Beginner teachers' experiences of professional identity development during an induction programme in the Free State

by

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Declaration

I, Nasaret Tjirumbi, declare that the dissertation, **Beginner teachers' experiences of professional identity development during an induction programme in the Free State**, submitted for the qualification of Master of Education with specialisation in Curriculum Studies at the University of the Free State, is my own independent work.

All the references that I have used have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that this work has not previously been submitted by me at another university or faculty for the purpose of obtaining a qualification.

A Turnitin report on the work produced is included in Appendix H.

Nasaret Tjirumbi — November 2021

SIGNED — DATE

Abstract

In this study, I explored the professional identity of beginner teachers (BTs) during an induction programme. Research indicates that many new teachers are thrown into the deep end when they start their careers and are expected to take on the same roles and responsibilities as their senior colleagues. Worldwide, it has been shown that teachers who feel unsupported, stressed and unprepared are more likely to abandon the teaching profession in their first few years. In South Africa, there is currently no formal induction programme in place for BTs. Stakeholders agree, however, that such a programme is required, prompting the Department of Education to launch an induction field test in one Free State district (Thabo Mofutsanyana). In collaboration with Gent University, the University of the Free State conducted a research component of this field test. My study fell within the ambit of the larger research component and focused specifically on the development of BT professional identity during an induction programme. I worked with Social Network Theory to better understand the role of social network structures, collaborative relationships and different actors that play a part in BT identity development. The study used a qualitative approach, drawing on survey and interview data from BTs in the Thabo Mofutsanyana district. The findings show that BTs experience a range of challenges in the first few years of teaching related to administrative duties, difficult relationships with senior teachers, little support, feelings of isolation, and large class sizes which further aggravated learner discipline issues. In addition, many experienced the added challenges related to dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic in their first years of teaching. Based on the highlighted, I recommend that induction programmes be strengthened to help BTs deal with the existing challenges as they develop their professional identity. This may help in minimising teacher turnover in South Africa.

Keywords: beginner teachers; induction programme; professional development; Social Network Theory; teacher professional identity

Dedication

I devote the attainment of this degree to my beloved mother and father, who, as parents, backed and supported me throughout my schooling career. Thank you, Mom and Dad, for the sacrifices you made for me. Thank you for your love, devotion and endurance during my years of studying.

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Thank you to my family for their patience and understanding when I could not make it to family gatherings as often as they would have liked due to my studies. A special thanks to my mom, Ms Kaukembwa Kasengo, my father, Mr Ndemongela Hifilenya, and my two siblings, Susan Hifilenya and Uteya Tjirumbi.

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Acronyms

BT	Beginner teacher
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CPTD	Continuing professional teacher development
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
FSDoE	Free State Department of Education
HOD	Head of Department
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
SA	South Africa
SNT	Social Network Theory
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UFS	University of the Free State

CHAPTER 1: STUDY INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Educators comprise the largest professional group and form the foundation for all other fields. Teachers are important since they are the foundation of schools, learning and teaching and the backbone of society's future pioneers (Ingersoll & Collins, 2018). The importance of teachers in the educational system for the preparation and development of young people's knowledge, skills and culture cannot be overstated (Mahkamov & Dilafruz, 2021).

The manner in which beginner teachers (BTs) (and teachers in general) identify as professional teachers is an important contributing aspect and foundation of their professional identity (Richter, Brunner & Richter, 2021). Although the focus of this study is on BTs' professional identity, it is important to remember that teachers' professional identity is formed and developed prior to entering the teaching profession. Jackson (2017:1) defines this concept as "pre-professional identity", a multifaceted phenomenon that includes awareness and connections with a student teacher's chosen profession. During the pre-professional identity phase, student teachers' beliefs, values, attitudes, abilities, standards and qualities, as well as their understanding of their professional self, are constructed (Zhang, Clarke & Lee, 2018).

According to Irani, Chalak, and Tabrizi (2020), there are a few distinctions between the identities of established professionals and those entering the teaching profession. Compared to more established and experienced professionals, the pre-professional identity of BTs is still in its maturation phase (Jackson, 2017). As such, the purpose of this study is to explore BTs professional identities, as they are still in the early stages of developing as professional teachers in the development of their professional identities.

The development of BTs' professional identity is crucial for the teaching profession. It provides a framework for BTs to build their own thoughts and perspectives on

becoming teachers and how they understand their roles and responsibilities in society (Yilmaz & Ilhan, 2017).

Additionally, according to Social Network Theory (SNT), when BTs begin teaching, their opportunities for learning and growth are adversely affected by their workplace relationships and interactions. These relationships and interactions are alluded to as their social network structures and influence the development of their professional identity (Van Waes et al., 2018).

However, unlike other professions, teachers seldom receive opportunities for professional development. This is specifically true for BTs in South Africa (SA), who begin their careers with little to no preparatory training or orientation programmes (Daniels, 2019). From the first day of work, they are expected to take on equal teaching duties as their senior peers and complete their prescribed teaching hours, and this while also having to engage in extracurricular activities (Woest, 2018).

Consequently, many BTs experience “reality shock” when they start to teach in real-world settings during this shift (Botha & Rens, 2018:1). Terms such as “transition shock”, “survival phase” and “shattered dreams” have been used to characterise this shift (Woest, 2018:2). As a result, most BTs are challenged with a discrepancy between theoretical knowledge and practice.

When this gap occurs, BTs’ professional identity develops on two levels: their interactions with people (social contexts) and their beliefs about who they are and what they want to be as professional teachers (Titu, 2019). From the social perspective, social settings consist of interactions with peers, learners and the community. Conversely, from the psychological and cognitive perspectives, their beliefs consist of who they are and the type of teachers they aspire to be, which are constructed from prior experiences and social interactions with others (Yilmaz & Ilhan, 2017).

Thus, their decision to continue or leave teaching is frequently influenced by their beliefs and perceptions of themselves as professional teachers (Vidović & Domović, 2019). Hence, developing BTs’ professional identity at an early stage is critical to

ensuring their adherence and commitment to their responsibilities as professional teachers (Titu, 2019).

However, most BTs have found the implementation and practical aspects overwhelming. This is due to the seemingly unfair expectation that they automatically possess an in-depth knowledge of classroom management and the curriculum, as well as a mastery of school functions, policies and structure, with little to no developmental programmes (Botha & Rens, 2018). Induction programmes, particularly BT mentoring, have been shown to support BTs and minimise teacher turnover (Daniels, 2019).

The major problem raised in this study is that SA BTs experience numerous problems in their initial year(s) of teaching (Flores, 2019). Among these challenges are teaching challenges, student assessments, classroom management, learner difficulties, subject knowledge and expertise (Petersen, 2017). While BTs gain a lot of knowledge about didactics and subject matter throughout their teacher preparation programmes, many skills and competencies can only be learned and taught on the job (Darling-Hammond, 2017). There is also a gap in the literature on the responsibility of SA tertiary institutions to adequately prepare BTs to deal with the issues they may face during their first teaching years (Ntoyakhe, 2018).

Thus, my interest in this study was evoked by the level of preparedness and developmental opportunities of BTs to develop their professional identity in their first years. In other words, I want to acknowledge the challenges faced by BTs in SA and investigate how an induction programme may assist BTs in developing their professional identity to sustain and maintain them in the teaching profession.

1.2 Study Background

The major problem highlighted in this study is that BTs in SA face many challenges in their first year or years of practice, resulting in a high rate of BT attrition (Petersen, 2017). Although higher institutions provide BTs with some skills and knowledge, this study claims that it is impossible for tertiary institutions to fully prepare BTs for all

facets of the teaching profession (Holmqvist, 2019). While pre-service teachers acquire much subject-matter knowledge and many didactic skills throughout their teacher education programmes, other skills can only be taught and learned on the job (Darling-Hammond, Hyler & Gardner, 2017).

It is believed that initial teacher preparation programmes provide pre-service teachers with underlying experiences and practice. Nonetheless, teaching also requires expertise and contextual knowledge that can only be taught, developed and acquired in the classroom (Hangül, 2017). Additionally, because SA lacks formalised induction programmes, most BTs seldom receive developmental opportunities, as BT induction and mentorship are considered a school-to-school initiative (Daniels, 2019).

As such, due to a lack of preparation in teaching areas, many BTs in SA encounter a range of difficulties during their first year(s) (Chigona, 2017). Lack of support and inadequate training and subject-matter knowledge have been identified as professional stressors (Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018). Personal stresses such as a lack of confidence, low self-efficacy, job discontentment and excessive work pressure occur due to this (Flores, 2017). This therefore leads to many BTs abandoning their jobs within their first few years of teaching (Esau, 2017).

This is affirmed by research indicating that novice teachers in SA appear to be quitting the profession in increasing numbers (SA. Department of Education [DoE], 2005). According to statistics, teachers under the age of 30 leave the profession at a rate of 5 to 5.5 percent per year in SA, resulting in an average of 17,000 to 20,000 teachers leaving the field each year (Daniels, 2019). As such, teacher retention and turnover are pressing topics that negatively impact SA's educational quality (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019).

Many countries and school districts worldwide mandate BTs to participate in mentorship and induction programmes to retain and support them (Spooner-Lane, 2017). Induction programmes are designed to support and develop BTs throughout their first year(s) of teaching (Daniels, 2019). Professional development, enhanced support, observations, collaboration and strategic feedback are all important

characteristics of first-year induction programmes (Davenport, 2019). Induction programmes have also been shown to positively affect BTs' decision to stay in the profession (Flores, 2019). However, SA currently has no official institutionalised induction programmes to help BTs transition into the teaching profession (Daniels, 2019).

To address the problem, the Free State Department of Education (FSDoE) developed a one-year induction programme in collaboration with Gent University that began in January 2020. The objective of the induction programme was to assist and retain BTs in their jobs. In this regard, the Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad (Flemish Interuniversities Council) and the Universitaire Ontwikkelings-samenwerking (University Development Co-operation) (VLIR-UOS) funded the University of Gent and the University of the Free State (UFS) to complete the research component of the induction model with the project: "Strengthening beginning teachers' professional identity: An exploratory study into the efficiency of an induction model in South Africa."

The goal of this research project was to conduct an exploratory field test of the implementation of this induction model. The project intended to use a mixed-method follow-up design to assess the extent to which this implementation was successful and to uncover supporting and (or) hindering factors. According to the Teacher Induction as a National Priority | VVOB in South Africa (2022), the field test of the New Teacher Induction (NTI) programme was launched in collaboration with the South African Council for Educators (SACE) and with the support of VVOB-education for development. The goal of NTI was to strengthen BTs' professional development while also supporting BTs in their transition from pre-service training to classroom teaching challenges. The NTI program's first field test was in the Free State, with subsequent roll-outs planned for KwaZulu-Natal and North West provinces. The purpose of these field tests is to provide the DBE with pivotal relevant information before finalising an induction programme for the national roll-out.

