

**Understanding Teacher Perceptions and Experiences of Teacher Appraisal in a  
Mainstream Public School and a Private School in Astana, Kazakhstan: A Multiple  
Case Study**

Aksamal Yessengarina

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in

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Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education  
53 Kabanbay Batyr Ave. Astana 010000  
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To the attention of Aksamal Yessengarina, MSc in Educational Leadership Program

Dear Aksamal,

This letter confirms that your research project titled **“Understanding Teacher Perceptions and Experiences of Teacher Appraisal in a Mainstream Public School and a Private School in Astana, Kazakhstan: A Comparative Multiple Case Study”** has been approved by the Graduate School of Education Ethics Committee of Nazarbayev University. You may now proceed with your fieldwork and data collection as indicated in your ethics application. Please note that the NUGSE Institutional Research Ethics Committee must be contacted if there are any changes to the protocol during the period of your fieldwork.

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Best wishes for your research work!

Sincerely,

Kairat Kurakbayev, PhD  
Assistant Professor,  
Graduate School of Education, Nazarbayev University  
Block C3, Room M027  
Office Telephone: +7(7172) 70 66 07  
Email: [kkurakbayev@nu.edu.kz](mailto:kkurakbayev@nu.edu.kz)

On behalf of:

Syed Abdul Manan, PhD  
Associate Professor and Chair, Institutional Research Ethics Committee  
Graduate School of Education, Nazarbayev University  
Office Telephone: +7(7172) 70 60 16  
E-mail: [syed.manan@nu.edu.kz](mailto:syed.manan@nu.edu.kz), [gse.irec@nu.edu.kz](mailto:gse.irec@nu.edu.kz)



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Record ID 62953595

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**Aksamal Yessengarina**

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Being part of Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education has been an incredible opportunity, one for which I will always be grateful.

## **Abstract**

### **Understanding Teacher Perceptions and Experiences of Teacher Appraisal in a Mainstream Public School and a Private School in Astana, Kazakhstan: A Multiple Case Study**

Teacher appraisal is considered crucial for improving educational quality. Teacher appraisal can not only help tailor professional development for teachers and improve teaching quality, but also enhance the attractiveness of the teaching profession. Teacher appraisal serves two main purposes: teacher professional development, which takes a formative approach, and school improvement, which adopts a summative approach. For a comprehensive teacher appraisal to be effective, there must be a clear connection between these two purposes. However, in reality, the conflict between these two objectives of appraisal typically leads to one of the goals being prioritized, which negatively impacts the other. Research indicates that teacher appraisal is primarily used to hold teachers accountable for student outcomes rather than focusing on their individual professional development. This qualitative multiple case study aimed to understand teachers' perceptions of the teacher appraisal process in two school settings: a public and a private school. The research questions addressed teachers' understandings and interpretations of the teacher appraisal process and the factors that contribute to its effectiveness. The study's findings revealed that most teachers from both private and public schools view the teacher appraisal process negatively, perceiving it as a bureaucratic and administrative task meant to fulfill the external requirements. This perspective can be understood through the lens of performativity. Teachers expressed their concerns about the fairness issue, specifically the transparency of the teacher appraisal process, the emphasis on the outcomes and accountability-driven practices making it difficult to connect the appraisal process to their ongoing professional development. Therefore, this study emphasizes the need for more comprehensive teacher appraisal process.

**Keywords:** teacher appraisal, qualification categories, performativity, accountability, teacher professional development, public schools, private schools

## Аңдатпа

### **Астанадағы Жалпы Білім Беретін Мемлекеттік Мектепте Және Жекеменшік Мектепте Мұғалімдерді Аттестаттаудан Өткізу Кезінде Мұғалімдердің Қабылдауы мен Тәжірибесін Түсіну: Бірнеше Кейс Стади**

Мұғалімдерді аттестаттау білім беру сапасын арттырудың маңызды факторы болып саналады. Мұғалімдерді аттестаттау мұғалімдердің кәсіби дамуына және оқыту сапасын арттыруға ғана емес, сонымен қатар мұғалім мамандығының тартымдылығын арттыруға да көмектеседі. Мұғалімдерді аттестаттау екі негізгі мақсатқа қызмет етеді: формативті тәсілді қолданатын кәсіби даму және жиынтық тәсілді қолданатын мектепті жетілдіру. Мұғалімдерді кешенді аттестаттау тиімді болуы үшін осы екі мақсаттың арасында нақты байланыс болуы керек. Алайда, шын мәнінде, осы екі аттестаттау мақсатының арасындағы қақтығыс, әдетте, бір мақсаттың басымдыққа айналуына әкеледі, бұл екіншісіне теріс әсер етеді. Зерттеулер көрсеткендей, мұғалімдерді аттестаттау негізінен мұғалімдерге жеке кәсіби дамуына назар аудару үшін емес, оқушылардың нәтижелері үшін жауапкершілік жүктеу үшін қолданылады. Бұл зерттеудің мақсаты бірнеше кейс стади әдісін қолдану арқылы мұғалімдердің мемлекеттік және жеке мектепте педагогтерді аттестаттау процесін қабылдауын түсіну. Зерттеу сұрақтары мұғалімдердің аттестаттау процесін және оның тиімділігіне ықпал ететін факторларды түсінуі мен ұғынуына қатысты болды. Зерттеу нәтижелері көрсеткендей, мұғалімдердің көпшілігі мұғалімдерді аттестаттау процесіне теріс көзқараспен қарайды, оны сыртқы талаптарды орындауға арналған бюрократиялық және әкімшілік міндет ретінде қабылдайды. Бұл көзқарасты перформативтілік объективі арқылы түсінуге болады. Мұғалімдер әділеттілік мәселесіне, нәтижелерге баса назар аударуға және есеп беру тәжірибесіне алаңдаушылық білдірді, бұл бағалау

процесін олардың қазіргі кәсіби дамуымен байланыстыруды қиындатады. Осылайша, бұл зерттеу мұғалімдерді аттестаттаудың кешенді процесінің қажеттілігін көрсетеді.

***Түйінді сөздер:*** мұғалімдерді аттестаттау, біліктілік санаттары, орындаушылық, есептілік, мұғалімдердің кәсіби дамуы, мемлекеттік мектептер, жекеменшік мектептер

## Аннотация

### **Понимание Восприятия и Опыта Учителей При Проведении Аттестации Учителей в Общеобразовательной Государственной Школе и Частной Школе в Астане, Казахстан: Множественное Кейс Стади**

Аттестация учителей считается важнейшим фактором повышения качества образования. Аттестация учителей может не только помочь в профессиональном развитии учителей и повышении качества преподавания, но и повысить привлекательность профессии учителя. Аттестация учителей служит двум основным целям: профессиональному развитию, в котором используется формативный подход, и совершенствованию школы, в котором используется суммативный подход. Для того чтобы комплексная аттестация учителей была эффективной, между этими двумя целями должна быть четкая связь. Однако в реальности конфликт между этими двумя целями аттестации обычно приводит к тому, что одна из целей становится приоритетной, что негативно сказывается на другой. Исследования показывают, что аттестация учителей в основном используется для того, чтобы возложить на учителей ответственность за результаты учеников, а не для того, чтобы сосредоточиться на их индивидуальном профессиональном развитии. Цель данного качественного множественного кейс стади - понять восприятие учителями процесса аттестации учителей в двух школах: государственной и частной. Вопросы исследования касались понимания и интерпретации учителями процесса аттестации учителей и факторов, способствующих его эффективности. Результаты исследования показали, что большинство учителей относятся к процессу аттестации учителей негативно, воспринимая его как бюрократическую и административную задачу, предназначенную для выполнения внешних требований. Эта точка зрения может быть понята через призму перформативности. Учителя выразили свою озабоченность по поводу

проблемы справедливости, акцента на результатах и практики подотчетности, что затрудняет связь процесса оценки с их текущим профессиональным развитием. Таким образом, данное исследование подчеркивает необходимость более комплексного процесса аттестации учителей.

**Ключевые слова:** аттестация учителей, квалификационные категории, перформативность, подотчетность, профессиональное развитие учителей, государственные школы, частные школы

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Teacher appraisal is considered crucial for improving educational quality (Darling-Hammond et al., 2013; Stronge, 2006; Tuytens & Devos, 2019; Zhang & Ng, 2017). It can help teachers and schools by providing recognition for excellent teaching and opportunities for career advancement. Teacher appraisal can not only help tailor teacher professional development for teaching staff and improve teaching quality, but also enhance the attractiveness of the teaching profession (OECD, 2013; 2014). Teacher appraisal is the process recognizing effective teaching, facilitating professional development, and ultimately enhancing student learning. Teacher appraisal serves two main purposes: professional development, which takes a formative approach, and school improvement, which adopts a summative approach (Abdulrazzaq, 2022; Abelha et al., 2020; Ford & Hewitt, 2020; Stronge, 2006). However, research indicates that teacher appraisal is primarily used to hold teachers accountable for student outcomes rather than focusing on their individual professional development (Abelha et al., 2020). As a result, this has turned teacher appraisal into a bureaucratic process that leads to distrust of teachers in the appraisal process (Abelha et al., 2020; Owuonda et al., 2020). Studies worldwide have explored teachers' perceptions of teacher appraisal, emphasizing that it is effective when it serves both purposes (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Elliott, 2015). Additionally, there is a growing body of research on the performativity issues of teacher appraisal. Performativity culture emphasizes measurable performance outcomes, prompting practitioners to conform to targets, indicators, and evaluations at the expense of personal beliefs and commitments (Ball, 2003). This study seeks to make a comparative analysis of teacher appraisal in public and private schools in Astana, Kazakhstan. Through the lens of Ball's performativity idea, this study will provide insights into teachers' perceptions of the existing appraisal system and its impact on their professional growth within a performative environment.

## 1.1 Background and Context of the Study

The teacher appraisal system in public schools in Kazakhstan was revised in 2018 according to Nazarbayev Intellectual School (NIS) standards (Penkina & Koksheyeva, 2022) and OECD recommendations (OECD, 2014; OECD/The World Bank, 2015). NIS is the network of schools around Kazakhstan for gifted students and they serve as pilot schools to promote the best educational practices to the public schools in Kazakhstan. The successful approaches from NIS have been introduced into public schools since 2011 (Shamshidinova et al., 2023). The previously existing process of teacher appraisal in public schools and private schools in Kazakhstan transitioned to the NIS teacher appraisal system resulting in the introduction of a new qualification category. Currently, there are five categories of teachers in public and private schools: teacher, teacher-moderator, teacher-expert, teacher-researcher, and teacher-master (Ministry of Education, 2016) and six qualification categories in the NIS system: teacher-intern, teacher, teacher-moderator, teacher-expert, teacher-researcher, teacher-master (Center for Pedagogical Measurements, 2017). Even though, the teacher appraisal process in Kazakhstan aims to provide incentives for teachers to excel, support their professional development, promote, and increase their salaries, the study by Abisheva et al. (2023), conducted among Kazakhstani urban and rural teachers, revealed that 48 per cent of the participants had a negative attitude towards the appraisal process in Kazakhstan.

According to the OECD (2015), in Kazakhstan, teacher appraisals are common in schools. However, they are mainly used as part of the teacher attestation process, rather than to recognize teachers' professional development needs. The predominant focus on the accountability purpose means that less attention is given to meaningful discussions about professional development and instructional quality. Using student performance data, such as standardized test results, UNT, and student Olympiad results to appraise teachers was considered problematic as these data tend to reflect other factors besides teaching, such as

student's socioeconomic background, prior learning, and school resources. Moreover, using specific measures of student performance to assess and appraise teachers might lead to strategic actions, including teaching to the test, and deviating from the curriculum to prepare students for tests.

### **1.1.1 Teacher Appraisal in Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools**

Since the current model of teacher appraisal in public and private schools in Kazakhstan was piloted in the system of Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools, I believe it is important to provide some information about the appraisal process in this school networks as well. While both private and public school sectors follow the same policy document for teacher appraisal in Kazakhstan, which is the Rules and Conditions for Teacher Attestation (Ministry of Education, 2016), there is a difference in how the appraisal outcomes affect remuneration of teachers. For example, in public schools, salary increases are tied to the obtaining or confirming a qualification category. Conversely, private school sector is not legally required to increase teachers' salaries based on the appraisal outcomes. According to the Article 52 of the Law on Education (Republic of Kazakhstan, 2007), the remuneration decisions are made by the private educational institution's founders. Therefore, private schools have more autonomy in determining teachers' salaries.

