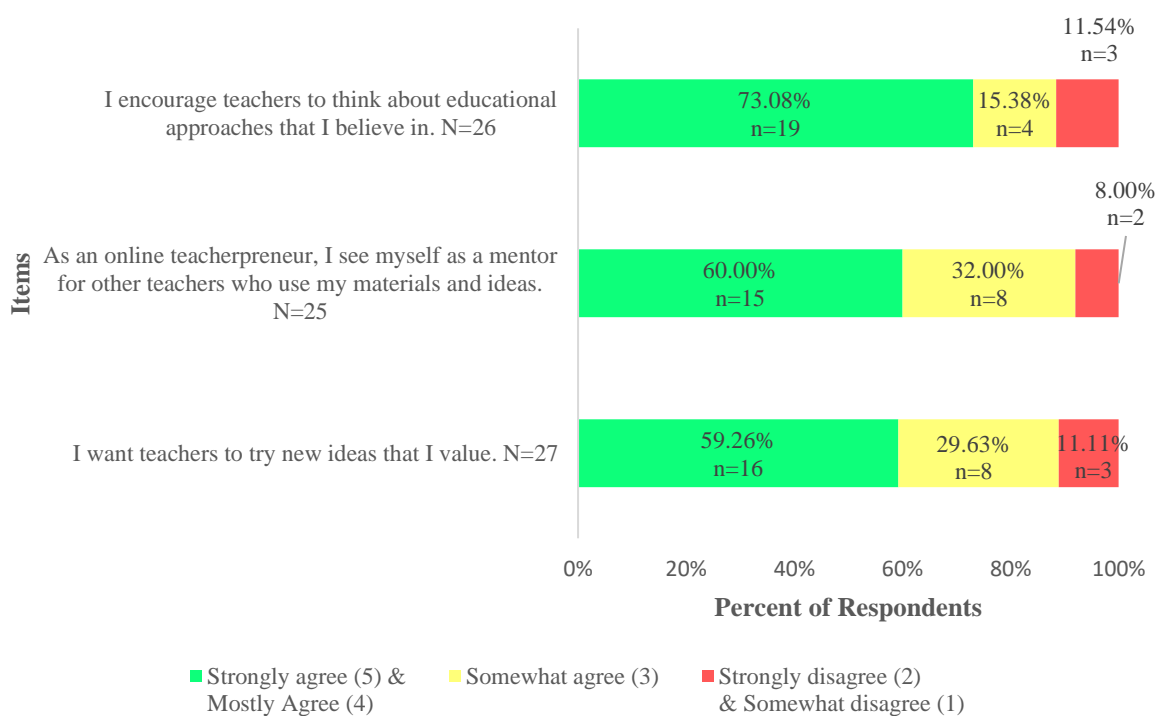


Figure I6. Percentage of respondents by ratings of items addressing leadership impacts