The induction model consisted of four main components: (1) school-based mentoring, (2) peer support, (3) training by external experts tailored to identified needs, and (4) the development of a personal development plan (portfolio). These components are described as highly relevant in the literature, but they have not yet been brought together in an overall and holistic framework. A field test was required to ensure the quality of this induction model. The UFS and Ghent University collaborated on this field test. The Ghent University research group Teacher Education and Professional Development was approached due to its unique methodological expertise in mixed-method research on BTs. More concretely, the goal of the research was to explore to what degree the components of the model are related to indicators of teachers' sense of professional identity (job satisfaction, school commitment, intrinsic motivation to teach, self-efficacy). Moreover, the research intended to determine which factors hindered or supported the relationship between the induction model and these indicators.

My study forms part of the research project between Gent University and the UFS. The goal of the induction model, as previously indicated, was to support and retain BTs in their roles. The specific focus of my work is on the development of teacher professional identity during an induction programme. The main objective of this study is to identify the problems that BTs experience and to investigate how an induction programme can support BTs in developing their teacher identity to support and keep them in the teaching profession.

Given that professional identity is seen as an important framework for developing and assessing BTs' learning and growth (Vidović & Domović, 2019), my study focuses on BTs' professional identity. Furthermore, in order for BTs to adhere to and secure their commitments in their practices as professional teachers, they must first develop their professional identity (Titu, 2019). The professional identity of BTs is strongly related to teacher retention (Flores, 2019). Therefore, this is further explored in this study.

As previously stated, my dissertation focus on BTs' professional identity is a subset of a larger research project. Two more master's students are also involved in the

larger project, with an emphasis on support and mentoring, and the self-efficacy and resilience of BTs, respectively. These components of the induction programme were identified by literature as critical measuring scales and have been shown to help retain BTs on a worldwide scale (Lancaster, 2019; Renbarger & Davis, 2019). As such, the various components of our individualised master's dissertations are related to the larger project and the induction model programme's objective of supporting and retaining BTs in their profession in SA.

1.3 Rationale and Problem Statement

When BTs enter the teaching profession, they transition from being students to becoming teachers of students, resulting in a substantial shift in their identity (Kearney, 2017). Unfortunately, when BTs enter the teaching profession, there is no gradual adaptation besides the expectation, if not the need, that they immediately assume the same duties and responsibilities as their more experienced colleagues.

According to international studies, beginning on the first day, BTs are expected to stand in front of students and educate in the same manner as their more experienced colleagues. This they must do while also learning school regulations and procedures and becoming acquainted with the school environment and curriculum (Sözen, 2018). Based on the lack of support in schools and training programmes, many BTs worldwide leave the teaching profession during their first years of teaching.

Consequently, based on the alarming number of BTs who leave the teaching profession prematurely in SA, my objective in this research is to discover the difficulties that BTs experience. I will do this by looking into their professional identity development and how an induction programme may remedy and support BTs in SA. As such, developing teachers' identity is essential for guaranteeing their job commitment to teach while adhering to professional standards (Fraser, 2018). Furthermore, teachers' identity influences their attitudes, where they spend their time at work and whether or not they pursue professional development opportunities. It also influences how they seek those opportunities and what roles they feel to be inherent in their starring role (Titu, 2019).

Additionally, Cook (2017) observed that BTs with no previous work experience are less equipped to carry out assigned tasks and responsibilities than experienced teachers. Thus, for BTs to become competent teachers, they must receive adequate training and expertise to deliver high-quality education, which is currently a key problem in the SA educational system (Maddock & Maroun, 2018).

When BTs go from university to school, they confront several identity conflicts and adaptations. During this time, they begin to question and reinterpret their professional identity (Henry, 2019). Furthermore, these stressors and adaptations frequently contribute to feelings of dissatisfaction and powerlessness, which lead to BTs abandoning their career as teachers (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017). As a result, it is critical to understand the conflicting feelings and challenges that BTs face as they develop their professional identity, and to provide them with the resources they need to succeed (Hong, Day & Greene, 2018).

According to Steenekamp, Van der Merwe and Mehmedova (2018), teachers' professional identity development is a continuous process of clarification and analysis of what they consider teaching to be. In contrast, BTs' professional identity development can be characterised as the act of negotiation, sense-making and understanding acquired through personal experiences and behaviours during practice teaching.

BTs who may have had negative experiences during their teacher education programmes or who may have had a poorly managed career may have a negative perception of their professional identity (Fraser, 2018). Thus, it is crucial to note that BTs' beliefs, attitudes and behaviours are important factors in how they construct their professional identity, whether they have work satisfaction and how they deal with day-to-day problems in their field (Titu, 2019).

In SA, BTs confront a variety of problems, including insufficient training and preparation (Govender, 2018) and a lack of competence, organisation and conceptual awareness. This is because teacher preparation programmes do not adequately model the vital roles and abilities that teachers should have (Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018). In addition, there are no formal institutionalised induction

programmes to help BTs in SA, as induction for BTs is still a school-based informal initiative (Daniels, 2019).

To support BTs, many schools require all new teachers to participate in some sort of induction programme (Hangül, 2017; Paronjodi, Jusoh & Abdullah, 2017). Effective induction programmes have been shown to have a good impact on BTs' confidence, which has a significant effect on their professional identity development (McGeehan, 2019). Research indicates that BTs' participation in collaborative reflection with experienced teachers and the community favourably influences their professional identity (Cook, 2017; Schwabsky, Goldenberg & Oppenheimer, 2020).

The majority of those BTs who quit do so because they cannot deal with the high demands and expectations of teaching, often leaving them to feel overwhelmed and confused and to abandon their primary duties (Dorji, Sirasoonthorn & Anusaksathien, 2019). Understanding professional identity development and how it is mediated is critical for categorising BTs' needs and professional learning improvement (Dikilitaş & Yayl, 2018). Furthermore, how BTs identify as experienced teachers is related to their characteristics as educators.

Thus, the point raised in this study is a lack of developmental opportunities for BTs, particularly in SA, which is a subject of concern and a contributing factor to BTs leaving the teaching profession. Therefore, this study proposes that BTs should be provided with developmental opportunities and experience through an induction programme. Through this, they will be able to see themselves through the lens and understanding of other teachers to better understand what is expected and required of them and what their position is regarding their professional identity (Tsybulsky & Muchnik-Rozanov, 2019). Since BTs' professional identity affects how they do their jobs and respond to educational changes (Karousiou, Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2019), it is essential to consider their professional identity as a critical element in improving teacher retention and stabilising the teaching profession.

1.4 Research Questions

1.4.1 Primary research question

The following research question directs this research: How do BTs' professional identity develop during an induction programme?

1.4.2 Supplementary research questions

The following supplementary research questions have been formulated:

- What are the challenges BTs face during their first year(s) of teaching?
- How can BTs' professional identity influence their professional development?
- What comments can be made on BTs' professional identity development during an induction programme?
- What suggestions can be made to enhance induction programmes for the benefit of BTs?

1.5 Aims and Objectives of the Study

1.5.1 Research aim

This study aims to understand how BTs' professional identity develops during an induction programme.

1.5.2 Research objectives

The following research objectives have been formulated:

- To explore the challenges that BTs face in their first year(s).
- To investigate how BTs' professional identity can influence their professional development.
- To offer comments on BTs' professional identity development during an induction programme.
- To make recommendations on how induction programmes may be enhanced for the benefit of BTs.

1.6 Research Paradigm

The interpretative paradigm underpinned this qualitative study. The interpretative paradigm is premised on the assumption that human performance and development are socially constructed and influenced by the individual's social position in society (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). The qualitative research method supplemented the interpretative paradigm since it allowed participants (BTs) to share their teaching experiences through semi-structured interviews.

Furthermore, the ontological stance of the interpretative paradigm strongly associated with my study. I assumed that the participants' subjective and internal experiences are essential, and how they respond in certain situations is primarily based on their prior experiences and circumstances (Žukauskas, Vveinhardt & Andriukaitien, 2018). I admit that how BTs construct their professional identity varies due to their diverse knowledge, experiences, views and interpretations.

SNT, in particular, reiterates that information and knowledge flow occurs through interpersonal relationships and social contacts, such as inquiry, collaboration and mutual support, which may occur through an induction programme in this instance. Hence, both the interpretative and SNT perspectives hold that humans are interdependent since they are encased in social network structures (Gašević et al., 2019). Therefore, my research paradigm influenced my study and the decisions I made regarding selecting a qualitative research approach.

1.7 Research Design

According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), a research design is a formal strategy used by the researcher to specify how data will be collected and analysed. The authors say that specific requirements, such as gathering data to address the research questions, must be met for a particular design. In the larger project of which my study forms a part, a mixed-methods approach was followed, with the primary methods of data collection being interviews and surveys (questionnaires). The

mixed-methods approach allowed for both qualitative and quantitative data to shed light on the experiences of BTs in an induction programme.

In the context of my specific study, which looks at BTs' professional identity development during an induction programme, I primarily focused on the use of qualitative data that emerged from semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were most appropriate for this study, since interviews are dialogic and provide a platform for discussion, allowing for good reading material (Tracy, 2019). According to Husband (2020), semi-structured interviews are in-depth interviews that are widely used in qualitative research. This approach often includes dialogues between participants and researchers, facilitated by flexible interview methods and reinforced by probes, follow-up questions and comments (McGrath, Palmgren & Liljedahl, 2019).

Semi-structured interviews serve as primary data as they provide a platform to dig deeper into participant (in this case, BTs) perceptions, behaviours and subjective perspectives (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). They also provide insight into participants' pedagogical viewpoints and experiences, allowing for a deeper comprehension of their narratives, which might be overlooked in experiments or surveys (Tracy, 2019).

Even though my study primarily draws on qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews, I also use some quantitative data that emerged from the baseline survey used in the larger project design. In the baseline survey, self-efficacy, sense of belonging, job satisfaction and motivation measuring scales were used and these informed my understanding of BTs' professional identity (Richter et al., 2021). These components of the induction programme are further investigated through semi-structured interviews in my study. Drawing on multiple data sources allowed for a more informed discussion and analysis of identifying variables hindering or enhancing BTs' professional identity and the challenges they face.

1.7.1 Data collection

As part of the larger project, we all used the same interview protocols to gather data from a sample of 14 BTs in the Thabo Mofutsanyana district. The objective was to interview the chosen participants three times during the induction programme, once at the beginning, once in the middle and once at the end. Implementing a follow-up design was critical since it allowed for insights into future changes and ensured that the changes in factors that inhibited or supported BTs' sense of professional identity were investigated. However, some changes had to be made to the initial plan due to the impact of COVID-19 on the induction programme rollout.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the semi-structured interviews were mostly conducted over the phone, with few face-to-face interviews. This is thoroughly discussed in Chapter 3, the research methodology chapter.

1.7.2 Sampling method

This study employed purposeful sampling since it focuses on the possession of knowledge and skills regarding a phenomenon, in this case BTs' professional identity development (Hoeber et al., 2017). Initially, the target of the larger project was for 100 BTs to participate in the field test of the induction model programme. However, due to the COVID-19 outbreak and lockdown limitations, only 47 BTs attended the induction training sessions.