In 2008, the first President of Kazakhstan ordered the creation of a network of twenty intellectual schools across Kazakhstan for gifted students. During the development of these schools, the methodologies of leading nations and their schools such as personalized and online learning, student-focused approach, and other factors were taken into account (Shamshidinova et al., 2023).

The appraisal of teaching staff in NIS aims to enhance Kazakhstan's intellectual potential by developing and implementing an innovative, multilingual education model in natural sciences and mathematics. This model integrates the best of Kazakhstani traditions and international practices. It involves evaluating the professional practices of teachers in NIS, identifying exemplary performance, and assessing their knowledge and skills in practical contexts to stimulate their professional development. The attestation establishes a qualification level system for teaching staff: teacher, teacher-trainee, teacher-moderator, teacher-expert, teacher-researcher, and teacher-master. Its purpose is to determine whether the teaching staff meets the qualification criteria, assess their professional competence, recognize their achievements, and identify opportunities for professional development. The primary goal of assessing teachers' performance is to engage them in continuous professional development. Teacher appraisal puts the teachers in the position of researchers who analyze difficulties in their own teaching practice, look for ways to overcome them, and strive for self-improvement (Center for Pedagogical Measurements, 2017).

### **1.1.2 Teacher Appraisal in Public and Private Schools in Kazakhstan**

Since 2018, a revised teacher appraisal process has been implemented in public and private schools in Kazakhstan. According to the revised regulations, school teachers must undergo teacher appraisal once in five years. This is necessary to obtain a higher qualification category or to maintain the current category. Upgrades in categories are linked to salary increases in public schools (OECD, 2019), as part of an effort to resolve the matter of low salaries and move towards a merit-based system (Ispusinova et al., 2023). However, the private school teachers' upgrades in categories do not result in salary increases since private school sector in Kazakhstan has more autonomy in determining their teachers' salaries. This

is due to the Article 52 of the Law on Education (Republic of Kazakhstan, 2007), which states that the private sector founders shall determine the remuneration of their employees.

In both school settings, teachers have the option to voluntarily seek a category upgrade before the 5-year mark since their last attestation. Teachers applying for an attestation need to pass a national qualification test, which consists of 50 multiple-choice questions—20 on methodology basics and 30 on subject-matter knowledge (Ministry of Education, 2016).

In the case of successfully getting a passing grade in a national qualification test, further steps include submitting a portfolio with details about teachers' professional development participation, a 250–300-word essay, and information on their student's educational achievements, such as awards from Olympiads or other competitions (OECD, 2015). In Kazakhstan, academic Olympiads are crucial in teacher appraisal (Ayubayeva, 2018; OECD, 2015). Using student performance data, such as the results of standardized tests and Olympiad awards to assess and appraise teachers can raise some concerns. This approach to teacher appraisal does not take into account factors beyond teachers' impact, such as student's background, their families, and school resources (OECD, 2015).

Based on the review of the applicant's portfolio, a commission would typically come up with one of the conclusions: 1) The teacher meets the requirements for the applied qualification category, resulting in promotion and increased salary for those seeking an upgrade, or maintaining the current category for those wishing to retain it; 2) The teacher is eligible for re-attestation, providing a second chance for appraisal; or 3) The teacher does not meet the requirements for the applied qualification category, meaning no promotion for those seeking an upgrade, or the withdrawal of the current category for those wishing to retain it. Consequently, if a teacher's attestation is unsuccessful, they may be downgraded to a lower

category. Additionally, teachers have the option to appeal the commission's decision (OECD, 2015).

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Public and private school teachers in Kazakhstan face differing financial motivations within the teacher appraisal. While public school teachers' salaries are increased as a result of the successful appraisal process and they receive or confirm a qualification category, private school teachers' salaries are not connected to the appraisal outcomes. This important difference likely affects how teachers in each school sector perceive and experience the appraisal process.

Another issue is that teacher appraisal in public schools in Kazakhstan lacks clear links to professional development potentially resulting in teachers' skepticism and apathy toward the appraisal processes (Ablyayeva, 2022). OECD's review (2015) highlighted areas for improvement in teacher appraisal in Kazakhstan, pointing out an overemphasis on accountability and inadequate attention to meaningful professional development. For example, each qualification category (teacher, teacher-moderator, teacher-expert, teacher-researcher, teacher-master) mandates teachers to complete a 72-hour professional development course offered by National Center for professional development "Orleu", funded by the local budget. However, this course is only available once in five years, which does not seem sufficient to address teachers' needs (Ayubayeva, 2018). According to the survey conducted by Abisheva et al. (2023), 41,3 % of of Kazakhstani teachers both in rural and urban areas regard professional development as one of the most important aspects of the appraisal. This shows that Kazakhstani teachers are interested in the professional development opportunities.

Additionally, there are concerns about the performativity of the appraisal processes, which tend to focus on compliance and measurable outputs rather than meaningful

professional development (Ball, 2003). Teacher appraisal in Kazakhstan is considered a high-stakes process because teachers are required to participate in different courses, competitions, and Olympiads to obtain certificates for themselves and their students that are later compiled into teachers' portfolios, a crucial part of the appraisal process. This is a process that emphasizes measurable outcomes rather than meaningful professional development, as conceptualized by Ball (2003). Teachers in public schools are likely to engage in various professional development programs only to obtain certificates, often neglecting activities that do not contribute to the appraisal process. This focus on performative measures detracts from the purpose of appraisal – improving teachers' practices (OECD, 2013) – and focuses on meeting the criteria of appraisal. Little is known about teachers' perceptions in public mainstream schools and private schools concerning the teacher appraisal process, especially considering the tension between administrative and developmental aspects of the appraisal system in Kazakhstan, as well as the different approaches to salary raises in the public and private school systems.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study and Research Questions**

This study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of teacher appraisal in public school and private school in Astana, Kazakhstan. Using Ball's performativity theory as a theoretical framework, this study will offer insights into how teachers perceive current teacher appraisal and how it affects their professional identity within a performative culture (Ball, 2003). The study seeks to understand how teacher appraisal shapes teachers' professional identities and influence their professional development through examining teacher appraisal process in both public and private school sectors. The inclusion of both sectors is important because they have different funding models and incentive systems, which likely affects the outcomes of teacher appraisal and teachers' experiences with teacher appraisal. The following research questions will guide the study:

**1. What are the teachers' perceptions of the teacher appraisal's impact on their professional development in a public and private school in Astana?**

Understanding teachers' perceptions reveals whether the appraisal system is viewed as a developmental tool or a compliance exercise. Comparing public and private school sectors highlights how institutional context (for example, autonomy, resources, school leadership) influences perceived outcomes for growth.

**2. How do teachers in a public school and a private school in Astana understand and interpret the teacher appraisal process?**

Teachers' interpretations shape their engagement with appraisals. Differences in teachers' understandings and interpretations may reflect systemic disparities in training, communication, or appraisal goals between sectors.

**3. What factors in both school settings support or shape the appraisal process?**

Identifying contextual factors (such as school leadership, resources, and school culture) explains variations in implementation and effectiveness, helping policymakers tailor teacher appraisal models to each sector's needs.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The significance of examining teacher appraisal in both public and private school sectors is the opportunity to address the contextual differences of teacher appraisal and their impact on teachers' professional identities and their professional development. It is hoped that this study will be valuable to various education stakeholders because it analyzes teacher appraisal practices in two different school settings. This study explores teachers' perspectives regarding the teacher appraisal process in a public school environment that provides financial incentives, in contrast to a private school that does not offer the same benefits for successful appraisal. By comparing the teacher appraisal process in these two schools, the study highlights how the appraisal process impacts teachers' professional development based on the

local school context and salary increases. The findings are intended to inform policymakers and school leaders about the necessity of tailoring teacher appraisal to better align with teachers' professional development needs in various school settings.

### **1.5 Outline of the Study**

This study is organized into six chapters. The first chapter is the introduction which provides background information and context of the topic. The second chapter is the literature review which places the topic within the ongoing discourse of the teacher appraisal. The third chapter is the methodology chapter which justifies the chosen research design, sampling, and data collection tools. The fourth chapter is the findings chapter, which organizes the participants' answers into key themes. The fifth chapter discusses the findings in relation to the literature review. The last, sixth, chapter concludes the study, underscores the strengths and limitations of the study, and suggest recommendations based on the findings and discussion chapters.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The focus of this chapter is on how appraisal is defined and implemented globally, on the tension between accountability and professional development, on the role of leadership in supporting the appraisal process. These topics were selected because they relate to the research questions outlined in this study. By exploring these topics, this chapter seeks to underscore their importance to the overall aim of the study, which is to understand teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding teacher appraisal.

### 2.1 Defining Teacher Appraisal

There are various definitions of teacher appraisal, but they all emphasize that it is a process designed to enhance the quality of instruction, improve pedagogical skills, provide feedback, and support professional development for teachers (Abelha et al., 2020; Tarhan et al., 2019; Zhang & Ng, 2015). According to OECD (2013), the teacher appraisal process is an evaluation of individual teachers to determine their competencies and performance levels, as well as provide feedback for improvement. There appears to be a general consensus that the primary purpose of teacher appraisal is to enhance the quality of teaching and serve as a tool for professional development. However, many research studies indicate that teachers are dissatisfied with the appraisal process. They often perceive it as a bureaucratic and mechanical system that does not contribute to their professional growth (Kagema & Irungu, 2018; Paufler & Sloat, 2020). Consequently, it is worth debating whether these definitions truly reflect the reality of teacher appraisal.

According to Graca et al. (2011, as cited in Abelha et al., 2020), teacher appraisal is a process through which teachers receive feedback on their instructional quality, hence it includes formal evaluation. Evaluation methods might involve classroom observation, interviews, teacher portfolios, student achievement reports, and performance surveys from

students and parents (Abelha et al., 2020). Appraisal can include two aspects: a formative aspect that emphasizes professional development, career growth, and feedback, and a summative aspect that focuses on promotion, salary increase, and termination purposes, which are high stakes (Elliott, 2015; Ford & Hewitt, 2020; Kelly et al., 2008; Stronge, 2006). A qualitative study by Abdulrazzaq (2022) in United Arab Emirates found that teacher appraisers view both formative and summative aspects as equally important. Similarly, Zhang and Ng (2017) in their study on teacher appraisal in public schools in China found that both developmental (formative) and administrative (summative) aspects are necessary for an effective appraisal. However, research conducted by Ford and Hewitt (2020) comparing teacher evaluation policies in Hawaii and Washington D.C. found that evaluations that encourage teacher development—focusing on intrinsic motivation, self-reflection, and professional growth—proved to be more effective than those based on high-stakes accountability, which often relies on rewards and punishments and can negatively affect teachers' ongoing development. Yet, different studies indicate that the emphasis on accountability often takes precedence (Ablayeva, 2022, Smith & Kubacka, 2017). The topic of accountability will be addressed again in the next section.

In Kazakhstan, the teacher appraisal process is carried out to determine if teaching staff meet the qualification requirements (Ministry of Education, 2016). Hence, teacher appraisal in Kazakhstan is a procedure to assign or confirm the qualification requirements to teachers. The only official definition of teacher appraisal in Kazakhstan can be found on [adilet.kz](http://adilet.kz), which is the legal information system for the Regulatory Legal Acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan. This definition primarily focuses on whether teachers meet specific requirements to receive a positive appraisal. However, it fails to address professional development and the improvement of teaching practices.

As mentioned earlier, the global definition of teacher appraisal encompasses both formative and summative aspects. In this context, Kazakhstan's approach to teacher appraisal appears to align with the concept of performativity. This topic will be further explored in the theoretical framework section. However, in brief, performativity refers to the idea that the performance of teachers is evaluated based on predetermined standards and metrics.

## **2.2 Purpose of Appraisal**

The main purposes of appraisal are accountability and professional development (Ford & Hewitt, 2020; OECD, 2013; Stronge, 2006), where the focus is on evaluating performance and professional growth opportunities for teachers, respectively. Accountability ensures teachers' competence to present effective services (McGaghie, 1991, as cited in Stronge, 2006) and is viewed as summative. On the other hand, professional development focuses on the development and growth of individual teachers and is viewed as formative. For a comprehensive teacher appraisal to be effective, there must be a clear connection between these two purposes and seen as part of a school's objectives (Ford & Hewitt, 2020; OECD, 2013; Stronge, 2006). This means that a teacher appraisal should contribute to the personal and professional development needs of teachers as well as overall school improvement (Stronge et al., 1996). However, in reality, the conflict between these two objectives of appraisal typically leads to one of the goals being prioritized, which negatively impacts the other. Ideally, teacher appraisal may become an effective quality evaluation system if used for both of these purposes (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Tuytens & Devos, 2014).