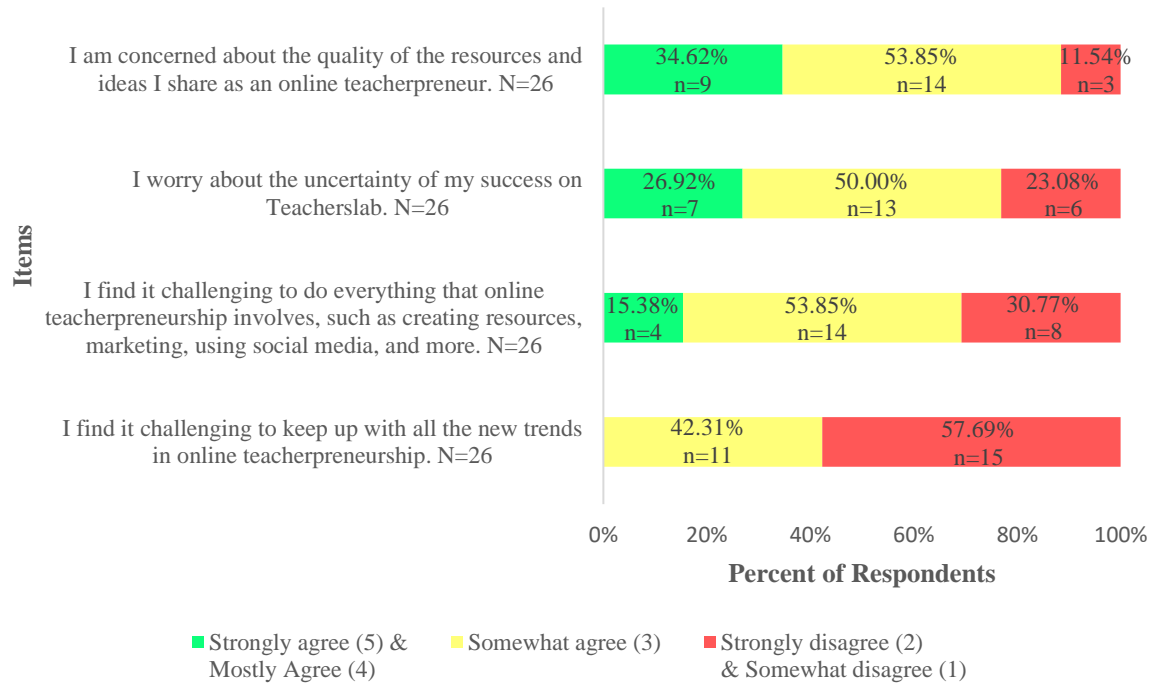
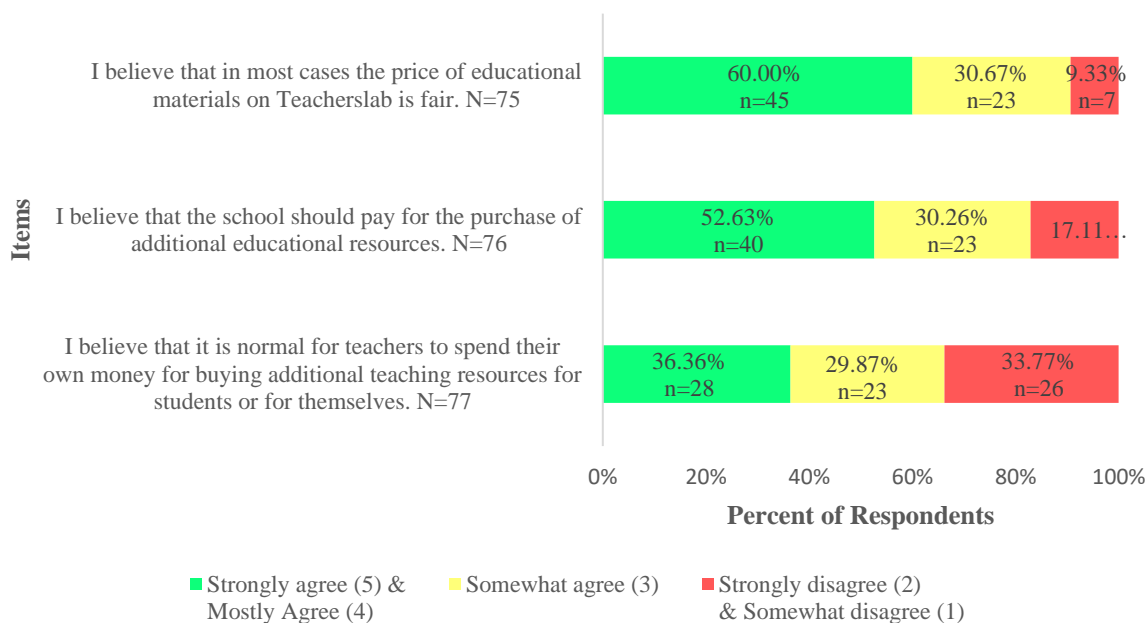