From these 47 BTs, 14 from the Thabo Mofutsanyana district were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted by myself and the two other master's students on the project. All BTs who participated were in their first three years of teaching and worked at a post-level one school in Thabo Mofutsanyana. The BTs I interviewed were specifically form the Bethlehem area. However, the data I draw on are from interviews conducted by myself and the other two master's students, who focused on the QwaQwa area. Between the three of us, we conducted two rounds of continuous semi-structured interviews with the 14 participants in 2021. There will be a final round of semi-structured interviews with

the participants in 2022 to conclude the larger project. However, for the purposes of my study, I only draw on the data gathered in 2021.

1.7.3 Data analysis

Data analysis can be described as the process of reducing the amount of data collected and categorising irrelevant data from important data into a coherent framework (Canals, 2017). SNT allowed me to recognise participants' descriptive accounts in their verbatim narratives in order to assess how their network structures (in terms of support availability, distribution of resources in their schools) impacted their experiences as BTs.

Furthermore, I used thematic narrative analysis to contextualise data by telling stories about what participants shared and told. This provided me with a dimension of realism, emotions, humanity, values and viewpoints in participants' network structures (schools) and how this influenced the development of their professional identity. Finally, thematic narrative analysis involves summarising data in recurrent patterns, themes or phrases (Nowell et al., 2017). The data were colour-coded and analysed inductively and deductively, with themes and subthemes emerging (Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019).

The data analysis included the steps of transcribing, reviewing and editing, analysis, interpretation and verification (Williams & Moser, 2019). In addition to semi-structured interviews and surveys, observation was used to increase validity and reliability. Furthermore, SNT guided the study framework during the analysis process by looking at existing networks of BTs.

The underlying philosophy of SNT is that how individuals (in this case, BTs) are connected within a broader network of social relationships significantly impacts their performance and behaviour (Azizi, Soroush & Khatony, 2019). Recognising the value of network structures as professional development tools might provide BTs with appropriate access to resources, skills and knowledge through reflective practices (Stoetzle, 2020).

Furthermore, SNT may be used as a lens to encourage reflective behaviours using professional development methods such as BT induction, allowing BTs to construct and deconstruct their professional identity (Sannen et al., 2019). The development of BTs' professional identity in education should no longer be viewed as an individual pursuit, but rather as part of the larger network of relationships surrounding the individual (Van Waes et al., 2018). SNT may function as a valid lens by helping BTs analyse their social interactions in professional settings.

1.8 Ethical Considerations

An application was made for ethical clearance for the larger project and ethical clearance was granted by the UFS and permission was granted to use it in our research. The following is the ethics clearance number: UFS-HSD2019/1371/2110 (see Appendix A). Since the study took place in various schools in the Free State (Bethlehem and QwaQwa in the Thabo Mofutsanyana district), authorisation was requested (and granted) by the FSDoE. My study forms part of the bigger umbrella project and was registered under the bigger project.

The study aims and objectives were explicitly outlined to potential participants before acquiring consent. Secondly, I stressed to the participants that their participation in the study was entirely voluntary and that they were free to withdraw at any moment. I also emphasised that there was no monetary incentive for them to participate in the study. In addition, I assured them that I would use pseudonyms to protect their identity and that of their schools.

After participants had consented to participate and were fully informed about the goals of the study, they were given consent forms to sign as confirmation (see Appendix B). The purpose of consent forms in research is to protect participants' rights, well-being and emotional state during their participation in a study (Botha & Rens, 2018). To adhere to strict confidentiality, protect my participants and avoid deceit throughout the study from me and my participants, consent forms were necessary. Lastly, before I visited the participating schools to collect data from the

participants, permission was sought for and granted from the principals of the schools to interview their teachers (see Appendix C).

1.9 Value of the Research

The importance of this study is linked to the economic and social need to invest in teacher education and professional identity development. Specific steps must be taken to address the present social demands in SA, three of which are attracting, developing and keeping competent teachers. Furthermore, an induction programme can be viewed as a toolkit for BTs to perform well in their chosen careers, rather than simply an attempt to keep them in the teaching profession.

In light of this, a fully effective and well-researched teacher induction programme in SA might assist BTs in successfully adjusting to school life and teaching. Therefore, it was vital to understand teacher development concerns and the difficulties experienced by BTs in preparing to teach. As a result, there is a big desire for assistance in easing BTs into their new, more profound roles.

1.10 Definition of Key Concepts

Beginner teachers are teachers who have undergone their teacher education programmes and are performing their first year(s) as novice teachers in schools (Woest, 2018).

Induction programmes are collaborative structures designed to assist BTs when they begin their career as teachers (Davenport, 2019).

Social Network Theory is a theory that examines the dynamics and social interactions of social networks (Van Waes et al., 2018).

Teacher professional identity development is a continuous process of perception and reinterpretation triggered by experience and contextual factors.

Teacher collaboration is described as the joint activity or shared tasks of activities of a group of teachers (Sannen et al., 2019).

1.11 Outline and Organisation of Chapters

Chapter 1: Study Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to familiarise the reader with my dissertation. It provides a brief overview and background of the study. This is accomplished by describing how BTs are expected to take on the same roles and responsibilities as their more experienced peers straight away. I expand on this discussion by looking at the vast range of responsibilities that frequently cause conflicts, as well as how these conflicts affect BTs' professional development. I describe the aim and rationale of my study, as well as the research problem that led to the development of my research questions to address it. In addition, I hypothesise my study's research objective and relevance. Furthermore, I clarify the topics that are relevant to my research. The research methods, design and paradigm are also presented.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In Chapter 2, a literature review is conducted to obtain a thorough conceptual understanding of the study's central concepts, including BTs' professional identity, BTs' challenges, induction programmes and the SNT analysis. Exploration of these concepts was considered essential for a broader and clearer knowledge of my topic. It is necessary to have a conceptual understanding of my research concepts in order to analyse the data generated in this study. Thus, it may be difficult to define exactly what to reflect on without in-depth knowledge, understanding and information about how BTs can develop their professional identity through an induction programme.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Design

This chapter describes the measures used to respond to the research questions presented in Chapter 1. I begin with the chapter's introduction, and then follow to discuss the research paradigm, research design and research methods employed. I also discuss the data gathering techniques and data analysis methods used. Furthermore, I discuss ethical issues as well as the validity and reliability of the study.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter provides a narrative summary of the generated data. Through the perspective of SNT, I discuss, present and analyse the generated data from the semi-structured interviews and baseline survey. The semi-structured interviews and baseline survey were used in this research to collect comprehensive data and elicit personal and subjective experiences from participants to better understand how these factors influenced their professional identity through an induction programme.

Chapter 5: Recommendations and Conclusion of the Study

The research questions posed in Chapter 1 are revisited in this chapter. The study overview is provided and the findings are discussed. In terms of reflection, I discuss and provide recommendations for future research based on the findings. Finally, I discuss the study's limitations and contributions.

1.12 Chapter Summary

Many teachers in SA, just like those in other countries, exit the teaching field soon after entering it, due to common challenges. Induction programmes have been shown to have a positive impact on BTs in other countries to decide to remain in their job. In SA, however, there are no formalised induction programmes, as BT induction remains a school-based initiative. Teacher retention is directly linked to professional identity, which is a crucial prerequisite for professional learning.

Based on the study aim of how teachers' professional identity develops during an induction programme, this chapter looked into the causes and consequences of BT attrition. This chapter gave an outline of the focus of the research. In order to achieve the research aim, this chapter listed a few objectives and sub-questions. This qualitative study's most appropriate research methods were a literature review, research methodology, data analysis and semi-structured interviews (primary data collection). The next chapter examines relevant literature to better grasp the research concepts essential to this study, namely BT experiences, induction programmes, professional identity development and SNT.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I conduct a literature study in order to gain conceptual knowledge and an understanding of the following research concepts: BTs' professional identity, BTs' challenges, induction programmes and SNT analysis. The rationale for this study is that there are insufficient developmental opportunities for BTs in SA, which results in BTs encountering a range of challenges, thus increasing BT attrition. As such, this chapter seeks to acquire a thorough understanding of how BTs' professional identity develops during an induction programme. That understanding will then be utilised to offer suggestions on how induction programmes may be improved to better assist BTs.

This chapter explores works of literature that are relevant to the research topic. Using relevant literature, I first explore teachers' professional identity. Similarly, I discuss the challenges that BTs confront on a global and local level and the present effect of COVID-19 on BTs. Following that, I discuss BT induction programmes, with a focus on the challenges and successes of induction programmes. Finally, I elaborate on the theoretical framework, SNT, in connection to my research concepts.

2.2 Teacher Professional Identity Development

To understand how teachers (in this instance, BTs) describe themselves and position themselves as professional educators, one has to have insight into their social interactions, experiences and self-perceptions. BTs' professional identity encompasses how they view themselves as teachers, their work situations, beliefs, experiences and social relationships (Richardson, 2019).

According to Androusou and Tsafos (2018), it is crucial for BTs to construct their professional identity to succeed in their jobs. BTs' professional identity also provides them with a framework for establishing and developing their views, decisions and

performances in teaching within their respective workplaces in society (Makovec, 2018). Various studies conducted in many countries have shown that BTs' professional identity is also important as it determines their motivation, perseverance, productivity and teaching abilities (Colognesi, Van Nieuwenhoven & Beausaert, 2020). Furthermore, BTs' professional identity also helps them establish objectives and paves the way for their desired career paths (Richardson, 2019).

Erikson (1968) contends that identity is something that individuals develop, not something they should have. According to Richardson (2019), identity is a sense-making process that combines personal characteristics with experience gained through social interactions. González-Calvo and Arias-Carballal (2017) assert that teacher professional identity affects the development of teachers' self-perceptions, beliefs, knowledge and interests in their profession. Despite scholars' interpretations and uses of teacher professional identity, poststructuralist notions of identity as multi-layered, dynamic, continuous and ever-changing serve as the foundation for this study (Golzar, 2020). To develop their professional identity, BTs must first visualise who they are as teachers and "how they identify themselves as teachers to themselves and others" (McIntyre & Hobson, 2016:2).

BTs can further construct their professional identity in educational contexts through reflection, facilitation and learning practices with peers within their social network structures (schools) (Van Lankveld et al., 2017). Thus, for BTs to recognise themselves as professional teachers, they should first look at themselves through the eyes of other experienced teachers (Androusou & Tsafos, 2018). Through developmental opportunities, BTs could thus be given a foundation to make sense of their professional identity through the lens of experienced teachers, given that identity is a sense-making process characterised by social experiences and interactions in social settings.

Effective induction programmes have been shown to be an effective strategy for developing BTs' professional identity. These programmes are thought to provide BTs with a foundation for negotiating, reflecting on and reinterpreting their professional identity alongside experienced teachers through collaborative

relationships (Hagos et al., 2019). BTs can broaden their views on what it means to be a teacher by participating in effective induction programmes wherein they can learn and gain expertise from other experienced teachers (Vidović & Domović, 2019). Observing, collaborating and delivering instruction alongside experienced teachers can thus support BTs to develop their professional identity (De Jong, Meirink & Admiraal, 2019).

By constantly deliberating the construction and reconstruction of their professional identity, BTs can positively channel inherent challenges. These include a lack of pedagogical knowledge, insufficient training, and a lack of subject-content knowledge, as well as low morale and motivation to teach. In addition, they can significantly reduce teacher attrition in the SA context (Muthivhi, 2019).