### ***2.2.1 Accountability and Teacher Dissatisfaction***

The accountability issue in education is becoming increasingly important. Accountability in education can be understood in many ways, but it ultimately means holding teachers responsible for student performance (Brill et al., 2018). It is widely accepted that

teacher appraisal should involve accountability as well as professional development (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Tuytens & Devos, 2014).

However, research indicates that the accountability purpose tends to be dominant. For example, Ablayeva's (2022) study conducted in one public school in Astana, Kazakhstan found that teachers perceived the current teacher appraisal in Kazakhstani public schools as being focused on holding them accountable rather than supporting their professional development. These perceptions are also influenced by mandated testing of teachers, which exacerbates teachers' stress (Gordon & McGhee, 2019). Furthermore, research has shown that measuring teachers' work by tests and student performance can lead to teachers' dissatisfaction and leaving the profession. A study by Han (2018) highlighted that test-based accountability has been a significant factor in teachers leaving the profession. The emphasis on testing culture is widespread, and focusing heavily on student test scores to appraise teachers is damaging to teachers and their teaching methods (Smith & Holloway, 2020). Smith and Holloway's (2020) study, which used data from the 2013 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) across 33 countries, examined the direct and indirect effects of the school testing culture on teacher satisfaction and indicated that teacher appraisals are not inherently likely to harm overall teacher satisfaction. In reality, when student test scores are not the main focus, teacher appraisal can enhance teacher satisfaction. In a similar vein to Smith and Holloway (2020), in their international, large-scale study of TALIS data across 33 countries, through teacher and principal questionnaires, Smith and Kubacka (2017) found that placing too much focus on students test scores in teacher appraisals led teachers to view the appraisal as a mere administrative and bureaucratic task. Consequently, teachers perceived that the teacher appraisal was not very important for their teaching practice. Additionally, Lacireno-Paquet et al. (2016) found that teachers in the public schools in the United States

had a 2.5 times lower chance of being satisfied with the appraisal process when it incorporated student test scores.

Further studies by Tuytens and Devons (2014) emphasized the importance of putting teachers and their classrooms at the focal point of teacher appraisal processes. However, many teacher appraisals tend to prioritize accountability over the development of teachers and their practice. Studies have shown that teacher appraisals often fail to provide meaningful feedback to teachers or support their professional development and many teachers feel that appraisals are just a formality to meet administrative requirements (Elliott, 2015; OECD, 2009, Smith & Kubacka, 2017).

### ***2.2.2 Professional Development***

It is crucial for a teacher appraisal to align with the school improvement and at the same time prioritize the professional development of teachers. Teacher appraisal serves two primary purposes: professional development, which takes a formative approach, and school improvement, which adopts a summative approach (Abdulrazzaq, 2022; Abelha et al., 2020; Ford & Hewitt, 2020; Stronge, 2006). As previously mentioned, the definitions of teacher appraisal agree that it should be a tool for both the professional development of teachers and the enhancement of their instructional quality. However, a sequential mixed-methods study by Paufler and Sloat (2020), which explored the perspectives of administrators and teachers involved in the evaluation process, found that most teacher participants perceived the system as having little or even a generally negative impact on their professional practice and student achievement.

Numerous studies over time indicate that teacher appraisals and evaluations have failed to identify teachers' professional development needs and improve their practices (Danielson, 2001; Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Donaldson & Firestone, 2019; Elliott, 2015; Kagema & Irungu, 2018; Smith & Kubacka, 2017). To investigate why teacher appraisals fail

to fulfill their formative purpose and are often reduced to mere summative procedures, Lillejord and Borte (2019) conducted a systematic review of fifteen articles focusing on school leadership and teacher appraisal/evaluation. Their analysis aimed to uncover the role of school leadership in the teacher appraisal process. The results highlighted that school leaders' perceptions of teacher evaluations (appraisal) play a crucial role in shaping their approach to these assessments. Additionally, they identified a disconnect between teachers' expectations for feedback and the capacity of school leaders to provide it, often due to burdensome administrative responsibilities. While some leaders view evaluations as instruments for professional growth, others prioritize external accountability, leading to a detachment from teachers and a lack of meaningful instructional leadership. A more in-depth discussion on the role of leadership in the appraisal will be discussed in detail in a separate subsection.

Classroom observation is one widely used method for evaluating teachers. Martinez et al. (2016) state that observing teachers in the classroom is regarded as a crucial tool for professional development and for offering formative feedback that can support improvement efforts.

Teacher appraisal aims to support both professional development and accountability, but the literature review showed that it often fails to support professional development of teachers. Additionally, there is a disconnect between teachers' expectations for meaningful feedback and school leadership's capacity to provide it due to their workload. Meaningful and formative feedback can be provided during classroom observation, but its effectiveness depends on school leadership's approach to teacher appraisal.

### **2.3 The Role of School Leadership in Teacher Appraisal**

The involvement of school leadership is essential in the evaluation of teachers. Tuytens and Devos (2017) emphasize that "school leadership is vital for teacher evaluation to

potentially enhance teaching” (p. 4). Their study shows that in schools where principals hold a positive view of teacher evaluation, the assessment methods tend to focus on formative practices. Conversely, when principals have negative perceptions, the evaluations often become summative. This finding is consistent with the finding of Flores and Derrington’s (2017) study that explored how school principals in Portugal and the United States perceive and experience teacher evaluation. According to Flores and Derrington (2017), the way principals perceive a new teacher evaluation system is crucial, as they hold the main responsibility for its deployment in the school. Additionally, the principal’s views on the effectiveness of the evaluation system influence how policies are understood and enacted. Therefore, the overall success or failure partially relies on the principal’s beliefs, perceptions, and approaches.

Furthermore, the study of Lacireno-Paquet et al. (2016), exploring the relationship between the school leadership and teachers’ satisfaction with the evaluation process found that teachers who view their principal’s leadership favorably tend to be more content with the evaluation procedures. Those who rated their principal higher in leadership qualities generally reported greater satisfaction with the evaluation process.

While the primary aim of teacher appraisal is to gather summative data and use it to support ongoing professional development, studies indicate that these appraisals often reduce to mere administrative formalities (Abelha et al., 2020; Lillejord & Borte, 2020; Owuonda et al., 2020; Smith & Kubacka, 2017). Despite the potential benefits of the extensive assessments for tracking school and system improvements, such data provides limited insight into effective school development. If school leaders fail to connect this numerical data with practical application, it may explain why the insights provided by teacher evaluations remain confined to administrative purposes rather than fostering professional growth. (Lillejord & Borte, 2020).

## 2.4 Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study draws on Stephen J. Ball's (2003) theory of performativity to explore the impact of teacher appraisal systems on professional identity, practice, and development. According to Ball (2003), performativity is a system for regulation and assessment that uses "judgements, comparisons, and displays" (p. 216) to measure, motivate, and control individuals, often related to rewards and penalties, to show their worth or quality within a specific setting. In performative frameworks, teacher appraisal serves not only as a developmental tool but also as a mechanism for accountability. Teachers are continuously assessed, evaluated, and compared using various benchmarks, such as student performance and standardized testing results. These frameworks create a high-stakes atmosphere where effectiveness takes precedence over authenticity.

The pressure imposed by this performative environment leads to ontological insecurity, causing teachers to question the significance and purpose of their work. They may struggle to discern whether their actions derive from genuine educational aspirations or merely from the need to meet appraisal benchmarks. Consequently, appraisal systems can undermine professional independence, especially when performance assessments, classroom observations, and performance-linked pay become primary tools of management.

In the era of performativity, Ball (2003) argues that teachers are expected to devote more time to being accountable to the school. Performativity is market-driven, and it is an effective instrument that pushes teachers towards a specific kind of professionalism (Loh, 2016). At the same time, it provides metrics that enable teachers to evaluate their performance, putting them in a continuous state of comparison with both their colleagues and their previous selves in the pursuit of becoming more "effective" and "excellent" (Ball, 2015). Moreover, performative data are used for comparisons, which often results in some form of ranking or hierarchical evaluation (Starr, 2019). Therefore, collaboration is replaced by

competition, and independence is traded for clearly defined (and measurable) expectations. This shift gives teachers insight into how they rank in relation to their colleagues. Such a transformation not only changes teachers' behavior but also affects their overall approach to their work, their professional identity (Holloway & Brass, 2018). Sachs (2016) raises concerns about the professionalism of teachers. She questions whether this type of professionalism will promote innovation, address future needs instead of just current ones, and support the development and collaboration of new insights to improve teaching practices. Since performativity in education can cause teachers to feel like they are merely performing to demonstrate their abilities, it can result in a sense of deprofessionalization (Perryman & Calvert, 2020). Tomlinson (2001) observed this trend almost two decades ago and stated teachers are being viewed more as a technical workforce rather than as respected professionals.

Performativity influences teachers' actions and self-perception, as it forms the basis for evaluations. This shift in focus alters teachers' identities and decisions to emphasize performative outcomes (Ball, 2003). Frostenson and Englund (2020) note that when teachers enter the profession with non-performative ideals, the concept of performativity ultimately reshapes those ideals. In line with the observations of Holloway and Brass (2018) and Sachs (2016), performativity becomes a fundamental aspect of what it means to be a teacher. For example, Gray and Seiki (2020) examined the impact of performative pressure on novice teachers. They found that, despite initially intending to implement new teaching methods to enhance student learning, these teachers changed their approaches when they realized their success was measured mostly by quantifiable data, such as students' grades. As novice educators, they felt compelled to deliver positive results, leading to a sense of fear surrounding their performance. As Ball (2003) notes, performativity cultivates fear as a means of regulation and emphasizes the importance of outcomes. Under performative

systems, teachers may feel pressured to make decisions based on achieving specific outcomes, rather than developing a deep understanding of students and enhancing their teaching skills (Ball, 2003).

Within a performative culture, there is a strong emphasis on teachers' and their students' accomplishments which are used for comparison. For example, in Kazakhstan, teacher appraisal employs data on student achievement including the results of standardized examinations, awards from Olympiads, etc. to assess and compare the effectiveness of teachers and schools (OECD, 2015). Similarly, Zhang and Ng's (2017) study found that teachers in China regarded student achievements highly and considered these as a testament to effective teaching. However, In their international, large-scale study of TALIS data, Smith and Kubacka (2017) found that teachers who believe student achievement is the main focus of feedback—and that this kind of feedback is more valued than other types—tend to see appraisals as merely an administrative tool with little impact on their classroom instruction. While some researchers support including student achievement when appraising teachers (Hallinger et al., 2014; Ovando & Ramirez, 2007), there are some drawbacks. According to Danielson (2001), since various factors impact students' learning process, it is challenging to link it solely to teachers; therefore, student performance as one of the appraisal criteria raises concerns regarding fairness and reliability.

In environments influenced by performativity, teacher appraisals serve not just as developmental tools but as instruments of control, compelling teachers to adjust their practices to meet institutional goals and accountability standards. Using Ball's concept of performativity as a theoretical framework, this study investigates how teachers manage these pressures, construct their professional identities, and react to the requirements of appraisal processes. This framework also emphasizes possible conflicts between teachers' internal motivations and the external pressures from appraisal processes, especially when linked to

high-stakes results. In this study, teacher appraisal is understood not just as a purely developmental process, but as a tool that affects teachers' actions and shapes their professional identities. This perspective enables a critical examination of how appraisal systems impact teacher motivation, identity, and perceptions of professional value in accountability-driven educational environments.

#### **2.4.1 Teachers' Professional Identity**

If a performative culture prioritizes crafting professional identities to meet external expectations, leading to competition over collaboration, changing teachers' behaviors and professional identity, and raising concerns about their professionalism, it is essential to understand teachers' professional identities, especially in the performative and accountability contexts.

Performative data are often used for comparisons, resulting in rankings or hierarchical evaluations (Starr, 2019). Consequently, teachers may shape their professional identities to satisfy these external expectations. Meeting such expectations is closely linked to accountability. Teacher accountability and performance are frequently assessed through standardized tests and rankings. According to Ravitch (2010), a good accountability system should incorporate professional judgment rather than relying solely on test scores. Other measures of student achievement, such as grades, teacher evaluations, student work, attendance, and graduation rates, could lead to a sense of deprofessionalization, with teachers being perceived as a technical workforce (Perryman & Calvert, 2020).