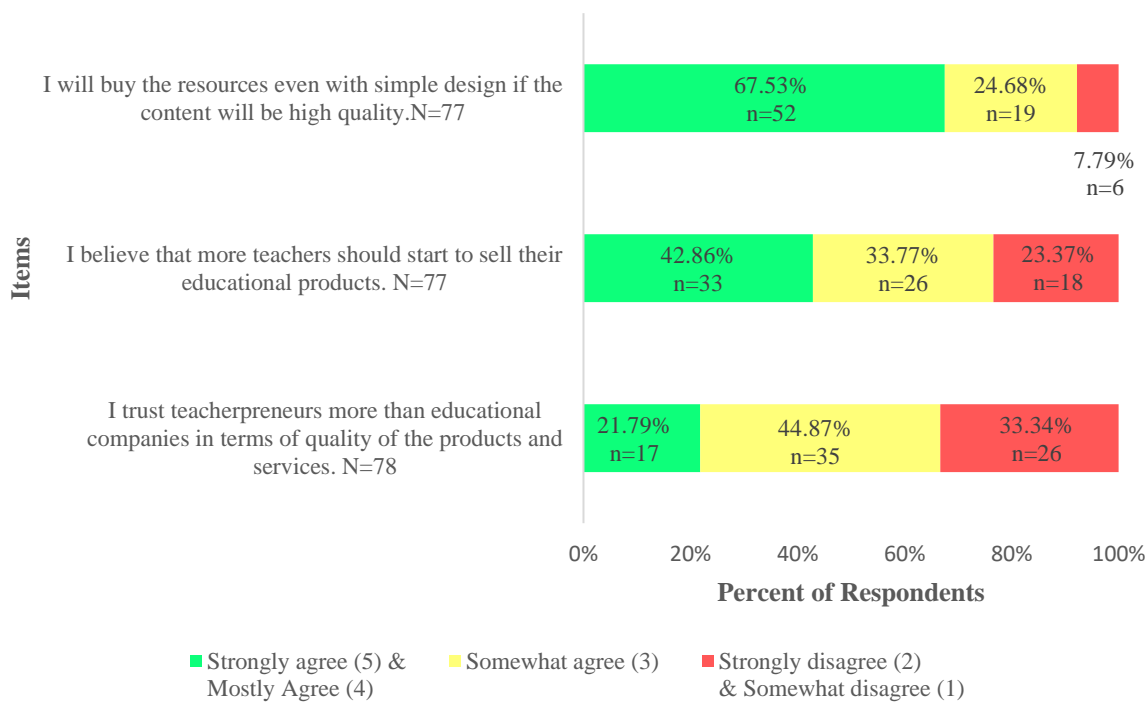
Figure 17. Percentage of respondents by ratings of items addressing professional stress

**Appendix J**

**Diagrams. Teacher-Buyers Experience of Engaging in Teacherpreneurship**



**Figure J1. Percentage of respondents by ratings of items addressing readiness**



**Figure J2. Percentage of respondents by ratings of items addressing level of trust**

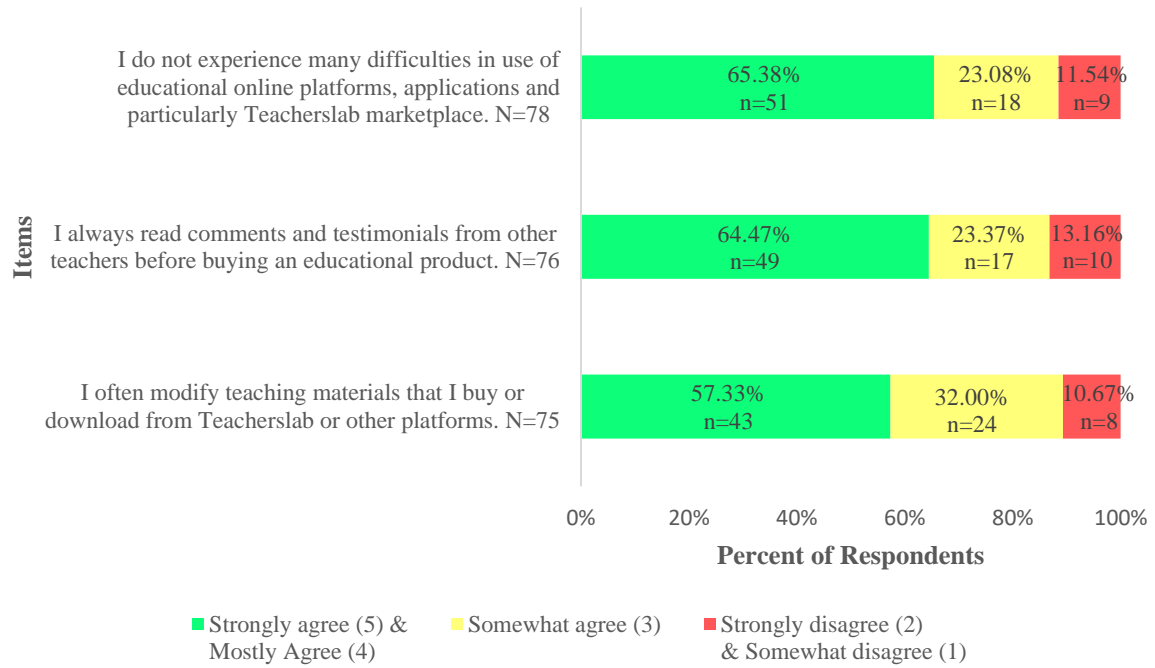


Figure J3. Percentage of respondents by ratings of items addressing buyers' experience