Overall, BTs' performance, behaviour and decisions to stay in their profession are influenced by their professional identity and perceptions of themselves as professional teachers. The development of their professional identity affects how BTs perceive, feel about and perform in their profession and whether they decide to remain in their profession. As such, the development of BTs' professional identity is an important component that can retain them in their job.

2.3 Reality Shock

When BTs initially join the profession with a teaching certification, they are more likely to be hired as full-time employees (Tondeur et al., 2017). Most teachers anticipate a smooth and stable transition from theory-based learning to well-rounded professional teaching (Ram, 2019). However, when confronted with "a gap between theory and practice", many teachers experience "reality shock" (Botha & Rens, 2018:1) and "praxis shock" in their initial years as they enter the teaching profession (Ballantyne & Retell, 2020:1).

Reality shock in this context is described as the dissonance between BTs' expectations and the realities and challenges they experience when they begin to teach in real-world settings. This transition is also known by terms such as "survival

phase", "transition shock" and "shattered dreams" (Woest, 2018:2). Praxis shock is defined as "teachers' confrontation with the realities and responsibilities of being a classroom teacher that puts their beliefs and ideas about teaching to the test, challenges some of them and confirms others" (Gaddy, 2020:6).

As a consequence of reality shock and praxis shock, BTs experience conflicting feelings and stress due to an unequal change in their personal and professional identity (Lindqvist, 2019). The reality-shock period is typically a defining period in a BT's career and can result in one of three outcomes. The inexperienced teacher may laboriously work through the reality-shock period, turn to the knowledge and skills acquired during training and thrive, or attempt to survive the reality-shock period while carrying an emotional burden and a heavy workload (Botha & Rens, 2018). In the worst-case scenario, acute reality shock results in BT burnout, which eventually leads to them quitting and resigning from the teaching profession (Sezen-Gultekin & Nartgun, 2018).

Despite hands-on experience and teaching practicums provided in their teacher preparation education courses, most BTs experience reality shock in their initial years of teaching (Sezen-Gultekin & Nartgun, 2018). They experience various challenges in their first years of teaching due to a lack of knowledge, experience and development opportunities. Hence, the subsequent subsections explore BT challenges both globally and in South Africa, respectively.

2.3.1 Beginner teacher challenges – International context

"Teaching is the profession that eats its young," explains Ferrell (2016, cited in Halford 1998:34). This phrase was used to describe the views of three BTs in their first year(s) at a Canadian educational institution and how they were instantly expected to take on the same duties as their more experienced colleagues.

According to census statistics in the United States (U.S.), 24 percent of BTs quit teaching in their first year, 33 percent leave after three years, and 40 to 50 percent leave within the first five years (Schmidt, 2017). Unlike their more experienced colleagues, BTs have not yet established and developed a repertoire of skills to turn

to when they try to take on and fulfil equal duties as their senior teacher peers. This shift therefore comes as a shock to most novice teachers (Mamba, 2020).

It has also been shown in Belgium that many BTs quit the teaching profession during their first five years (Colognesi et al., 2020). A quantitative study conducted in Belgium involving 72 Flemish primary schools and 273 BTs significantly linked the reasons for BTs leaving their employment to their degrees of commitment and self-efficacy (Flores, 2017). The author found that BTs' levels of commitment and self-efficacy were essential in determining how their intentions to leave their job were connected to how they perceived their working environment.

Furthermore, in a Netherlands study, Den Brok, Wubbels, and Van Tartwijk (2017) identified common stressors experienced by BTs that cause them to leave the teaching profession. These include high workload, student disciplinary issues, a lack of support and insufficient teaching resources, poor working conditions, social isolation, and a lack of professional development opportunities.

Based on the international literature demonstrating the difficulties BTs face in various countries, it is arguable that most BTs encounter similar challenges in their first year(s). However, although BTs globally face similar challenges, it is important to recognise that these challenges are not constant or permanent; they may vary from school to school, state to state, country to country and district to district (McGeehan, 2019).

In order to adequately support BTs in their initial years of teaching, it is thus essential to recognise their individual needs and challenges to better support and equip them. This is true considering research indicates that BTs who receive adequate support in their first years are more likely to report high levels of job satisfaction, sense of belonging and self-efficacy than those who do not receive any support (Toropova, Myrberg & Johansson, 2021).

Unfortunately, many SA BTs, like their peers in other countries worldwide, abandon the profession during their first few years of employment (Caluza & Niemand, 2019).

Therefore, the challenges of BTs in the context of SA are explored in more detail in the subsequent section.

2.3.2 Beginner teachers – South African context

Despite the fact that SA is commemorating its 27th year of democratic governance and the reform and improvement of its educational system, findings suggest that teachers continue to face disadvantages in the teaching profession (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). Prior to 1994, when SA achieved democracy, the educational system was segregated, with each racial group having its own department of education (Gallo, 2020). Education was uneven and politically motivated; resources were inequitably allocated to various racial groupings, with white ethnic groups receiving preferential treatment (Maarman & Lamont-Mbawuli, 2017). Since 1994, the educational system's stakeholders have worked hard to ensure a fairer and equal system. It is heartening to see that all racial groups now have access to basic education (Blignaut, 2020).

However, quality education remains an inclusive ideal in SA, where the education system is characterised by severe inequalities (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). Socioeconomic and racial inequalities, poor learning outcomes and high teacher and student dropout rates persist almost 27 years after independence (Wilmot, 2017).

Despite relatively high levels of education funding in SA, teacher shortages, overcrowded classrooms and inadequate school infrastructure all contribute to the challenges that most SA teachers confront in the classroom (Meier & West, 2020). Overcrowding, for example, causes disciplinary problems, which in turn cause additional difficulties such as poor student engagement, a lack of teacher evaluation and assessment, and noise disruption. These difficulties make it difficult for teachers to maintain control over their classrooms (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). Overcrowded classrooms can easily become unbearable, particularly for BTs who are not adequately trained and appointed according to their training and have a high workload, all of which contribute to BT burnout (Köhler, 2020; Nkuna, 2017).

These findings are supported by a qualitative study conducted in 150 secondary schools across SA. Teachers in those schools experienced numerous challenges in teaching and learning due to overcrowded classrooms. Among the challenges are difficulty interacting with students and the inability of students to participate in critical thinking and problem-solving activities (Matsepe, Maluleke & Cross, 2019).

Overcrowded classrooms do not impact only teachers but also learners' overall performance. According to Meier and West (2020), one of the most frequent causes that leads to didactical neglect is overcrowded classrooms. These classrooms incapacitate teachers from paying attention to each pupil's educational requirements.

This is corroborated by data from the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) cycles of 2006, 2011 and 2016, revealing that SA students consistently ranked last among 50 countries in reading scores (Mlachila & Moeletsi, 2019). PIRLS is an international assessment used to evaluate fourth grade students' reading literacy (Govender & Hugo, 2020). In SA, 78 percent of fourth graders are unable to read fully in any language (Mlachila & Moeletsi, 2019). Critical learning abilities are severely deficient among SA learners in their early levels of schooling.

Furthermore, SA teachers have been shown to have the lowest level of subject-content knowledge when compared to other sub-Saharan African countries (Nsengimana et al., 2020). This is a concern, since teachers cannot impart or teach knowledge they do not possess or acquire (Taylor, 2021). Teachers cannot appropriately assess students' progress and assist them in progressing forward due to their limited subject knowledge, while inadequate education and support remain a nationwide issue in SA, contributing to the high rate of BT attrition (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019).

To support BTs, stakeholders must first address three fundamental problems in the SA educational system: teachers' lack of preparedness, non-accountability of school managers and teachers, and support to equip BTs as competent educators (Liwane, 2017). Furthermore, stakeholders must recognise the current challenges that BTs face. These include the most conspicuous demands of COVID-19 and the transition

to online learning, which provided new challenges and barriers to the identified problems that BTs face, as discussed in greater detail in the following section.

2.4 COVID-19: Challenges of Transitioning to Online Learning

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) designated the outbreak and spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) a global pandemic (Balkhair, 2020). Schools, colleges and businesses around the world were all urged to shut down in hopes of preventing direct contact with potentially infected individuals (Landa, Zhou & Marongwe, 2021).

In SA, the president also ordered the closure of all schools, universities and educational institutions and adopted precautionary measures to offer education through online learning (Mpungose, 2020). Among the many challenges that BTs already face, the most conspicuous consequence of COVID-19 was the expectation, if not demand, that teachers continue to educate through a virtual mode due to social distancing measures (Sahu, 2020). Due to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, many educational institutions were compelled to transition from conventional face-to-face teaching to virtual learning (Coman et al., 2020).

COVID-19 caused havoc on the educational system; therefore, understanding its effect on BTs and contemporary issues in the teaching profession is essential (Pietro et al., 2020). Some teachers may have been well-prepared for online teaching, while others may have laboured tirelessly to develop online resources. Professors and lecturers were already acquainted with online teaching and may have just been challenged to master more complex settings, such as designing online examination question papers. However, BTs with no previous teaching experience may have encountered fundamentally different difficulties, such as a lack of appropriate workspaces or a minimal grasp of the subject matter. The abrupt and unexpected online transition arguably impacted millions of teachers (particularly BTs) across the globe (Jandri et al., 2020).

While COVID-19 brought an array of different difficulties, I was interested in the transition to online learning for the purposes of this study. I was specifically interested to know how BTs coped when faced with the added obstacles and challenges of transferring lessons online. I wanted to explore what changes, if any, they detected before this application to assist with their current challenges. Hence, the following subsections are concerned with the effects of COVID-19 on BTs' experiences in an international and local context while considering the challenges they already face. I will also look at the opportunities presented to BTs during this time.

2.4.1 Challenges of online learning – International context

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed BTs to new threats not previously recorded in professional literature. Teachers were expected to rapidly transition from traditional teaching to online learning on a regional and global scale (Dvir & Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2020).

Teachers were the driving force behind the adoption of online learning, and they were expected to effectively condition each educational component (Aliyyah et al., 2020). These included instructional media, time management, teaching methods and social and psychological aspects that substantially impact a teacher's desire to continue teaching (Aliyyah et al., 2020). According to Demuyakor (2020), teachers' ability to continue teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic mainly depended on their technological experience. The unfamiliar working conditions of technology posed challenges, especially for BTs with no experience in the spectrum of teaching, as they had to redefine temporal and special boundaries (Dvir & Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2020). "This period was very challenging for me; I almost gave up," one BT remarked of her experience with online learning (Dvir & Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2020:7).

Although the transition to online learning may have presented challenges for senior teachers and other teachers across the spectrum, this study concurs that BTs with limited knowledge and experience were more compromised. They are still relatively

young in the teaching profession and are still navigating their ways, now dealing with additional challenges and uncertainties.

This is supported by findings from a study in which many BTs in Israel expressed dissatisfaction, confusion and anxiety about the new reality of online learning. One said: “I did not understand what to do with my teaching, I felt slightly passive and pessimistic” (Dvir & Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2020:8). According to these BTs, teachers had to work with regularly changing rules, presenting them with new problems. The BTs in this study saw their education system as an added impediment. “I told parents there was nothing I could do when they expressed dissatisfaction with the Ministry of Education’s recommendations. These are the rules I was given, and I have to follow them,” stated one participant when explaining what she would typically say to frustrated parents (Dvir & Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2020:11).