Standards and accountability are interconnected, with standards often serving as tools for managing and overseeing teacher accountability (Sachs, 2016). Teacher standards denote the levels of competence expected of individual teachers, either for entering the profession or for measuring ongoing performance. To align with these competence levels and to meet the external expectations, teachers may curate favorable portrayals to create good impressions

within appraisal systems. As a result, standards can take the form of what Ball (2003) describes as fabrications. Ultimately, this leads to changes in teachers' behaviors and their professionalism (Holloway & Brass, 2018).

One concern regarding standards is that while a "one-size-fits-all" approach may be appealing to governments, it may not be beneficial for teachers working in remote areas, difficult schools, or multi-age settings. In such contexts, their competence might be judged based on an idealized notion of what makes competent or excellent teaching (Sachs, 2003).

Rodrigues and Mogarro (2019) argue that student teachers' professional identity is a dynamic and multifaceted construct shaped by personal experiences, educational environments, and the integration of theory and practice. This underscores the significance of teacher standards and appraisal systems, not just as evaluative tools but as mechanisms that can influence and support the development of teachers' professional identities.

Tatto (2021) emphasizes the critical role of teacher education in shaping teachers' professionalism. Her research highlights the importance of university-based teacher preparation programs in equipping educators with the professional knowledge necessary for sustained growth and success in the field. Tatto goes on to advocate for an inquiry-driven culture within teacher education to better support teachers' professional learning and development (Tatto, 2021).

## **2.5 Summary**

This chapter examined teacher appraisal through many perspectives including the conceptual differences in the definitions of teacher appraisal, the tension between the accountability and professional development aspects of teacher appraisal, the role of leadership shaping and supporting the effectiveness of appraisal, and its impact on how teachers construct their professional identities. This literature review reveals a lack of connection between teacher appraisal's purpose, that is professional development, and its

implementation as a performative process. Three main patterns emerge from the literature review: globally teacher appraisal process mostly prioritizes accountability and fosters performative culture over genuine professional development of teachers, change teachers' professional identities through performative demands, and rely on the supportive leadership for the appraisal process to be effective.

### **Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology**

This chapter outlines the research design and a method used to examine teacher appraisal processes in a public and a private school in Astana, Kazakhstan. A qualitative multiple case-study approach was used to capture the experiences of teachers in both school settings. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews allowing to investigate the appraisal-related challenges, perceptions, and experiences on the part of teachers in a public school and a private school.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

According to Yin (2018), the choice of research method depends on the research questions. This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the teachers' perceptions of the teacher appraisal's impact on their professional development in a public and private school in Astana?
2. How do teachers in a public school and a private school in Astana understand and interpret the teacher appraisal process?
3. What factors in both school settings support or shape the appraisal process, and how do these factors influence teachers' professional development?

To answer these questions, a qualitative multiple case study approach was used (Stake, 2006). The qualitative research method is justified because the research questions are about understanding the participants' experiences and uncovering the significance of a phenomenon for the involved participants, rather than establishing causation, making predictions, or determining the distribution of a specific characteristic within a population (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), "qualitative methods can be used to obtain the intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and

emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional methods” (p. 11). Case study research method is relevant because the research questions require a detailed description of a social phenomenon (Yin, 2018). This multiple-case study adopts an exploratory approach to identify emerging themes in teacher appraisal across public and private schools (Yin, 1993). Additionally, case studies are valuable in understanding how the organizational and environmental context is impacting or shaping social processes (Cassell & Symon, 1994). Since my study involves one public school and one private school, the chosen method for the study was the multiple case study, which entails the description and comparison of multiple cases to gain understanding into an issue (Creswell, 2012). A significant rationale for conducting the multiple case study is to investigate how the program or phenomenon functions in different settings (Stake, 2013), that is the teacher appraisal processes in two different schools. Multiple case study is the study of more than one case to “investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition” (Stake, 2000, p. 437). Since this study is about understanding and making sense of the participants’ experiences and perceptions, semi-structured interviews will be used to gather data. Fontana and Frey (2000) describe semi-structured interviews as the most influential method understanding other people.

### **3.2 Research Sites and Participants**

In qualitative research design, the aim is to acquire an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon, rather than to make a generalization to the whole population (Creswell, 2012). The study involved approximately eight teachers and two school administrators. My study used the qualitative research design. Thus, purposeful sampling will be employed in this study because the qualitative research design usually delves into relatively small, sometimes even individual, purposefully chosen samples. Criterion sampling will be applied (Patton, 1990). The selection criteria included:

- Teachers who have undergone the appraisal process at least once.
- Teachers who represent different levels of teaching experience and who hold various qualifications.

This study examined two schools in Astana, Kazakhstan: a public school following the national curriculum and a private school following the national and International Baccalaureate curriculum. The public school represents the state education system, where teacher appraisal directly affects teacher's salary and professional growth. The private school functions under international standards while still participating in a teacher appraisal, where teacher appraisal does not affect teachers' salaries and promotion. Both schools were selected using typical case sampling (Patton, 1990) to represent common examples of public and private school sectors. This approach ensured that the findings could illustrate typical processes and experiences related to teacher appraisal in these two school sectors.

**Table 1**  
*Demographic Characteristics of Interview Participants*

	<b>School type</b>	<b>Qualification Category</b>	<b>Years of Experience</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Gender</b>
<b>Participant 1</b>	Public	Moderator	5 years	English	Male
<b>Participant 2</b>	Public	Expert	5 years	English	Female
<b>Participant 3</b>	Public	Researcher	6 years	English	Female
<b>Participant 4</b>	Public	Master	35 years	English	Female
<b>Participant 5</b>	Private	Moderator	7 years	Homeroom Teacher	Female
<b>Participant 6</b>	Private	Moderator	4 years	English	Female
<b>Participant 7</b>	Private	Expert	10 years	Homeroom Teacher	Female
<b>Participant 8</b>	Private	Expert	15 years	ICT (Information and Communication Technologies)	Female

### 3.3 Data Collection Tools

The data collection for this study consisted of semi-structured interviews to explore teachers' perceptions of the appraisal process. The semi-structured interviews allowed participants to share their experiences and insights in-depth (Creswell, 2012). Since this study is about understanding teachers' perceptions of the appraisal process, the semi-structured interviews were used as a primary data collection tool to allow teachers to share their

experiences in depth. Interviews lasted approximately 40 minutes and were scheduled at a time convenient for the participants. The interviews were conducted face-to-face. The interview protocol is given in Appendix B.

The interview questions were created addressing the research questions. The initial five questions were related to the demographic characteristics of the participants, background information about their last experience with the teacher appraisal. The next three questions addressed the relationship between teachers' professional development and the teacher appraisal process. The last four questions addressed the factors shaping and supporting the appraisal.

The interview questions consisted of open-ended questions since according to Nelson-Gray et al. (1989), open-ended questions allowed participants to give richer, more detailed answers about their experiences and concerns, while close-ended questions led to concise and restrained answers. Therefore, the interview questions consisted of open-ended questions to prompt teachers to give full answers.

### **3.4 Data Collection Procedures**

First, I contacted the school principal to arrange a meeting and explained the purpose of the study and its procedures. After I received permission from the principal, I requested that they shared information about the study in their school chat or corporate email. Later, I asked for the contact information and phone numbers of interested teachers who met the sampling criteria. An invitation message was sent to potential participants, explaining the study's purpose, the expected time commitment, and the voluntary nature of participation (Appendix C). The message also outlined the confidentiality of responses. Interested teachers were provided with a consent form that outlines the research objectives, confidentiality, and their rights as participants (Appendix D). After receiving signed consent, participants were

scheduled for interviews. The interviews were conducted in a language that was convenient for the participants. The data collection process started upon receiving ethics approval. I started negotiating with the school leaders after I received permission. The participants were selected based on the criteria mentioned above. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study and signed a consent form to participate in the interview. Once consent was obtained, participants were scheduled for interviews that ranged from 25 to 40 minutes. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and via video conferencing, depending on participant availability and preferences. During the interviews, participants answered open-ended questions and provided in-depth reflections on their experiences. With their consent, the interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy in data collection, and the recordings were transcribed for analysis. All data, including interview transcriptions and documents, were securely stored to ensure participant confidentiality.

### **3.5 Data Analysis Strategies**

This study used a qualitative analysis approach that includes within-case and cross-case methods (Yin, 2018) to better understand teacher appraisal process and teachers' experiences in a public and private schools. Each school as a case was initially analyzed separately, showing the institutional patterns before analyzing two cases together. According to Yin (2018), within-case analysis involves a detailed analysis of each case in a multiple-case study. This is necessary to understand the unique context of each case before proceeding to make any cross-case comparisons. This way the unique patterns, explanations specific to each case emerge. Cross-case analysis includes comparing and contrasting data across cases to identify the similarities and differences between cases. Cross-case analysis allows to build a comprehensive understanding of the subject under study.

The transcripts of the interviews with the participants were manually coded using Saldaña's (2013) two-cycle coding approach. In the first cycle, initial open coding was performed to identify key words, phrases, and recurring patterns within the data. Descriptive and In Vivo coding proved particularly effective in capturing participants' voices and perspectives. In the second cycle, pattern coding was used to group similar codes into broader themes, allowing for a deeper interpretation of the data.

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations**

To ensure the confidentiality of participants throughout the study, several procedures were implemented during data collection, storage, and reporting. First, before the start of the interviews, participants were informed about the study's purpose, and their informed consent were obtained in writing. Participants were assured that their identities would remain confidential and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. During data collection, participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their identities. These pseudonyms were used in all notes, transcripts, and reports to ensure that individuals could not be identified. The schools involved were also referred to generically as "Public School" and "Private School" to avoid revealing their specific identities. All data, including audio recordings of interviews, transcriptions, and any collected documents, were stored securely. Audio files were saved on a password-protected device accessible only to the researcher. After transcription, audio files were deleted to further protect confidentiality. The transcribed interviews and any related documents were also anonymized by removing any identifiable information, such as names, positions, or locations that could potentially link the data to individual participants. Access to the collected data were strictly limited to the researcher. Digital data, including transcriptions and documents, were stored on an encrypted, password-protected device. Furthermore, once the research is completed, the data would be

securely deleted or destroyed in accordance with ethical guidelines to ensure the continued protection of participants' confidentiality.

In conducting this study, one potential risk could be discomfort that was caused by answering interview questions. To mitigate this risk, several procedures were implemented. Before participation, participants received information about the study, including potential risks. Informed consent ensured that participants were fully aware of their rights and the voluntary nature of their participation. All participants were assigned pseudonyms. The researcher emphasized that their identities would not be disclosed in any reporting or publications. Additionally, schools were referred to generically, further protecting participant identities. This study provided an opportunity for the participants for reflection on their experiences with the teacher appraisal process, which could have contributed to their own professional growth and self-awareness.

### **3.7 Summary**

This chapter outlined the qualitative multiple-case study design to examine teacher appraisal process in a public and a private school in Astana, Kazakhstan. Semi-structured interviews with eight teachers from both schools provided data on their experiences and perceptions of the appraisal process. The study applied purposeful sampling to select participants. Ethical considerations protected confidentiality of the participants during and after data collection and analysis.

## Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter presents the findings of this multiple case study that aimed to make a comparative analysis of teacher appraisal in two different school settings: a public and a private school. The findings are structured in two main sections: within-case analysis, where each school is analyzed separately, and cross-case analysis, where the similarities and differences of teacher appraisal processes are identified.

Overall, eight teachers from both schools agreed to participate in the study. Four of the teachers work in a public school, and four of them work in a private international school in Astana, Kazakhstan. All of the research participants have undergone teacher appraisal at least once and have qualification categories.

### 4.1 Within-case analysis: A Public School

The mainstream public school examined in this study is located in Astana, Kazakhstan. As a Kazakh-medium school, instruction is primarily delivered in the Kazakh language. Like many public schools in Kazakhstan, it follows the national curriculum.

#### 4.1.1 Teachers' Understandings of Teacher Appraisal

##### *4.1.1.1 Perceived Appraisal-Related Challenges*

The teacher appraisal is a mandated procedure in all public schools. Teachers must undergo the teacher appraisal every five years. Therefore, three teachers (teacher-moderator, teacher-expert, teacher-master) mentioned that the teacher appraisal process is stressful and chaotic. They highlighted concerns related to the emotional burden, fairness and objectiveness, the additional pressure of having to pass a test, and the constantly changing appraisal criteria, which made it difficult to know what was expected from them. For example, Participant 2 (teacher-expert) mentioned a couple of times that her experience with the appraisal was chaotic because she did not understand the process. Participant 4's (teacher-

master) opinion about teacher appraisal was much stronger and she stated: “Nobody needs it (teacher appraisal)” ... they only want to torture us.” In contrast, other participants expressed less negative views. For example, Participant 3 (teacher-researcher) felt she got lucky because she was able to attain a teacher-researcher category with the help of her IELTS results before the rules and procedures were amended. As a result, her experience was not stressful, as she did not undergo the appraisal in the typical manner. However, she mentioned that the teacher appraisal is “only a paper” highlighting the bureaucracy issue. Meanwhile, Participant 1 (teacher-moderator) noted that the appraisal can provide opportunities for growth and development.

In conclusion, teachers’ perspectives from a public school on the appraisal process reveal a mix of frustration and value. While some find it burdening, others see opportunities for professional growth. This diversity in experiences highlights the need for a more coherent appraisal system that prioritizes fairness and clarity. Addressing teachers’ concerns is essential for creating a positive appraisal environment, improving both teacher development and student outcomes.

#### ***4.1.1.2 Perceived Lack of Transparency***

All four participants from a public school expressed concerns about the fairness and objectivity of the teacher appraisal process. Participant 2 (teacher-expert) mentioned that the methodologist, who was responsible for the teacher appraisal in their school, falsified her students’ grades to make her eligible for the teacher-expert category. Moreover, she had to pay an independently designed (signature) program (*avtorskaya programma*) because it was a requirement for this category, and she was completely unaware of what was needed. As a result, the school methodologist suggested that she pay someone to provide a ready-made program:

The methodologists informed me that I needed to write an independently designed (signature) program. I had no idea what that was, and I was given only a week to complete it. I honestly thought it was impossible to finish something like that in such a short time. So, my methodologist told me I could pay to get my author's program ready. I suspect it was written by someone else. I didn't even take the time to read it. I simply included it in my portfolio. I believe this process (the appraisal process) is unfair and not objective at all, especially since the rules change every year.

Additionally, other three participants (teacher-moderator, teacher-researcher, teacher-master) mentioned that whether teachers were allowed to participate in the teacher appraisal depended on the school leadership. In some cases, school leadership (principal, vice-principals) decided who can participate or not. For example, Participant 1 (teacher-moderator) reported that he was not awarded the teacher-moderator category in his first year of teaching, despite having a red diploma. He noted that his peers from other schools with similar diplomas received their teacher-moderator category immediately, in the first year of teaching at school. He was unsure of the exact reason for this discrepancy but believed the school principal wanted to test him:

I thought the principal might be testing me. He mentioned that I was still young, which led me to believe he thought I needed to work hard for a couple of years before receiving the category immediately.

In a similar vein, Participant 4 (teacher-master) shared an observation: "In general, it seems to me that giving the principals power to select which teachers can take part in the teacher appraisal process is not necessary because the principal and vice-principal can sometimes not allow teachers through (the appraisal)."

Meanwhile, Participant 3 (teacher-researcher) faced repeated denials of her request for a teacher-researcher category, even though the rules clearly stated that one could obtain

this category with the help of an IELTS result. She expressed her confusion about the reasons for her rejections. However, through the assistance of her methodologist, who reached out to the local education authorities, she eventually obtained her teacher-researcher category.

Additionally, two participants (teacher-moderator, teacher-expert) mentioned the constant changes of the appraisal criteria, which made it difficult for them to know what was expected from them. For example, Participant 1 (teacher-moderator) stated:

The appraisal criteria change every year. Last year, in 2024, some of my colleagues were unable to obtain their categories because the new reform was being introduced. A lot of time—about a year—was spent on the preparation. However, a new set of criteria was reintroduced, with higher requirements than the previous year.

Participant 2 (teacher-expert) also highlighted the confusion that comes with the changing criteria: “My experience was quite chaotic because of criteria being changed. I was uncertain whether I was eligible for a teacher-researcher category or a teacher-expert category. The rules change every year, so you don’t know.”

The insights from participants reveal significant concerns about the teacher appraisal process in public schools. The lack of transparency and fairness in the appraisal criteria has led to confusion and frustration among teachers. Many shared the feeling of skepticism about the teacher appraisal’s objectivity, especially when school leadership influenced appraisal participation. These challenges emphasize the need for a more transparent approach to teacher appraisal to ensure fairness and support professional development.

#### ***4.1.1.3 Appraisal as a Formality***

All four participants expressed views that teacher appraisal is a procedural requirement rather than a meaningful professional growth opportunity. Instead of teacher appraisal being an opportunity for development and growth, it is perceived as a box-ticking exercise driven by administrative requirement. Three participants (teacher-expert, teacher-

researcher, teacher-master) reported that they have taken part in the appraisal without any enthusiasm because they believed that it had little impact on their teaching practice. As Participant 5 (teacher-master) noted: “I would prepare for my lessons instead. I am now participating in another competition in order to confirm my teacher-master category.”

Participant 3 (teacher-researcher) stated:

I don't see teachers participating willingly in this process, if I may say so. The methodologist always emphasizes that we need to take part in the teacher attestation (appraisal), stating that it's the third year or the fifth year and that we have to apply for the next attestation. The problem is that most teachers don't perceive any benefits from it. As a result, they tend to view it as just another issue to deal with.

She also mentioned the focus on the paperwork: “... it's only papers. Maybe some people from the government should come to schools, should be in our class, and watch us teaching to make a decision like that.” Participant 2 (teacher-expert) mentioned the formality of lesson observations instead of providing meaningful feedback: “... supposedly I had to conduct demonstration lessons in front of my colleagues and they would rate my lesson based on specific criteria. Instead, we did it formally, like it just had to be done.”

Teachers' answers indicate that teacher appraisal is often seen as a formality rather than a genuine professional development opportunity. The focus on administrative requirements has diminished enthusiasm and value for teachers. Instead of improving teaching practices, the appraisal process becomes a mandatory task. Teachers express a desire for more constructive and observational methods that could lead to meaningful improvement in their work.

### **4.1.2 Teachers' Perceptions of the Teacher Appraisal's Impact on their Professional Development**

Participants' perceptions of how the appraisal process impacts their professional development were mixed. While one participant expressed positive views about the impact on his professional development, the other three participants expressed concerns about the mandated nature of the professional developed courses and the little relevance of them to their day-to-day teaching practice. This theme examines the perceptions of the teacher appraisal's impact on professional development of the teachers through the following sub-themes: *Professional Development Courses* and *Performance Metrics in Appraisal*.

#### **4.1.2.1 Professional Development Courses**

While professional development courses are supposed to foster teachers' growth, inspire them to keep bettering their practice, two participants (teacher-expert, teacher-researcher) emphasized the misalignment with their professional development needs and the mandated nature of them. As Participant 2 (teacher-expert) noted: "They (professional development courses) don't always align with my professional development needs, I think. Because they are mandatory and they just come out of nowhere." Similar opinion was shared by Participant 4 (teacher-researcher): "I guess most of the professional development courses don't align with our professional needs. They are just mandatory; so that's why teachers participate in them." However, Participant 1 (teacher-moderator) expressed positive view about a mandatory course he had to take in his first year of teaching: "That course helped me a lot. The teachers and trainers were very good at explaining things."

Teachers' answers on professional development courses reveals a significant disconnect between the offered courses and teachers' actual professional development needs. While some, like Participant 1 (teacher-moderator), found value in specific mandatory courses, many others, including Participants 2 (teacher-expert) and 4 (teacher-researcher),

expressed concerns that these courses do not align with their professional growth needs. This misalignment raises questions about the effectiveness of the courses and highlights the need for a more tailored approach that addresses the needs of teachers.

#### ***4.1.2.2 Performance Metrics in Appraisal***

Teachers in both public and private school sectors are required to pass a standardized test and gather documentation including certificates, teacher's achievements, and students' achievements to become eligible for a category. Participants' answers reflected a heavy emphasis on the importance of having certain certificates to enhance their eligibility for the next qualification category. On this matter, Participant 5 (teacher-master) mentioned:

Why are only the results of international and republican competitions taken into account, while local competitions are ignored? Our local education department wonders why we are unable to collaborate with local teachers and share our work experience. Many teacher-masters refuse to engage at the local level because their certificates and diplomas are not recognized during the attestation process. At the local level, our efforts go unrecognized, and we do not receive any points for our work. Consequently, local teachers become frustrated with us for only participating at the republican level instead of at the local level.

Participant 1 (teacher-moderator) provided an interesting insight about how certain certificates shape teacher's identity and self-worth:

After completing the course (mandated by the Center of Excellence), I received a certificate that is recognized everywhere. This certificate is valid for attestation and other purposes, it is as almost showing that I am a qualified specialist now. It is valid for three years, and I believe this certificate is incredibly beneficial.

The similar idea regarding the teacher identity and self-worth was mentioned by Participant 4 (teacher-researcher): "I believe my teacher-researcher qualification category just

makes me better in my colleagues' eyes. I was assigned a teacher-researcher qualification category and then I became the head of the English Teachers Association in our school.”

However, only Participant 2 (teacher-expert) expressed a different view, saying that she does not place a heavy emphasis on certificates:

I didn't do anything for the sake of teacher appraisal system. I didn't participate in the professional development courses for the sake of attestation. I have been always curious about different teaching methods, interesting ways of teaching. And, I have always done it for the sake of my curiosity because I was genuinely curious.

The teachers' answers on performance metrics in teacher appraisal reveal differing views on certifications and their role in professional identity and development. While some participants emphasized the importance of certificates for recognition and eligibility, others prioritized intrinsic motivation and personal curiosity. Therefore, balancing external validations with internal motivations could create a more supportive environment for teachers.

#### **4.1.3 Factors Contributing to the Effectiveness of the Teacher Appraisal**

Beyond the perceived challenges and public-school teachers' understandings reported in the previous sections, the participants also mentioned the factors that contributed to the effectiveness of the teacher appraisal process. Drawing from the answers, these factors were essential in how teachers understood and engaged with the process. These factors include: *financial rewards, leadership support, and collaboration among teachers*. Each of these factors contributed to create an environment where teachers felt recognized, supported, and encouraged to grow professionally.

##### **4.1.3.1 Financial Incentives**

It is well-known that financial rewards are a significant motivating factor for many teachers. Two participants out of four (teacher-expert, teacher-researcher) revealed that their

primary incentive for participating in a teacher appraisal is the potential for a salary increase. For instance, Participant 2 (teacher-expert) expressed her motivation for participating in the teacher appraisal process earlier than scheduled: “I talked to my methodologist that I wanted to get this category because I wanted a salary increase.” Participant 3 (teacher-researcher) had a similar experience: “I wasn’t even interested in it,(teacher appraisal). And then he (school methodologist) told me ... about salary increase and everything, so I just started preparing and took an IELTS exam.”

Financial incentives are important in motivating teachers to engage in the appraisal process. Since both the teacher-expert and teacher-researcher noted that their decision to participate in the teacher appraisal was driven by the potential for an increase in salary, these answers indicate that the possibility of a salary increase significantly influences their motivation to participate in the appraisal process. This highlights that while other factors matter, financial rewards remain a key motivator for encouraging teacher participation in professional development and teacher appraisal. Acknowledging the importance of these incentives is important for designing effective appraisal systems that influence both educator engagement and educational quality.

#### ***4.1.3.2 Leadership Support***

All teacher participants from the public case-study school emphasized the important role of the school leadership, especially a methodologist, a designated person for the teacher appraisal process. The school methodologist was a person who made a difference in how the participants’ attitudes towards the appraisal were shaped. Participant 3 (teacher-researcher) emphasized the difference a methodologist makes during the appraisal:

I’ve heard some stories from my colleagues from different schools, and most of them said that there was no help provided from the administration. So I guess we are lucky

enough to have a methodologist like that, who is really interested in our professional growth.

Participant 2 (teacher-expert) expressed a similar view:

I believe that leadership plays a significant role in the effectiveness of teacher appraisal. In my case, my methodologist took charge of everything because I was unsure about what was required from me. She handled most of the tasks on her own, which was very helpful.

Participant 1 (teacher-moderator) highlighted the important role of the methodologist once again:

The work of the methodologist before the appraisal is crucial. It is essential for the methodologist to be able to clearly explain the appraisal criteria and requirements to us. They should provide detailed explanations for each document, ensuring we understand everything clearly. We must adhere to what the guidelines specify. I've noticed that in other schools, methodologists don't provide explanations; they just send the documents via messaging apps.