The current study assents that BTs were confronted with additional challenges due to their limited expertise with online teaching (Demuyakor, 2020). Moreover, it agrees that the conspicuous demands of COVID-19 and online learning also increased stress, self-isolation and anxiety for many BTs (Jones & Kessler, 2020). Given how complex and demanding the teaching profession is already, since they had to adjust to the required software, this shift also accelerated BTs’ workload (Allen, Rowan & Singh, 2020). Therefore, it is crucial to acquire insight into the potential challenges and opportunities presented by COVID-19 and what effects COVID-19 had on the educational system, notably on the experiences of BTs and teachers in general. Ultimately, although online learning is novel for many, it is now our new reality (Pietro et al., 2020).

2.4.2 Challenges of online learning – South African context

In general, SA teachers are thought to lack commitment and motivation. This is understandable considering that 80 percent of public schools in SA are classed as dysfunctional and underperforming, and research reveals that just 40 percent of classroom time is dedicated to teaching (Ngwenya, 2019).

COVID-19 substantially impacted teachers' expectations of their ability to continue teaching (Sahu, 2020). SA President Cyril Ramaphosa imposed a state-wide lockdown in March 2020 to battle the spread of COVID-19, which had by then infected over 13 million children in traditional (primary and secondary) and special schools in SA (Parker, Morris & Hofmeyr, 2020). In order to resume education while maintaining social distance, the SA Government also heavily advocated for online learning to be the only medium of teaching and learning (Omodan, 2020).

The SA Government established a number of arrangements to deliver online education using virtual classes on television, digital cell phones, laptops, computers and radios (Nyamboga & Ali, 2020). During the nationwide lockdown, teachers were responsible for organising and implementing lesson plans, assignments and activities to ensure that all children received a fair education (Mhlanga & Moloi, 2020). Due to this change, many teachers around the country were put under pressure as they were forced to rush through curricular content to finish the required school plan and save the school year (Hoadley, 2020).

In participatory research with 15 teachers from KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) schools, participants expressed their frustration as they spoke about the difficulties associated with online education (Dube, 2020). One of them said: "This [online learning] is a major challenge. It is not that we do not want online learning; it is that there is no or a minimal network, which makes it difficult for us to teach learners. This only works in towns where the network is always available" (Dube, 2020:11). Likewise, even though this study concurs that the transition to online learning mostly impacted BTs, it is important also to recognise that elderly teachers were also affected.

Another participant in the same study voiced her concern regarding her older peers' lack of online learning skills. She said (Dube, 2020:12-14):

> In my school, I know some of the colleagues who cannot even operate a computer; they [referring to senior teachers] were trained as teachers 30 years ago when computers were not common in South Africa.

“This online learning thing is like giving someone pots to cook without food and expect you to have addressed his or her needs,” noted another participant (Dube, 2020:12-14).

The challenges of online learning are not limited to BTs’ lack of training and competence, but also to other issues such as a lack of accessible network and resources to conduct online courses. Statistics from the National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS) indicate that just 20 percent of learners (4695) out of a total of 23,258 had access to the internet and connection for studying and teaching purposes (Parker et al., 2020). Furthermore, computer laboratories were lacking in 12,587 schools in the Eastern Cape, KZN and Limpopo to facilitate online learning for teachers and students. The underlying issue of teachers’ inability to manage online learning was highlighted in the study (Parker et al., 2020). Moreover, the results point out that the DoE should avoid assuming that all teachers can teach online.

Given the challenges that BTs encountered prior to COVID-19, the pandemic introduced new types of educational challenges for BTs in SA (Le Grange, 2020). Since many SA teachers are qualified but lack the necessary pedagogical skills and content knowledge (Berg, 2018), both BTs and teachers at all levels of education should first be learners in order to model the adaptive competence they seek to instil in their pupils (Mutton, 2020). BTs and senior teachers can thus engage with digitally skilled peers through school-based induction programmes to improve their technological and pedagogical preparedness for online learning (Mwapwele et al., 2019).

2.4.3 Opportunities of online learning

Besides the above reported challenges of the abrupt transition from traditional to online teaching, such as the unreliability of internet connections and BTs’ lack of use of online platforms, there were also opportunities. This subsection aims to analyse the opportunities and experiences that emerged from remote teaching during COVID-19, specifically those of BTs.

The benefits of online learning are based on the range of teaching media (videos, readings, exercises and others) available on online platforms enabling teachers to locate and incorporate effective materials into their classroom practices (Rapanta et al., 2020). Online learning in supportive contexts allows for time for exploration, improvement, assessment and experimentation in teaching and learning that is not possible in traditional settings (Rosângela & Vera, 2020).

Despite the difficulties associated with online education, 32 BTs from Israel who participated in a qualitative study provided positive comments. This is demonstrated by a participant's statement: “This [online learning] was an opportunity to make progress in the curriculum because I hardly had any problems with classroom discipline, and I could help each child” (Dvir & Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2020:9). Additionally, Hyseni and Hoxha (2020) found that teachers’ motivation and willingness to expand their skills and knowledge grew as a result of the shift to online learning.

This pandemic was (and continues to be) a catalyst for digital transformation in all areas of education worldwide (Mhlanga & Moloi, 2020). Although the COVID-19 pandemic reduced opportunities for socialisation and face-to-face interaction, online learning platforms continue to provide opportunities for socialisation through the incorporation of communication and class-based interaction (such as group projects, online clubs and individualised contacts). Through this, social barriers between teachers and students are lowered (Pietro et al., 2020).

Le Grange (2020) emphasises that, despite physical isolation, teachers should view online learning as an opportunity to strengthen their commitments through academic research, teaching and learning. At this point, technology should be used to facilitate difficult dialogues about the issues that BTs face, such as curriculum-related issues, in order to gain a better understanding of one another (Rapanta et al., 2020).

Implementing structured and formalised induction programmes can provide BTs with opportunities for exploration and learning, improve overall educational quality, reduce social isolation, and support BTs’ professional development through online learning platforms (Hawkes, 2018). In so doing, BTs and teachers of all ages would

be even more prepared and equipped in blended and online learning pedagogies (Pietro et al., 2020).

2.5 Beginner Teacher Induction

When they initially join the teaching profession as first-year teachers, BTs are often apprehensive and may feel unprepared to face teaching difficulties on their own (Kearney, 2017). BT induction has grown in favour of acculturating teachers into their new professions (Paronjodi et al., 2017). However, the nature and perception of BT induction, orientation and mentorship programmes have been interpreted in various ways, making the concepts complex and ambiguous (Estrict, 2018).

Thus, it is important to discern between BT induction, orientation, and mentorship programmes for this study. According to DeMichino-Acquadro (2019), training programmes are orientation programmes typically delivered in the form of workshops. They are designed to acclimate and acculturate new teachers in their respective schools over several days. BT induction, as opposed to orientation, is a formalised programme that often involves mentorship (but is not limited to mentoring) and includes a variety of activities for BTs such as orientation sessions, mentorship, collaborative and developmental workshops, and programmes designed to support and help BTs transition into the teaching profession (Estrict, 2018). While mentoring can be defined as a formal or informal process in which an experienced teacher is expected to support, guide, advise, and lead a novice teacher over a period of time (Alabi, 2017).

Çobanoglu and Ayvaz-Tuncel (2018) state that BT induction is intended both for new teachers entering the profession and experienced teachers transitioning from one school to another. McGeehan (2019) states that BT induction can be either a formal or an informal process of integrating new teachers into a school's system, including all administrative, academic and social components. Steenekamp et al. (2018) agree that BT induction should be given priority so that new teachers can fully integrate and become acquainted with the school's culture and expectations.

In the context of this study, BT induction refers to rigorous, systematic, structured, consistent, thorough and continuous professional programmes designed to train, guide and support new teachers entering the teaching profession (Çobanolu & Ayvaz-Tuncel, 2018). The terms *induction* and *in-service* and *pre-service training programmes* are used interchangeably (Hangül, 2017; Mintz, 2019). Thus, it is critical to distinguish the three concepts for the purposes of this research study.

Teacher training programmes for in-service and pre-service teachers are different from BT induction programmes (Xuan, 2019). While pre-service training is concerned with preparing and teaching applicants prior to employment, in-service training entails additional progressive training while on the job (Çobanolu & Ayvaz-Tuncel, 2018). On the other hand, induction programmes are designed for BTs who have completed their basic training preparatory programmes. They are considered as ongoing programmes that provide BTs with experience and contextual knowledge that can only be taught and accessed in a classroom setting (Estrict, 2018).

Apart from the difficulties faced by BTs, numerous scholars have recognised successful and continuous induction programmes as one of the most effective methods for alleviating the pressures experienced by BTs during their first years of teaching (Kearney, 2017). As such, the subsequent subsections explore existing BT induction programmes on international and local levels. The challenges and successes associated with the implementation of induction programmes will also be looked at.

2.5.1 International induction programmes

Despite the wide recognition and relevance of induction programmes, approximately only half of European Union (EU) countries provide comprehensive, structured induction programmes to help BTs transition to teach (Costa et al., 2019). Compulsory induction systems are not in effect in Belgium, Bulgaria, Norway, the Czech Republic, Latvia, the Netherlands, Portugal, Lithuania and Sweden (Hunuk et al., 2019). Instead, individual schools and municipalities organise local support for BTs in these countries (Tarhan et al., 2019). Induction programmes are also not

mandatory in Flanders or Finland. Instead, teachers undertake a five-year master's degree before obtaining official teaching qualifications to ensure they have the requisite knowledge and skills (Harju & Niemi, 2020).

While structured formal support is available in schools to assist BTs in overcoming praxis shock, the knowledge exchange that transpires determines whether BTs exhibit perseverance or satisfaction in their job (Colognesi et al., 2020). Formal induction programmes do not necessarily ensure that BTs will take advantage of all opportunities or that their learning environments will automatically improve (Thomas et al., 2019).

Formalised induction programmes do not guarantee BTs' perseverance or satisfaction in their workplaces. Nonetheless, BTs in countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands, Latvia and the Czech Republic who have not had structured induction systems face professional isolation. These teachers have expressed a need for a more structured and formalised induction system (Hunuk et al., 2019).

This shows that formalised induction programmes are crucial and should be offered to all BTs in schools, both internationally and locally, based on the findings. Teachers, administrators, staff developers and mentors should jointly share responsibilities in formalised induction programmes (Hangül, 2017). Induction programmes should be viewed as a collaborative initiative with shared duties among all staff members, not just incoming teachers.

2.5.2 Induction programmes in South Africa

The provision of high-quality education is one of the fundamental goals of the SA educational system. Following the demise of the apartheid regime in SA in 1994, the democratic government strived to put in place various measures aimed at enhancing the educational system (Tapscott, 2017).

Since professional development is considered a crucial mechanism for developing teachers' teaching abilities, knowledge and educational quality, the SA Government implemented the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) in 2003 (Sigudla,

2019). The IQMS is a professional and personal development tool for teachers to enhance the quality of education in schools (Emmanuel & Harunavamwe, 2017).