The more experienced Participant 4 (teacher-master) expressed a different opinion:

I believe that young teachers might be receiving support, but I personally have not received any assistance. Even with minor things, like when I held a master class yesterday, no one attended—not even the vice-principal. I felt disappointed at first, but then I thought maybe this was a sign of trust in my abilities, which helped me calm down.

The answers of the participants highlight the crucial role of school leadership, especially that of the methodologist, in shaping and supporting the teacher appraisal process. Clear communication and support from leadership significantly affect teachers' attitudes and experiences. However, more experienced teacher-master expressed feelings of being

overlooked, highlighting a need for consistent and equal support for all teachers regardless of their working experience. Overall, effective leadership and support systems are essential for improving the appraisal process.

#### ***4.1.3.3 Teacher Collaboration and Ethical Dilemmas in Preparations for Appraisal***

Collaboration among teachers, both online and in person, has been identified as one of the key factors influencing the effectiveness of teacher appraisals. This may be a controversial point, but many teachers receive assistance with test questions through WhatsApp groups or even directly from their colleagues. Teachers from all across Kazakhstan participate in chats specifically created for the teacher appraisal test. Participant 4, a master teacher, expressed ethical concerns about this practice:

There are many WhatsApp groups sharing test questions. For instance, when I was preparing for the test, I found a Republican chat where members had posted some of the questions from the test. I glanced at two or three of them, and when I was actually taking the test, I was shocked to see those same questions. It's clear that there's a leak.

Participant 1 (teacher-moderator) shared his experience of a collaborative preparation for the test:

As colleagues, we all prepared for the test simultaneously. They invited me to join them, and we studied together. Each person focused on their own subject but also helped one another with pedagogy questions. They shared insights about which questions were likely to appear on the exam. The support we received was invaluable. There were individuals who managed to pass the test with just one day of preparation, thanks to the assistance from our colleagues.

Participant 3 (teacher-researcher) also mentioned the help she provided to her colleagues:

“Some of my colleagues sent me the questions of the test right from the test center, I helped some of my colleagues with their tests.”

In conclusion, collaboration among teachers significantly influences the effectiveness of a teacher appraisal process. While sharing advice is beneficial, ethical concerns arise when collaboration leads to sharing actual test questions. Participants’ experiences reveal the balance between support and the need for fairness during the teacher appraisal. Ultimately, fostering a supportive community is essential, but it must follow the ethical standards to confirm the appraisal system’s credibility.

The findings from a public school reveal significant challenges but with potential for improvement. Teachers shared that unclear and changing criteria, bureaucratic aspect, and the perceived unfairness of the teacher appraisal process lead to stress and confusion. Many teachers view the appraisal process as a mandatory requirement rather than an opportunity for growth and development. The mandatory professional development courses often fail to address the needs of teachers and the emphasis on certificates for a portfolio showcase the performativity aspect of the appraisal.

However, these findings also identify factors that could further improve the effectiveness of the teacher appraisal. For example, a salary increase is likely to be a strong motivation for teachers to participate in the appraisal. Support from the leadership, especially from a methodologist who provides guidance and supports teachers in this journey, enhances teachers’ experience during the appraisal process. Collaboration among teachers was another positive factor that contributed to the effectiveness of the appraisal, although there were concerns about the ethics since some teachers were sharing the test answers.

These findings suggest that the teacher appraisal process would benefit from establishing clear and stable criteria, aligning the mandated professional development courses

with teachers' needs, keeping the financial incentives, providing consistent support from the leadership, and promoting ethical collaboration among teachers. Through addressing these points, teacher appraisal in public schools has the capacity to change from being perceived as burdensome to becoming a tool for teacher development and school improvement.

## **4.2 Within-case analysis: A Private International School**

Four private-school teachers voluntarily agreed to participate in this study. Two of them are homeroom teachers, one is an English teacher, and one is an ICT teacher. Notably, two of the teachers are graduates of Nazarbayev University, which is significant because graduates of this institution automatically qualify for the teacher-moderator category. Since this private school has only been open for four years, many teachers have recently received their first categories. Additionally, many have joined from public schools or NIS, where they have already obtained their categories. As a result, the majority of the teachers did not meet my sampling criteria. Therefore, I recruited two teacher-moderators and two teacher-experts, who were also willing to participate in my study.

### **4.2.1 Teachers' Understandings of Teacher Appraisal**

#### ***4.2.1.1 Appraisal as a Formality***

All teachers from a private school expressed that the appraisal carried little weight in their professional standing. The school leadership initially told them the appraisal outcomes and their qualifications were not so important. In this private school, teachers' qualification categories do not affect their salaries. Participant 8 (teacher-expert) elaborated on this point:

I am generally pleased that, in this private school, the leadership does not tie any attestation results to the teachers. The attestation system we have in Kazakhstan does not accurately reflect teachers' status, skills, or their ability to work with children. I appreciate that, here, my assessment is based on my actual skills in working with

children rather than on attestation results. The school leadership observes my lessons directly, provides feedback, and evaluates my interactions with parents. For these personal qualities, they reward me with a salary increase.

The answers of teachers at the private school reveal a disconnect between the traditional appraisal system and the competencies needed for effective teaching. The private school teachers advocate for a holistic approach that emphasizes direct observation and meaningful feedback rather than standardized results. This perspective highlights the need for teacher appraisal to focus on individual skills and interactions, fostering a supportive environment for professional growth. Prioritizing direct assessment of teaching practices can enhance teacher satisfaction and improve student outcomes.

#### ***4.2.1.2 Concerns Over the Fairness and Objectivity of the Appraisal***

Since teachers in a private school did not get any financial rewards for getting a higher category, I was curious to understand their perceptions of the teacher appraisal. All the participants did not agree with the test and portfolio being the core evaluation tools.

Participant 8 (teacher-expert) stated: “Evaluating a teacher based on a test is absurd. Achievements alone are insufficient as well. Many factors influence whether one is going to get a place or not.” She also added: “If they want to evaluate us as teachers, how can they do so if they don’t observe our lessons?” Participant 7 (teacher-expert) also expressed her concerns about evaluating teachers through their achievements:

Firstly, there is widespread corruption in Kazakhstan; many top places in the Olympiads are bought and sold. Secondly, with thousands of teachers already working, it’s unreasonable to expect that they can all secure the top places in the competitions. This situation seems fundamentally unfair to me.

Participant 1 (teacher-moderator) questioned testing the knowledge of teachers through a test: “I believe that the goal of the attestation should be precisely to test the methodology and not

just subject knowledge.” Participant 2 (teacher-moderator) expressed a similar view, agreeing with the opinions above: “Personally, I don’t think it improved my teaching, because I was mostly on my and my students’ achievements. The test only evaluated my subject knowledge rather than my instructional quality.”

Private school teachers express significant concerns about the fairness of the appraisal process, criticizing the reliance on tests and portfolios as inadequate measures of effective teaching. They advocate for a more holistic approach that includes classroom observations and accounts for the complexities of teaching. Additionally, issues like corruption and competition for top positions increase the feelings of unfairness among teachers. Overall, the answers show the necessity to create a more equitable appraisal system that truly reflects teachers’ capabilities and contributions.

#### **4.2.2 Teachers’ Perceptions of the Teacher Appraisal’s Impact on their Professional Development**

##### ***4.2.2.1 Professional Development Courses***

This private school conducts professional development sessions every week focused on the context of their school and the needs of their learners. Each week, the school leadership selects a topic that is relevant to teaching practices. They also provide access to professional development courses that align with the school’s mission and framework. The school has implemented the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IB PYP) and International Baccalaureate Career-related Programme (IB CP) curricula. Participants agree that the professional development courses offered by the school meet their professional development needs and are relevant to their teaching practices. However, Participant 8 (teacher-expert) mentioned that the certificates of these courses are not recognized during the appraisal as part of their portfolio:

We had a course on IB that was conducted offline with a trainer coming to our school. There was another course that was online, but we still provided feedback. I learned a great deal from both of these courses and continue to use the knowledge I gained. If I forget something, I can always refer back to the course content. However, I later learnt that these certificates are not eligible for the teacher appraisal process.

Similarly, Participant 6 (teacher-moderator) shared that the courses provided by the school were relevant to her teaching: “We have seminars every summer and spring. For example, International Baccalaureate seminars for all teachers. I believe this is because our school is really interested to make us more competent.” On the other hand, regarding the courses provided by Orleu and Center of Excellence, Participant 7 (teacher-expert) shared that she did not know about the courses and their certificates being recognized for the appraisal:

At the time I was taking those courses, I didn't realize how useful they would be for me. Nobody told me that those certificates were going to be beneficial for the teacher attestation process. I was just fortunate in this regard.

Overall, the private school teachers found the professional development courses provided by the school relevant and helpful for their teaching practice. However, there was some confusion about the recognition of the professional development course certificates in the appraisal process.

#### ***4.2.2.3 Performance Metrics in Appraisal***

Participants from this private school did not emphasize the importance of certificates in their appraisal and doubted the relevance of the test to evaluate their teaching. Regarding this point, Participant 7 (teacher-expert) stated:

Taking a test is also stressful, because the questions are generally, well, I don't know, they are very difficult, and they don't affect my professional knowledge, right? That is, you just memorize something that, in principle, you don't use in teaching.

Regarding the less emphasis on the certificates, she also added a point when she conducted online lessons for a national TV channel, but she did not even realize whether this experience was eligible for the teacher appraisal portfolio. She shared that she felt lucky that this was recognized as sharing experience (which is one of the requirements during the teacher appraisal), yet she did not even realize it before.

Participant 6 (teacher-moderator) also questioned the purpose of the test: “It checks how well you know the subject content, understanding of the subject, and theoretical knowledge; but it does not assess your pedagogy.” She also placed less emphasis on the role of the certificates, but more emphasis on making the lessons engaging:

Other teachers and colleagues can attend our lessons and observe us because it is a requirement of the teacher appraisal. And I think this helps because we all want our lessons to be engaging and interesting, so we start looking for some new ideas, strategies, techniques, and activities. So, yes, teacher appraisal can be helpful if a teacher is motivated.

Overall, participants questioned the effectiveness of a test and a portfolio being the core evaluation tools. Teachers emphasized that appraisal is meaningful when it focuses on classroom practice.

### **4.2.3 Factors Contributing to the Effectiveness of the Teacher Appraisal**

#### ***4.2.3.1 Leadership Support***

According to the answers of the participants, leadership of the private school were not rigid with the teacher appraisal making the process less stressful for the teachers. All teachers also highlighted the important role of the leadership during the appraisal and the significance of one specialist responsible for the teacher attestation in their school. For example, Participant 7 (teacher-expert) stated:

Now we have a much better organization of the process, because now we have Miss Anna (pseudonym) who directly supervises our primary school. We are in the same building, and I can approach her at any time. She is open to assistance in this regard, and therefore now it is much easier and simpler for me to prepare.

Participant 8 (teacher-expert) shared: “Here (in a private school) the leadership doesn’t really put any pressure on either you or themselves.” Participant 1 (teacher-moderator) elaborated on the matter of leadership support in their school: “I feel like our leadership has a proactive attitude, that they prioritize the improvement of teaching staff and school overall. They are always ready to help us and everyone is involved in this process.”

Participant 2 (teacher-moderator) also added an interesting point about the school resources:

I believe teaching at a private school comes with a privilege since we have access to international resources. Our school buys subscriptions that provide teachers with high-quality materials saving us time and energy while preparing for the lessons. For example, I don’t have to spend many hours in order to prepare for my lessons because I have access to a high-quality quality ready-made resources.. Additionally, we have opportunities to attend international conferences, which inspire new ideas and teaching strategies. This kind of support really makes a difference in our classroom practice.

The answers show that supportive leadership make teacher appraisal more effective.

The participants reported less stress due to the supportive leadership and a designated person for the appraisal process. Teachers also benefited from access to high-quality resources, saving them time and energy, and professional development courses that are relevant to their practice. Together, these factors seem to successfully contribute to the effectiveness of the teacher appraisal process.

#### **4.2.3.2 Collaboration**

All participants highlighted the role of the collaboration in navigating the appraisal.

Participant 7 (teacher-expert) shared her experience:

Since I am going to apply for a teacher-researcher qualification category, one of the requirements for this category is to share my experience with the teachers of the city and the region. So in collaboration with my fellow teachers, we decided on the topic and a date of the seminar, consulting with our leadership, who provided full support for our initiative. We then organized a city-wide professional development seminar.

We demonstrated our lessons and conducted master-classes to share different teaching methodologies. This experience was a great opportunity for me to learn and grow as a teacher.

Participant 2 (teacher-moderator) also emphasized the importance of collaboration, mainly through working on projects together: “I believe teachers need to participate in projects together because they are really helpful. For example, by participating in certain projects, teachers can learn something new like integration of lesson study.”

The answers demonstrate that collaboration plays an important role in teacher appraisal effectiveness. Teachers benefited from peer collaboration while working together to organize professional development seminars to share their experiences. Leadership support further supported the collaboration among teachers, creating opportunities for professional growth. This collaborative approach not only contributed to the effectiveness of the appraisal process but also promoted ongoing professional development.

This chapter dealt with the teacher appraisal process in a private school. The three findings can be highlighted. First, teachers perceived the appraisal process mostly as formalistic since their assigned or confirmed qualification categories did not affect their salaries. Instead, teachers emphasized direct classroom observations as a means of evaluation.

Therefore, this created less stressful but more unenthusiastic attitude towards teacher appraisal. Second, teachers shared their concerns regarding the fairness and validity of the appraisal. They criticized the test that assessed their subject knowledge and the portfolio that included the certificates and diplomas being the evaluation tools. They suggested a more holistic approach including a classroom observation. Third, several factors were identified that contributed to the effectiveness of the appraisal. Leadership support, access to high-quality resources, weekly professional development sessions, and collaboration between teachers fostered professional development of teachers.

The findings show that appraisal can be effective when it focuses on classroom practice rather than on bureaucracy.

### **4.3. Cross-Case Analysis**

This section looks at two schools and how teachers in each school perceive and experience appraisal. The focus of this section is on the emotional effects of appraisal, concerns about fairness and transparency, the role of school leadership, and how teacher appraisal relates to professional development.

#### **4.3.1 Emotional Impact**

Teachers in the two schools have different feelings about the appraisal process. Two participants (teacher-expert, teacher-master) from the public school expressed strong opinions on how the appraisal process was overwhelming and disorganized. They felt stressed due to emotional pressure, complicated administrative and changing requirements. The frequent changes of the requirements and criteria of the appraisal new and teachers' anxiety about the appraisal outcomes made them view appraisal as high stakes, often leading to frustration. Conversely, all participants from the private school felt disconnected from appraisal because it did not affect their pay or job status. Instead of feeling stressed, they saw appraisal as

unimportant since their teaching skills and classroom practice had more effect on their salary increase more than the teacher appraisal results. Thus, this shows that when the appraisal outcomes affect teachers' salaries, teachers engage emotionally and when it lacks professional significance, they tend to feel indifferent instead of anxious.

#### **4.3.2 Fairness and Transparency**

Participants from both schools had concerns about the fairness and objectivity of the teacher appraisal process, though the nature of these concerns was different. In the public school, all participants questioned how transparent and fair the evaluation tools were, with two participants (teacher-expert, teacher-researcher) claiming that required data for the appraisal could be manipulated and criteria applied inconsistently. The lack of clear guidelines and frequent changes to requirements increased feelings of frustration and mistrust. Two participants (teacher-moderator, teacher-expert) also had to pay for their own professional development programs without enough support from the school, which added to the perception of unfairness. In the private school, all four participants shared doubts about the usefulness and effectiveness of the appraisal methods, especially regarding standardized tests and achievement measures. While teachers from the private school valued performance appraisal based on their teaching skills, they believed some assessments (standardized tests, portfolios) did not truly reflect their work. Despite these differences, both schools faced a gap between the appraisal system and teachers' views on its fairness and trustworthiness.

#### **4.3.3 The Role of School Leadership**

School leadership plays an important role in how teachers experience and perceive the teacher appraisal process. In the public case-study school, all participants mentioned that their chances to take part in the appraisal often depended on leadership choices. In some cases, their age and experience affected the categories they could get. This created inequality in

accessing professional recognition and led to confusion about how the teacher appraisal worked. In the private case-study school, the leadership role was different. Teachers did not have the same issue of accessing teacher appraisal, instead they felt that professional development opportunities provided by the school leadership were better organized and matched the school's curriculum. However, teachers were frustrated because, even though they had access to various professional development sessions, the certificates they earned were not officially recognized in the teacher appraisal system, which made them feel less valuable. This comparison shows that while public school teachers struggled to access appraisal opportunities, private school teachers faced a different challenge: having their professional growth recognized within the appraisal.

#### **4.3.4 The Connection Between Appraisal and Professional Development**

The two schools differed in how they linked the teacher appraisal to professional development. In the public school, teachers saw the appraisal process as mainly a bureaucratic task that did not support their professional growth. They experienced confusion due to changing criteria. In contrast, the private school had structured weekly professional development sessions that teachers valued. These sessions matched the school's educational goals and offered ongoing learning opportunities. However, there was still a disconnect between the professional development and the appraisal system.

#### **4.4 Summary**

In conclusion, this study highlighted how teacher appraisal functions in a public and a private school in Astana, Kazakhstan. Public school teachers found the appraisal process stressful due to the high-stakes nature of the appraisal linked to their salaries, while private school teachers perceived the appraisal process irrelevant because it neither impacts their salaries nor their teaching practice. However, each school type has some benefits. While

public schools provide structured financial incentives for each qualification category, private schools focus on classroom observations and meaningful feedback.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

This chapter situates the findings of this study within the discourse on teacher appraisal and analyzes them in relation to existing literature. This chapter also addresses the research questions that explore teachers' perceptions, interpretations, and the factors that support the appraisal processes in both public and private school sectors.

### **5.1 Teachers' Perceptions of Teacher Appraisal**

The first research question aimed to determine teachers' understandings of teacher appraisal. The findings of this study revealed that most teachers in both schools perceive teacher appraisal as a formal process intended to meet administrative requirements, with little connection to their professional development. Public school teachers perceived the teacher appraisal process as another issue to deal with, because they did not perceive any professional benefits aside salary increase. They also seem to struggle to link the appraisal process with the professional development opportunities, because the predominant focus of the appraisal seems to be on the accountability-focused activities and performative data such as preparation for the test, gathering the certificates/diplomas for the portfolio. This finding aligns with previous studies (Danielson, 2001; Darling-Hammond et al., 2013; Elliott, 2015; Milanowski & Kimball, 2003, Smith & Kubacka, 2017) which indicate that if an effective teacher appraisal process is not linked to professional development opportunities designed to enhance teachers' instructional quality, the appraisal process becomes a meaningless procedure. This can lead to a lack of trust and apathy among appraised teachers, who may regard the process as mechanical and automated, lacking any meaningful impact when there are no clear connections to professional development. On the other hand, private school teachers also perceive the teacher appraisal as an administrative procedure; however, the nature of their perceptions differ than that of public school teachers' perceptions. Private school teachers seem to be content with the professional development opportunities they are provided with,

but they cannot use them for the benefit of the teacher appraisal. More specifically, there are certain requirements for the eligibility of competition and professional development course certificates to be included in the portfolio. For example, since this private school is an international school that adopted an International Baccalaureate curriculum, the courses teachers are provided with are relevant to their context, curriculum, and teaching practice. However, the certificates that teachers from the private school obtained through certain professional development courses that align with their teaching practices do not meet the portfolio requirements. Additionally, if public school teachers receive financial rewards after getting a positive appraisal, private school teachers' salaries do not increase even after confirming or obtaining a qualification category. Therefore, the private school teachers feel indifferent towards the teacher appraisal, regarding it as not fair. All participants from both schools expressed concerns regarding the fairness of the appraisal process. They questioned the effectiveness of the tests used to assess and appraise teachers. Additionally, participants raised concerns about the portfolio's significant weight in the evaluation process, as they were required to gather all their and their students' achievements. One teacher from a private school (teacher-expert) and one teacher from a private school (teacher-master) shared their concerns about the fairness of having scaled requirements for confirming or obtaining categories. For example, to confirm or obtain higher qualification categories (teacher-expert, teacher-researcher, teacher-master), a requirement is to include republican and international certificates and diplomas. Therefore, teachers find it challenging to get diplomas on a republican and/or international level every three to five years since the outcome is not always dependent on the teachers' performance and professionalism. This finding resonates with the literature (Danielson, 2001; Pawson, 2019), which suggests that various factors influence students' learning processes, making it difficult to only attribute performance to teachers. Consequently, using student performance as one of the appraisal criteria raises concerns

about fairness and reliability. Additionally, teachers from both schools mentioned that participating in republican and international-level competitions requires significant effort and time, adding to their main responsibility of teaching. Relying on students' performance and test scores to appraise teachers can undermine their teaching practices and contribute to thinking that teacher appraisal is mostly a bureaucratic procedure (Smith & Holloway, 2020; Smith & Kubacka, 2017). This can lead teachers feeling like their work is measured by only tests and students' performance which can result in teachers leaving the professions (Han 2018).

## **5.2 Teachers' Interpretations of Teacher Appraisal**

The second research question aimed to explore how teachers interpret the teacher appraisal process. It was evident from the answers' of public school teachers that they emphasized the importance of certificates received from student Olympiads and competitions, as well as from various professional development courses. They particularly valued the professional development course certificates provided by Orleu and Center of Excellence because these were a requirement and held a significant weight when compiling a portfolio for the appraisal. For example, one novice teacher from a public school noted that the certificate he obtained from Orleu in the first year of his teaching instilled a sense of confidence and made him feel professional. He expressed that the certificate gave him confidence that in the future he could easily find a teaching job at another school with his Center of Excellence professional development course certificate. This finding aligns with Ball's (2003) definition of performativity, which describes it as a regulatory and assessment system that employs "judgements, comparisons, and displays" (p. 216) to measure, motivate, and control individuals, often in relation to rewards and penalties, in order to demonstrate their worth or quality within a specific context. A possible explanation for this might be that this novice participant regarded a Center of Excellence professional development course

certificate as a tool to show his worth and quality in an education sphere since he is a young professional. It seems that he tied his sense of professionalism to the certificate he obtained. According to Starr (2019), when the performative data used for comparisons and resulting in some form of rankings and hierarchical evaluations, teachers might shape their professional identities according to these rankings. Similar comments were expressed by teachers of both schools regarding qualification categories, suggesting that certain certificates and qualification categories significantly influenced their self-worth and professional identity. In this environment, teachers engage in what Ball (2003) describes as "fabrication"—the intentional crafting of professional identities and work narratives designed to meet external expectations. These fabrications are not outright lies; instead, they are curated portrayals aimed at creating a favorable impression within appraisal systems. As a result, appraisal shifts from a focus on reflective development to prioritizing visibility. The perceived benefit of the appraisal process for teachers was the assignment of qualification categories, that contributed to their sense of accomplishment. However, this contrasts with the literature (Perryman & Calvert, 2020), which states that performativity in education may lead teachers to feel as though they are merely performing to showcase their capabilities, resulting in a sense of deprofessionalization. It seems that, on the contrary, the qualification categories are contributing to the confidence of teachers and making them feel like they are professionals. However, this might be fabricated identities. As conceptualized by Ball (2003), fabrication is an intentional crafting of professional identities and work narratives designed to meet external expectations. According to Ball (2003), fabrications are not necessarily lies, rather they are deliberately and carefully constructed images intended to present a positive perception during the appraisal process. Therefore, it can be debated whether the assigned qualification categories following a successful teacher appraisal genuinely contributed to

their sense of professionalism or if they only created an identity to meet the expectations of the established requirements.

Another interesting finding is that teachers from a public school linked their professional development to the outcomes of various competitions. Teachers intentionally selected which competitions to enter, as there is a list of eligible competitions based on specific requirements. This raises a concern that teachers are prioritizing compliance with teacher standards over genuine professional development. According to Sachs (2016), standards and accountability are interconnected. It can be argued that teachers' identities changed in the pursuit of trying to comply to the external requirements and emphasizing the performative outcomes (Ball, 2003). According to Ball (2003), in a performative culture, teachers emphasize the importance of the outcomes and mainly act towards achieving specific outcomes rather than trying to improve their practice.

On the other hand, since teachers in the private school were not motivated by the financial incentives, they were not driven by the external requirements only. They shared that they were participating in the competitions and professional development courses to improve their practice.