The IQMS model was developed to assist teachers in preparing, developing, monitoring and evaluating their general teaching performance (Bernadine, 2019). The evaluation process of the IQMS aims to promote teachers' professional and personal growth (Makubung, 2017). Additionally, the IQMS model also identifies teacher strengths and weaknesses and seeks to support teachers' needs and develop, encourage and promote accountability (Mantshiu & Odeku, 2020).

As a result of the aforementioned challenges, IQMS was revised to quality management system (QMS) in 2014 (Quality Management System [QMS] for Educators, n.d.). The objective of the performance-based QMS for school-based educators is to evaluate teachers' performance in order to improve school performance. Allowing educators to perform according to their job descriptions tends to increase accountability (SA. Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2020). After all of the failed measurements put in place by the IQMS as schools continued to experience challenges with its implementation, the QMS was specifically designed to evaluate teacher performance levels to achieve high school performance levels.

Irrespective of that, even after two decades since the establishment and implementation of the IQMS model, its effectiveness remains in doubt. In a study conducted with 120 teachers from KZN, just 18.6 percent of the participants agreed that the IQMS model was effectively implemented, compared to 18.4 percent who did not believe it was an effective tool (Emmanuel & Harunavamwe, 2017). However, 39 percent of the participants admitted that the IQMS helped them identify developmental needs, which was the highest level of recognition in the study.

Masetla (2018) conducted a study in the Limpopo province to determine factors that contributed to the poor implementation of the IQMS and which question its effectiveness. Factors identified were inadequate monitoring, inadequate teacher commitment, lack of trained principals and a lack of motivation in teachers (Masetla, 2018).

These studies recommend that teachers, principals and deputy principals undergo thorough training on the success and implementation of IQMS programmes in schools. Additionally, they make recommendations for IQMS officials to be permanently employed to ensure proper implementation of IQMS programmes in schools. Teachers must have pedagogical knowledge and expertise to be able to teach and learn effectively. Therefore, many say “experience is the best teacher” (Sigudla, 2019:2).

In 2012, the SA Government also implemented the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (Hay, 2018). The CAPS was launched to enhance the standard and quality of teaching and learning in SA (Schoeman, 2018). However, once the CAPS was introduced, many teachers faced additional challenges in understanding and implementing the vast array of curricular regulations in their classes (Govender, 2018). Inadequate teacher training, a lack of professional identity development, a lack of administrative support, lack of mentorship, and language barriers have all been mentioned as factors contributing to the CAPS implementation in SA failing to accomplish its intended goals (Pillay & Molapo, 2018).

Over the last two decades, structured induction programmes have been among the most influential international approaches to assist and retain BTs in teaching (McGeehan, 2019; Paronjodi et al., 2017). While there is interest in providing induction to all BTs, this is not always the case in SA. Furthermore, there are no prerequisites for completing induction programmes in SA (Daniels, 2019). Instead, in order to teach, teachers must merely meet the South African Council for Educators (SACE) requirements, which do not include induction and are solely confined to teacher qualification and registration (Mamba, 2020). Thus, the key issue is that the purpose of BT induction is uncertain and not fully realised in most SA schools.

In SA, principals, heads of department (HODs), deputy principals and senior teachers are generally in charge of BT induction (Basson & Mestry, 2019). According to the findings of a qualitative study involving six schools in the Limpopo province, not all of the schools in the study inducted BTs. Those that did, did so through

departmental meetings once a term, with the induction process mostly directed by senior teachers and the HOD (Ntsoane, 2017).

Likewise, school management teams (SMT) who were responsible for inducting BTs reported that the lack of induction policy, training, clarity, guidance and support from the DoE had a substantial influence on their efforts and obligations to effectively induct BTs. One HOD participant said the following regarding BT induction: “The challenges that I have realised is that I don’t have enough time to do this (induct BTs) due to the school workload” (Ntsoane, 2017:66).

In research by Christie and Monyokolo (2018:178) in KZN, another HOD stated:

> One of our big problems in our black schools is that we are promoted but don’t know what our function is. No one comes to induct you and say, “Listen, this is what is happening, this is what is expected, and this is how you go about it.”

Another HOD in the same study indicated that she had had only three years of experience as an HOD and was still concerned about her job because of her premature promotion. Furthermore, experienced HODs noted that the DoE did not provide any training programmes for newly appointed HODs, which was a major flaw in preparing them for their roles to induct BTs.

The results of a single induction programme implemented in a school in the Western Cape province highlighted the need for a more organised induction programme. The results demonstrated that the current induction placed a major burden on mentors (HODs and senior teachers) due to their workload and mentoring of BTs (Daniels, 2019). Similarly, a study sampling six BTs from three high schools in the Western Cape province found that induction programmes were non-existent in these schools. The BTs felt “thrown in at the deep end” because they were expected to teach things they had never studied or were unfamiliar with (Esau, 2017:179).

Despite the fact that the findings above show a need for more formalised induction programmes for BTs, BT induction in SA is a school-to-school initiative that is often described as “patchy, uncoordinated, and informal” (Daniels, 2019:6). Given this,

governments around the world have identified continuing professional teacher development (CPTD) as another viable method of supporting, developing and improving BTs' pedagogical and subject expertise (Noge, 2018).

2.5.2.1 *Professional development opportunities in South Africa*

CPTD is defined as the activities that BTs engage in to assess their professional development and to become competent and efficient teachers, such as planning, assessing and re-teaching (Bwanga, 2020). The CPTD concept arose from the evidence that undergraduate training and education alone are insufficient to prepare BTs for their entire teaching career successfully. Developing professional identity is a continual process of learning and relearning (Roux, 2018). Simply put, undergraduate education and training are insufficient on their own, and continual skill and knowledge development are required (Noge, 2018).

Since CPTD is an electronic system, teacher training is conducted online, while implementation actually occurs at the school (Mlachila & Moeletsi, 2019). Johns and Sosibo (2019) report on the findings of a Western Cape school that attempted to implement the CPTD system. According to the research findings, most BTs struggled to understand the essential functionalities of the CPTD system. These BTs had no concept of what activities to choose or which were necessary. Consequently, they were demotivated and unable to see the importance of developing their professional identity and competency as practising teachers.

Likewise, BTs in a study from KZN also said that the CPTD activities available to them were insufficient and that they received no supervision, monitoring or support (Govender, 2018). As a result, the CPTD programme's activities were regarded ineffective, with few opportunities for classroom practice.

Most BTs in a study at North-West University identified discipline, administrative responsibilities and classroom management as severe difficulties in the teaching profession (Botha & Rens, 2018). Most participants stated that their higher education programmes did not effectively prepare them for the gap and reality shock they experienced. One participant stated (Botha & Rens, 2018:5):

> I was thrown in the deep end … In less than a year, I had to go from being a creative English teacher to a rigorous accounting teacher, and I had to use my experience to teach myself new abilities that I had never had the opportunity to master.

The existing CPTD programmes in SA have proved unsuccessful because they do not bridge the gap between theory and practice (Jeram & Davids, 2020). Given the current obstacles in the educational system, BTs may continue to leave the teaching profession if new strategies are not implemented through formal induction programmes. BT turnover may continue if BTs are not adequately supported in developing their professional identity and teaching abilities.

2.5.3 Challenges with induction programmes

Induction programmes are thought to help BTs cope with the pressures they face in their first year(s), but what happens if they do not receive sufficient induction? What happens if an induction programme does not go according to plan?

Although well-structured induction programmes reduce BT attrition and increase job satisfaction and commitment, there is limited research on the effects of failed induction on BTs. Induction programmes do not always necessarily guarantee success (Xuan, 2019); poorly designed induction programmes may end up creating additional challenges for BTs rather than helping them (Harmsen et al., 2018).

Since induction programme quality and content differ per country, district, state and even school, induction programme implementation and execution also differ (McGeehan, 2019). While BT induction is a period of growth for new teachers, it may also be a stressful time for them, influencing their decision to stay in the profession (McGeehan, 2019).

Kearney (2016) conducted a qualitative study that was aimed at investigating the experiences of BT induction. Participating BTs assessed the induction programme in a specific Australian school as “haphazard”, “terrible”, “disjointed”, “ridiculous”, “poor” and “poorly managed” (Kearney, 2016:5). The induction programme had a negative influence on BTs’ efficacy and morale since it was not very helpful. Instead,

it was viewed as their thing (in relation to the BTs) that they had to figure out on their own since their job relied on it, making the BTs even more uncomfortable (Kearney, 2016).

According to a comparative study conducted in the Netherlands, BTs hated the induction process, since it failed to provide support and was not tailored to their specific challenges within their school (Gaikhorst et al., 2017). Another study in Tanzania's Kongwa region discovered that education stakeholders had very little expertise in and understanding of induction programmes or how to induct BTs (Akech, 2016).

There are significant variations in BT induction and participation between low-income and affluent schools (Maulana, Helms-Lorenz & Van de Grift, 2017). In lower income schools, induction participation and mentorship are significantly lower, since it is thought that induction exacerbates intrinsic issues while also contributing to the additional challenges that BTs already face. Simultaneously, teacher turnover in such schools is much higher (Davenport, 2019).

Although BT induction programmes and mentorship might be valuable, if not properly handled, they can also be detrimental to BTs (Daniels, 2019). Inadequate induction programmes include poor mentoring-process planning, insufficient mentoring time and a lack of experience in the induction and mentoring process (Hawkes, 2018). Furthermore, mentoring relationships provided to BTs during induction may be unduly focused on structure and standardised frameworks, limiting the support BTs seek for a clearer perspective on teaching (Davenport, 2019).

Many schools throughout the world have devised induction programmes to assist BTs. Despite this, many BTs leave the teaching profession in their first year(s) due to the required frameworks, discrepancies, intensity and duration of induction (Dishena & Mokoena, 2016). Therefore, before inducting BTs into the teaching profession, the induction process should be rigorously designed, with mentors properly recruited, trained and demonstrating competence (Hawkes, 2018).

2.5.4 Successful induction programmes

While BT induction successfully lowers teacher turnover and increases BTs' teaching capacity, there is currently a lack of research on the core components of effective BT induction programmes in primary education (Spooner-Lane, 2017). When BTs first enter the teaching profession, many are faced with the unreasonable expectation, if not expectations, of having in-depth knowledge of the curriculum, knowledge of school regulations, and classroom management skills, among other factors (Daniels, 2019).

Although poorly designed induction programmes could have a negative impact on BTs' experiences, it is arguable that effective induction for BTs is an important tool for strengthening and developing BTs on social, personal and professional levels (Erawan, 2019). First, effective and high-quality professional development induction programmes are crucial to establishing teaching as a recognised and appealing job that draws well-qualified applicants (Spooner-Lane, 2017). Induction programmes can assist BTs rather than scare them away or overwhelm them with high teaching expectations (Daniels, 2019:3). Furthermore, successful induction programmes have been demonstrated to improve the quality of BTs' professional development, increase job satisfaction and reduce BT turnover (Leggio & Terras, 2019).

Second, training sessions, collaborative workshops and seminar attendance should be prioritised in BT induction to help BTs cultivate their professional identity (Günes & Uysal, 2019). International studies conducted in the U.S., for example, discovered that while 30 percent of teachers leave within the first three years, successful and effective induction programmes could be successful in retaining more than 90 percent of those teachers (Hawkes, 2018; García & Weiss, 2019).