In the context of private schools, teachers were initially informed that their qualifications were irrelevant and that they did not need to participate in teacher appraisal. However, they later began to take part in the appraisal process because schools required "quality" teachers with recognized qualifications. This aligns with prior literature (Cracknell, 2020) indicating that performative indicators, such as recognition and improved student performance on tests, contribute to enhancing a school's reputation among students and parents in a competitive educational environment. This is particularly relevant in the private sector, where, according to Perryman and Calvert (2020), schools are increasingly driven by the desire for performance, productivity, and value-added outcomes.

### **5.3 Factors Supporting Teacher Appraisal**

The third research question examined the factors shaping and supporting the appraisal process and their impact on the professional development of teachers. All participants agreed that effective leadership, particularly from a methodologist or a designated appraisal coordinator, was crucial in successfully passing the appraisal. This finding aligns with Tuyten and Devos's (2017) study that school leadership plays an important role in improving teachers' practice. In line with this, Flores and Derrington (2017) concluded that principals' perceptions are crucial in how the evaluation policies are understood and implemented. The participants' experiences with the leadership during the appraisal support Lacireno-Paquet et al.'s (2016) finding that teachers who view their leadership positively tend to be more satisfied with the appraisal process.

However, teachers from both schools emphasized that the appraisal criteria in Kazakhstan are challenging to understand and that the annually changing criteria exacerbate this confusion. This finding aligns with Lillejord and Borte's (2020) finding that when school leadership fails to make a connection between the appraisal process and its practicality, teacher appraisal tends to become more administrative rather than a process that supports the professional development of teachers. Therefore, all teachers emphasized the value of having a methodologist who could explain the procedures and guide them through the process. This finding supports the study of Tuytens and Devos's study that showed that the attitudes of school leadership influence whether the teacher appraisal focuses on formative or summative purpose of the appraisal.

### **5.4 Summary**

The findings of this study show a disconnect or a gap between the globally accepted definitions of teacher appraisal and the lived experiences of teachers with teacher appraisal in the local context of a public school and a private school. Teachers mostly view the appraisal

process as administrative and bureaucratic while one of the teacher appraisal's purposes is professional development. This shows that the professional development purpose is undermined while the accountability purpose prevails.

Teachers across both schools—a private and a public—expressed their concerns about the fairness of the appraisal process, especially they criticized the evaluation tools within the appraisal. This study shows how performative requirements—documenting certificates and diplomas, documenting their and their students' achievements, being accountable for the grades and achievements of their students, passing a test—dominate teacher appraisal. In a public school the current appraisal process stimulates teachers to compile the evidence of their competence in a high-stakes environment and the qualification categories create a hierarchical structure emphasizing the competition rather than fostering professional development and collaboration. In a private school, teachers feel disengaged from the appraisal process, since the outcomes seem not to affect their practice anyhow.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

This study aimed to explore how teachers in different school settings- a public and a private school- understood and interpreted their experiences within teacher appraisal. The research questions addressed the impact of teacher appraisal on their professional development, their perceptions, and the factors that shaped the appraisal process in their schools. This chapter deals with the conclusion of the whole study. The limitations, implications for further studies, and recommendations are presented in this chapter.

### **6.1 The Study Summary**

The study explored teachers' understandings and experiences of the teacher appraisal in a public and a private school in Astana, Kazakhstan. The notion of performativity by Ball (2003) was used as a theoretical framework. This framework proved to be useful in interpreting the study results, allowing to understand a deeper exploration of how the appraisal process shaped or changed teachers' identities and behavior. A qualitative multiple-case study design was used, with semi-structured interviews conducted with eight teachers, four teachers from each school.

Since the aim of the study was to understand teachers' lived experiences, the qualitative case study proved to be effective. The semi-structured interviews provided detailed answers allowing the researcher some flexibility. The multiple-case study highlighted contextual differences between a private and a public school.

The findings revealed the differences and similarities in how teachers perceived and experienced the teacher appraisal process influenced by the contextual differences of the schools. Teachers from both school perceived the appraisal process as mainly bureaucratic and administrative with little connection to their professional development. Public school teachers were more concerned with the high-stakes nature of the appraisal since the outcome of it would influence their salaries. On the other hand, private school teachers perceived the

appraisal process as irrelevant since it did not affect their salaries. Participants of both schools mentioned their concerns about the fairness and objectivity of the appraisal process and criticized the heavy reliance on a standardized test and portfolios as main evaluation tools. The factor that contributed the most to the effectiveness of the process in both school was the effective and supportive leadership, especially a methodologist or any designated person for this process to curate teachers during the appraisal. The study also found how performative measures shape teachers' professional identities. This finding aligns with the concept of fabrication by Ball (2003), where teachers craft their professional identities to meet external expectations.

## **6.2 Implications for Further Studies and Recommendations**

Further studies could expand to different cities of Kazakhstan and make a comparative analysis on how teachers experience teacher appraisal in different cities of Kazakhstan. To explore the regional differences even further, further studies could include teachers from rural and urban areas. Since supportive leadership found to be an effective factor shaping the appraisal process, the further studies can focus solely on leadership in the process of teacher appraisal.

The findings of this study suggest several courses of action for improving the current teacher appraisal system. First, the current appraisal process should be redesigned so that it would prioritize the professional development of teachers and not the bureaucratic and administrative aspect. Second, the criteria should be redesigned so that they are clear and stable in order to decrease the stress and confusion among teachers. Third, the appraisal process should not emphasize the standardized measures to evaluate teachers, rather it would be better to incorporate holistic measures that focus directly on the instructional practice of teachers. Fourth, school leadership should get sufficient training so that they can effectively guide teachers through the appraisal process and foster collaboration among teachers and

eliminate the biased approaches. Fifth, teacher appraisal should be inclusive to various professional development activities since teachers from private school found their contextually appropriate professional development certificates useful for their practice but not for the appraisal process.

### **6.3 The Study Strengths and Limitations**

This chapter presents the strengths and limitations of this study. The key strength is that the semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions allowed participants to give full and detailed answers to understand the lived experiences' of teachers with teacher appraisal. Additionally, the multiple-case study allowed to emphasize the institutional differences that shape the teacher appraisal between two schools settings.

A limitation of the study is the small sample size and that it was conducted in only one city of Kazakhstan (eight participants from two schools). Therefore, the findings of this study may not represent the diversity and variety of experiences with teacher appraisal. Another significant limitation is that being an insider researcher could have affected the answers of the participants. A final limitation is that this multiple-case study is based only on interview data, whereas Yin (2018) recommends using multiple data sources (documents, observation) to make findings more reliable.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Completed AI Declaration Form



**Thesis Title: Understanding Teacher Perceptions and Experiences of Teacher Appraisal in a Mainstream Public School and a Private School in Astana, Kazakhstan: A Multiple Case Study**

#### Declaration of the Use of Generative AI

I hereby declare that I have read and understood NUGSE's policy concerning appropriate use of AI and composed this work independently (please check one):

- with the use of artificial intelligence tools, or
- without the use of artificial intelligence tools.

(If you have used AI tools as defined in the GSE policy document, please complete the rest of this form.)

During the preparation of this thesis/examination, I used Google Scholar to select the relevant academic works to my topic, ChatGPT and Grammarly AI to rephrase the sentences and proofread the text I have written myself, ChatGPT to find the synonyms of some words, and ChatGPT to brainstorm ideas.

I also declare that I

- am aware of the capabilities and limitations of AI tool(s),
- have verified that the content generated by AI systems and adopted by me is factually correct,
- am aware that as the author of this thesis I bear full responsibility for the statements and assertions made in it,

have submitted complete and accurate information about my use of AI tools in this work,  
and

acknowledge that there may be disciplinary consequences if I have not followed  
NUGSE's guidelines regarding AI appropriate use.

Name: Aksamal Yessengarina

Date: 26.04.2025

Signature:

**Appendix B: Interview Protocol****Interview Protocol**

Date:

Time:

Duration:

Interviewee:

1. What is your name?
2. What subject do you teach?
3. How many years have you been teaching?
4. What is your qualification category?
5. When did you last go through the teacher appraisal process, and can you describe your experience during that appraisal?
6. How has the appraisal process influenced your growth and development as a teacher?
7. Can you share any specific ways the appraisal has helped you improve your teaching practices?
8. Do you think the appraisal system aligns with your professional development needs?  
Why or why not?
9. How clear are the goals and criteria of the teacher appraisal process in your school?
10. Do you feel that the appraisal process is fair and objective? Why or why not?
11. What factors in your school (e.g., school culture, leadership, resources) contribute to the effectiveness of the appraisal process?
12. How does the leadership at your school influence the way teacher appraisal is conducted?

## Appendix C: Recruitment Letter

### Recruitment Letter to Participate in Research Study

Dear Teacher,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Aksamal Yessengarina, and I am a graduate student in the MSc Educational Leadership - School Education program at Nazarbayev University. I am currently conducting research for my thesis titled "Understanding Teachers' Perceptions of Teacher Appraisal Experiences in a Mainstream Public School and a Private School in Astana, Kazakhstan: A Comparative Multiple Case Study".

The purpose of my study is to explore teachers' perceptions of teacher appraisal experiences in a mainstream public school and a private school in Astana, Kazakhstan. I would like to invite you to participate in this study. Your participation would involve:

**An Interview:** An individual interview lasting approximately 60-70 minutes.

**Scheduling:** The interview will be scheduled at a time and place convenient for you, ensuring minimal disruption to your responsibilities.

**Confidentiality:** All information you provide will be kept confidential, and your identity will be anonymized in all reports and publications.

Your insights and experiences are invaluable and will contribute significantly to understanding and improving teacher appraisal in Kazakhstan.

Participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without any penalty. If you are interested in participating or have any questions, please contact me at +7 708 393 4803 or [aksamal.yessengarina@nu.edu.kz](mailto:aksamal.yessengarina@nu.edu.kz).

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Aksamal Yessengarina

## Appendix D: Informed Consent Forms

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

#### **Understanding Teachers' Perceptions of Teacher Appraisal Experiences in a Mainstream Public School and a Private School in Astana, Kazakhstan: A Comparative Multiple Case Study**

**DESCRIPTION:** You are invited to participate in a research study that explores teachers' perceptions of teacher appraisal experiences in a mainstream public school and a private school in Astana, Kazakhstan.

#### **WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO IF I AGREE TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?**

You will be asked questions about your experience with the appraisal processes in an interview, which is expected to take approximately 60-70 minutes. The interview will be either conducted face-to-face or via video conferencing, depending on your availability and preference, at a time and place convenient for you.

If you decide to participate, I will arrange a mutually convenient time for us to meet in-person or online in order to have an individual interview with you. During the individual interview, you will be asked to discuss your attitude towards teacher appraisal in the context of your school. This interview will be audio-recorded. After the audio recording is written down (transcribed) the audio recording will be deleted. If you do not wish to be audio-recorded, you will still (or will not) be able to participate. The researcher will just take hand-notes. The interview will take approximately 60-70 minutes. You will be given a de-identified code in order to keep your identity confidential.

All data, including interview transcriptions and documents, will be securely stored to ensure participant confidentiality. After transcription, audio files will be deleted to further protect confidentiality.

**TIME INVOLVEMENT:** Your participation will take approximately 60-70 minutes.

**RISKS AND BENEFITS:** In conducting this study, one potential risk might be discomfort that is caused by answering interview questions. Before participation, you will receive information about the study, including potential risks. Informed consent will ensure that participants are fully aware of their rights and the voluntary nature of their participation. You may not benefit directly from the study, but this study may provide an opportunity for reflection on your experiences with the teacher appraisal process. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your employment in the school.

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

#### **CONSENT FOR AUDIO RECORDING**

**Audio recording is part of this research study. You can choose whether to give permission to be recorded. If you decide that you don't wish to be recorded, you will still be able to participate in this research study.**

\_\_\_\_\_ I give my consent to be recorded \_\_\_\_\_

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ I do not consent to be recorded \_\_\_\_\_

Signature

#### **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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

[kkurakbayev@nu.edu.kz](mailto:kkurakbayev@nu.edu.kz)

**Independent Contact:** If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a participant, please contact the GSE Research IREC subcommittee at [gse.irec@nu.edu.kz](mailto:gse.irec@nu.edu.kz).

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

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

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**According to the law of the Republic of Kazakhstan, an individual under the age of 18 is considered a child. Any participant falling into that category should be given the Parental Consent Form and have it signed by at least one of his/her parent(s) or guardian(s). In addition, the child must give assent to participate in the research. Both parent consent and child assent scripts should be included with this application.**