Induction programmes in California have improved BTs' professional growth and teaching competence and student performance, and lowered BT attrition (Carver-Thomas, Kini & Burns, 2020; Mitchell et al., 2017). Instead of coping with a swim-or-sink mentality in which BTs battle to keep their heads above water, effective induction programmes can help BTs adapt to school environments more smoothly (Barkauskaitė & Meškauskienė, 2017).

BT induction programmes are intended to supplement BTs' existing skills and knowledge, while also providing opportunity for continuous identity construction and socialisation within the workforce (Estrict, 2018). Finally, through peer support, curriculum facilitators, mentors, and classroom demonstrations, effective induction programmes can help minimise the difficulties faced by BTs (Steenekamp et al., 2018).

However, implementing induction programmes alone does not guarantee success (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). Induction programmes must be well facilitated and adapted to the specific needs of schools before they are initiated or implemented (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017). Effective induction is a viable tool for supporting BTs in developing their professional identity (Xuan, 2019). Without adequate induction, BTs will struggle to grasp the nuances of teaching and will most likely leave the profession prematurely (Spooner-Lane, 2017). As such, it is crucial to analyse the role, influence and impact of BTs' social interactions and social structures in schools, as outlined in the following section.

2.6 Social Network Theory

Consider the following distinctions between two schools: One has secluded and disconnected teachers, while the other has a strong community of entities and social interaction. According to SNT, teachers working in schools with a strong sense of community and social interaction among peers have a better likelihood of developing high levels of job satisfaction and commitment. These factors ultimately impact their choice to stay or leave their professions.

Rather than understanding social phenomena through the viewpoint of an individual's traits, SNT posits that the emphasis should be on the social relationships within which the phenomenon is embedded (Marz & Kelchtermans, 2020). SNT contends that an individual's (in this instance, BT) social connections impact how well they perform in their profession. Therefore, the performance of a secluded and disconnected teacher varies from that of one with a large network of social connection structures.

For example, BTs receive professional support through collaborations with colleagues, which has a major impact on their decision to remain in the teaching profession (Craig, 2017). One of the stated challenges for BTs during their initial years is a lack of support and development opportunities. Rather than viewing BTs' challenges as a distinct entity that they are responsible for, social network analysis (SNA) enables us to refocus on BTs' connections and interactions within their network structures, which is where professional help is available (Liu et al., 2017).

BTs' professional identity is constantly formed and reformed since they are socially constructed and dependent on their interactions and socialisation with others (colleagues within school settings) (Tsafos, 2018). The social connections of BTs and the support they receive within their social network structures impact the development of their professional identity and their choice to stay in the teaching profession (Richardson, 2019). Similarly, how BTs construct their professional identity and support allows them to have a sense of belonging in their school.

Therefore, SNT allows us to understand who BTs interact with, the information they receive and the factors that influence their interactions. Understanding these factors is critical because it will enable scholars to gain a better understanding of how BTs form a professional identity and how BTs can be adequately inducted during their first years (De Lima & Zorrilla, 2017).

BTs can receive knowledge, support and opportunities to collaborate with other teachers through induction programmes. Through joint efforts and comprehensive and ongoing professional development programmes to guide, train and support BTs, they can develop their professional identity (Çobanolu & Ayvaz-Tuncel, 2018). SNT enables us to view induction programmes as a social process, including interactions between BTs and co-workers. Lastly, through the sharing of knowledge and collaborative relationships among colleagues, BTs can receive the necessary support to construct their professional identity in schools (Thomas et al., 2019).

This study corroborates Marz and Kelchtermans's (2020) findings, who assert that teachers who work in schools that foster a sense of community, and are connected and have social connections, are more likely to receive adequate support. They are

also more likely to receive adequate support through the exchange of resources and information, positively influencing their decisions to remain in their jobs. Thus, to retain and support BTs, their networks must adhere to local norms and knowledge throughout educational reforms (Marz & Kelchtermans, 2020).

As such, the analysis of teachers' social network structures in this study is essential for BTs to integrate these new practices into their classrooms (Tsiotakis & Jimoyiannis, 2016). Given the high rate at which BTs leave the teaching profession, network structures can have a significant impact on their intent to stay in their job (Sannen et al., 2019).

Individualistic connections are built on the flow and transfer of resources, knowledge, and skills through interpersonal contacts within social circumstances; hence, the SNT is appropriate for the needs of BTs (De Lima & Zorrilla, 2017). By interacting with their more experienced colleagues, BTs, for example, can benefit from their knowledge. This indicates that BTs are interconnected, and changes in dyadic relationships have an impact on the school's broader social structure and vice versa (Kurt & Kurt, 2020). Furthermore, individualistic network positions are important predictors of resource inaccessibility; hence, when social structures in schools cause BTs to feel isolated, their access to resources is limited (Thomas et al., 2019).

Since teachers play such an important role in educational changes, it is imperative to use SNT to draw upon teacher networks, local expertise and norms (Sannen et al., 2021). Considering teaching is a dynamic profession that necessitates a range of social contacts, SNA can provide tools for investigating and analysing hidden and underlying dynamics in schools.

SNT can be used as an analytical tool by researchers and future academics to gain a full understanding of school social systems (Sannen et al., 2019). BTs can form social ties with their employees and the larger society, which can aid in their professional growth (Stoetzle, 2020). Furthermore, as BTs develop their professional identity, these connections become increasingly important for actively

handling challenges and reflecting on their career choices (Paniagua & Sánchez-Martí, 2018). Therefore, SNT is the best fit for this study.

2.7 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the global and local experiences of BTs were discussed, with a focus on SA. Society and BTs have great expectations for a smoother transition from being students to becoming professional teachers. However, when confronted with a gap between theory and practice, many BTs experience reality shock. This is due to various challenges they face in the classroom, insufficient developmental programmes, insufficient support, a lack of subject expertise and insufficient administrative support. All of these are acknowledged as contributing causes to teacher turnover. The most visible and recent challenge for BTs is COVID-19, with the transition from traditional to online teaching posing additional obstacles on top of those already in place.

This chapter explored the various types of literature used to inform this study. In this study, SNT is used as an analytical tool to investigate BT experiences and interactions in educational systems and how it shapes and influences BT performance and behaviour. While successful induction programmes are beneficial in supporting BTs, if not carefully designed and regulated, they may also be detrimental to the development of BTs' professional identity.

Nonetheless, based on the international success rate and effectiveness of well-executed induction programmes, this study concurs that effective induction programmes can provide BTs with the necessary skills, knowledge and support to become qualified teachers. This is particularly true for SA, where there are currently no institutionalised induction programmes but only ineffective school-based BT induction initiatives.

Despite the various reforms implemented by the SA Government to deliver high-quality education, BTs face a lack of support and inadequate development opportunities when they transition from students to teachers. When BTs are not

adequately supported and prepared in their first years while confronted with various challenges, this adversely affects the development of their professional identity, leading to BT attrition.

The subsequent chapter will further discuss the data collection methods and trustworthiness issues utilised to accompany the research objective and answer the research question of how BTs can develop their professional identity during an induction programme.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

SA teachers, like those in other countries, are leaving the profession after only a few years (as discussed in section 1.2). An increasing body of evidence suggests that the availability of professional development through social contact among teachers in social network structures (school settings) has a significant impact on BTs' decision to stay in their selected career (as discussed in section 1.1). Since teaching is a dynamic profession that necessitates a range of social interactions, it is crucial to recognise, understand and analyse its dynamics that result in BT attrition (Karlberg & Bezzina, 2020). Therefore, it is essential to recognise, understand and explore the processes contributing to BT attrition, since teaching is a dynamic profession encompassing a range of social interactions.

In the preceding chapter, literature pertaining to the study was discussed to obtain conceptual knowledge and an understanding of the various concepts relevant to the study. These concepts are BTs' first-year experiences, professional identity development and BT induction programmes. SNT serves as the theoretical underpinning for this study, serving as an analytical lens through which the literature review sources are interpreted.

This chapter describes the research design that was utilised to accomplish the study objective. Additionally, this chapter explains the research paradigm that served as the study's conceptual underpinning. The methodology and strategy for the research are also discussed. The study participants, research site and data collection methods are then described in detail. Finally, the trustworthiness, validity and ethical considerations of the research are addressed.

3.2 Research Overview

The research design and methodology used in this study were aimed at answering the proposed research questions (see section 1.4). A research design can be

thought of as the planning process, indicating the type of study that will be conducted, whereas the research method details the processes taken, the techniques and the instruments used to answer the research questions (Moser & Korstjens, 2018).

Although quantitative research components of the survey were included in this study, the study had a strong qualitative approach. Qualitative research aims to investigate how people act and attribute meaning to their lives (Cosgrove, 2018). This research seeks to analyse a social phenomenon, hence a qualitative technique was deemed the most suitable and best suited for this study.

This inquiry was founded on SNT, since knowledge, interpretation and observation all occur in social settings. This research employed an interpretative paradigm and relied substantially on semi-structured interviews. This qualitative technique focused mostly on data acquired through audio recordings and interview transcripts. In addition, a brief questionnaire was used to obtain quantitative data (see Appendix D: Baseline survey).

3.3 Research Design

For a study to attain its intended objectives and aims, an effective strategy for guiding the research process must be implemented (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019). The primary purpose of a study design is to ensure that the research questions and data gathered are connected (Boru, 2018). I considered three important criteria while designing this study that I believed would be best suited to achieve the study's aim: the research paradigm, methodological approach and techniques. I regard these principles as important instruments for logically and consistently addressing my research issues. The following sections address the study's research methodology, participant sampling, data collection techniques and ethical considerations, respectively.

3.4 Research Paradigm

The research paradigm indicates and characterises my worldview in terms of methodological, epistemological and ontological assumptions. Furthermore, this propelled and supported this study, and it was the first issue addressed during the design phase of this study. The interpretative paradigm was adopted for this study. The ontological view that people's social reality is understood by the words they construct in their minds and how they interpret a social phenomenon through personal experiences impacted this choice (Berryman, 2019).

The interpretative paradigm fits well with SNT. SNT argues that people's social reality and their ability to comprehend and interpret their experiences are influenced by social interactions and the way individuals, groups or organisations interact within their network structures (Thomas et al., 2019). SNT asserts that the degree of connectivity among cliques or subgroups (in this case, BTs) is significantly influenced within cohesive social networks and less influenced by one's cohesive social networks. As such, SNT is a shift from critical theorists and the perspectives of progressives (Liu et al., 2017).

According to SNT, individuals are interdependent rather than independent, since they are embedded inside social structures (Sannen et al., 2021). For example, BTs engage in dyadic relationships with their co-workers in educational settings. Changes at the individual level (teachers' attitudes), according to social network academics, influence and improve their attitudes towards their profession (Saqr, Fors & Tedre, 2018). Second, teachers regard social interactions as a "pipe" through which they can interchange knowledge, resources and teaching materials (Sannen et al., 2019:2). For instance, when BTs seek assistance from more experienced peers, resources, knowledge and pedagogical materials are provided through social interaction between person-to-person interactions. Additionally, social network structures enable teachers to collaborate (e.g., by exchanging good teaching techniques). Additionally, researchers should consider interdependence and resource flow in addition to the individual levels of BTs when utilising SNT (Van Waes et al., 2018).

To support BTs in building their professional identity as practising teachers, I believe that the issues they experience on the job (in schools) should be analysed and evaluated as broader social concerns. Workplaces should work with BTs to address their professional identity development needs, rather than viewing it as an independent duty for BTs. This, I believe, could be taught during BTs' first year of teaching during the induction process. Considering this, I believe that shared responsibility and accountability for the development of BTs' professional identity is critical (Prenger, Poortman & Handelzalts, 2021).

Thus, working with an interpretative paradigm requires more in-depth inquiry to gain a better understanding of my participants' (BTs) experiences, because it is predicated on the notions that individuals are interrelated and embedded in social systems (Sannen et al., 2021). In a social setting, an interpretative paradigm aims to comprehend human experiences, emotional perceptions and world knowledge (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

My desire to understand more about how an induction model programme affects BTs' professional identity prompted me to conduct this study within an interpretative paradigm. I was particularly interested in how BTs' professional identity (attitudes, beliefs, expectations and values) influenced their self-identification and the obstacles they encountered during their first year(s) of teaching.

3.5 Methodology

Research methodology refers to the actions and techniques taken as well as the data collection strategies employed in studies (Manfra, 2019). It is a systematic, deliberate and well-planned approach (Sileyew, 2019). This study used a qualitative methodology since it involved the enhancement of knowledge and thorough understanding of subject matter through BTs' first-year experiences. Choosing the appropriate approach was thus vital for this comprehensive inquiry to obtain the necessary knowledge from the research participants.

Furthermore, in Chapter 4, the use of generated data, methods and data analysis as new knowledge in a research methodology is validated. The qualitative research for this study relied on semi-structured interviews, recordings and transcriptions. A baseline survey (questionnaire) was employed to analyse measuring scales related to BTs' professional identity in terms of quantitative aspects.

Moreover, since this study involved participants' (BTs) worldviews and experiences, a qualitative approach fit well with the interpretative paradigm. An interpretative ontology, from my perspective, is a style of discourse that contends that an individual's social reality is not objective or distinct, but is rather influenced by social context and human experiences (Cuthbertson, Robb & Blair, 2020). Similarly, SNT suggests that social network structures and relationships within social settings influence people's (in this case, BTs) worldviews and experiences (Liu et al., 2017). As a result, this study instigated my interest as it explores the alignment of BTs' professional identity through an induction model programme.

3.6 Sampling

Sampling is often used in qualitative research when researchers conduct experiments with a small group of individuals who can offer detailed descriptions of their experiences with the phenomenon under inquiry (Nicholls, 2017). In this inquiry, I used purposeful sampling, which was the most viable method for selecting the most suitable participants for the study (Turner, 2020). According to Moser and Korstjens (2018), purposeful sampling is the process of choosing and identifying research participants (in this case, BTs) as experts on the phenomenon under study. Sharma (2017) refers to this form of sampling as intense sampling, which implies a specified group and includes well-articulated examples and a thorough understanding of the studied phenomenon.

The larger project sought to engage roughly 100 BTs in a field test of the induction model programme. However, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown limitations in SA, only 47 BTs attended the induction training sessions. A

representative sample of 15 BTs was invited to two training sessions, one in February 2020 in Bethlehem and another in October 2020 in QwaQwa.

In total, 47 BTs from the Thabo Mofutsanyana district participated in the induction programme training and completed the baseline survey (T0 – see Appendix D), as detailed more in section 3.8 Participants also provided informed consent to participate in the study, as described further in section 3.11, where detailed information about the study's trustworthiness is discussed. Furthermore, section 4.2 discusses the respondents' biographical and background information, supported by some survey components presented in graphical form.

BTs were asked to volunteer to participate in interviews; from those who consented, a sample of 15 was selected and invited to participate in follow-up interviews. Fourteen of these participated in the research for my dissertation and the dissertations of two other master's students. The participants were stratified based on their gender, age, education level and teaching experience.

The initial plan was to conduct face-to-face interviews in 2020. Nonetheless, due to COVID-19 and lockdown regulations in SA, the first round of interviews (T1 – see Appendix E) was conducted telephonically in January 2021 with 14 BTs. They had previously completed the induction training session in 2020. Each of us interviewed four or five people from the Thabo Mofutsanyana district, notably the QwaQwa and Bethlehem regions, for our research. Although 15 BTs volunteered to be interviewed in 2020, by 2021, only 14 had responded to the invitation. I interviewed five participants from the bigger sample of 14.

These participants were invited to take part in a second round of interviews (T2 – see Appendix F) scheduled for August 2021. Telephonic and in-person interviews were conducted. The third round of interviews (T3 – exit interviews) will take place in 2022 as part of the larger project. The first round of interviews focused mainly on BTs' first-year experiences and contextual challenges. The second set of interviews focused on the development of BTs' professional identity during an induction programme, specifically on the various components of the induction model and their

influence on the development of BTs' professional identity. For the purposes of my study, I will only draw on data from T0, T1 and T2.

To ensure fair representation, both male and female participants from diverse racial groups were invited to participate in the bigger project. These participants were invited to share their experiences and to highlight barriers, goals and flaws in the induction model programme, and to explain how this affected their professional identity. The goal of my study is to explore means and ways of how BTs could be better supported and equipped in developing their professional identity during their first years of teaching. Selecting the stratified sample of participants in this study was of significant importance, seeing that they hold the experience and qualities to answer my research question; thus, they were regarded as important.

3.7 Research Site

The social and physical context in which research is conducted is referred to as the research site (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Qualitative research was the most appropriate approach for this study, since it focuses on meaning-making through observations of individuals in real-life situations (Kamitsis & Simmonds, 2017).

In collaboration with the Flemish Association for Development Cooperation and Technical Assistance (VVOB), the FSDoE initiated an induction programme to trial a one-year induction model for first-year teachers in the Free State province. The VVOB was founded in 2017 and is a Belgian non-profit organisation dedicated to improving educational quality through the professional development of new teachers and school leaders (Murru, Miyato & Vandenbosch, 2018). Originally scheduled to run from 2020 to 2021, the project was extended to August 2022 to account for setbacks caused by COVID-19. As such, the 14 participants in the larger research project were all teaching in the Free State province, specifically the QwaQwa and Bethlehem regions of the Thabo Mofutsanyana district.

I only interviewed participants from the Bethlehem region, whereas the other two master's students interviewed participants from the QwaQwa region. This was a

deliberate decision based on our proximity to these areas and to be cost-effective regarding travel. The goal was for each of us to interview 5 participants in three rounds, for a total of 15 participants. However, we interviewed a total of 14 participants who participated in the first round of interviews (T1 – see Appendix E). Due to the scope limitation of my study, as well as busy work schedules, a lack of time and the COVID-19 social distancing constraints, I was only able to interview three participants in the second round of interviews (T2 – see Appendix F), which were follow-up interviews, despite the initial plan of interviewing five.

Despite this, I was able to collect sufficient, comprehensive data to answer my research questions. I was also able to draw on data gathered from other participants in the larger sample of 14. For the purposes of my study, I will not draw on data from the final, exit interview (T3), as this will only take place in January 2022.

A professional transcriber transcribed the interview data. Even though we conducted our interviews in different areas, we shared the data gathered in the larger project among the three of us. As such, I had access to all the interview transcripts from the larger sample of 14 participants during the data analysis process. The data gathered from the interviews were sufficient to provide me with insight and understanding in order to answer my research questions.

According to Adam (2019), since a researcher in a qualitative study seeks to collect data based on participants' real-life experiences, qualitative researchers must invest substantial time studying the subject matter. Although I did not reside in Bethlehem during the study period, I became comfortable and familiar with the place through follow-up visits and interviews with my participants. I also kept a constant channel of communication with my participants through phone calls and WhatsApp.

3.8 Data Collection

A qualitative research approach enables readers to understand participants' experiences better, explore how decisions in a study were made and gain an in-depth understanding of the data collection process (Busetto, Wick & Gumbinger,

2020). Qualitative methods require rich, comprehensive and nuanced data to obtain such insights, allowing patterns and results to emerge through critical analysis (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019).

This section investigates the inclusion and exclusion criteria. It also looks into the methods used to collect data, which include a baseline survey from the larger project (T0) and semi-structured interviews (T1 and T2). Following that, the data analysis process is described.

3.8.1 Inclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria are attributes or knowledge that the target population should have for researchers to answer their study questions (Patino & Ferreira, 2018). Some of the most frequent inclusion criteria include geographic, demographic and ethnic factors (Hornberger & Rangu, 2020).

To ascertain eligible participants for the study, certain criteria were put into place. To be considered, BTs had to be in their first three years of teaching. They had to have a teaching certificate and affiliation in SACE. BTs must have consented to participate in a trial run of the FSDoE induction model programme in the Free State province. To be eligible, BTs were also required to participate in funded research on the induction field test (a collaboration between Gent University and the UFS) of which my study forms part.

3.8.2 Exclusion criteria

Exclusion criteria are distinctive features of potential research participants who meet the inclusion criteria that may increase the likelihood of negative results or obstruct the study's efficacy (Patino & Ferreira, 2018). Eligible participants who frequently skip meetings, provide incorrect information, have risk factors that might distort study results or have a higher risk of adverse consequences (which is more appropriate for intervention studies) may need to be excluded from participation (McCashin, Coyle & O'Reilly, 2019).

For this study, the criteria for exclusion were as follows. BTs who were in their first year(s) of teaching in the Free State but did not participate in the induction field test were excluded. In addition, BTs who were not teaching in the Thabo Mofutsanyana district, specifically Bethlehem and QwaQwa regions, from the Free State province were excluded. BTs were also excluded who had agreed to participate in the induction field test but not in the research collaboration between Gent University and the UFS on which I am working with the two other master's students. Lastly, BTs who were unable to engage in follow-up interviews that were conducted during the school year were also excluded.

3.8.3 Baseline survey

According to Dalati and Gómez (2018), a survey is a quantitative data collection approach used in research most often utilised in the social sciences. This method involves using checkbox surveys (either online or on paper) to obtain data from people (Loizillon et al., 2017). Surveys are widely used in exploratory, explanatory and descriptive research (Dalati & Gómez, 2018). Before conducting surveys, researchers must first develop a model prediction to identify any connections between various parameters (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

As part of the larger project, an exploratory field test of the implementation of the induction model was undertaken (see Appendix G). The induction model included school mentoring, peer support, training sessions and a personal development plan. The 47 selected BTs were asked to fill out the scales for the four indicators (T0 – see Appendix D), which offered an overview of how these indicators changed during the school year. These measures have been globally recognised for their ability to influence BTs' self-efficacy, motivation, work satisfaction and sense of belonging to teaching (Richter et al., 2021).

Participants in the induction programme (BTs) were given a brief survey from the larger project to assess these components (see Appendix D), and this was done during the training sessions. Two training sessions were conducted in total. In the first training session in Bethlehem in February 2020, only five teachers completed

the survey. In the second training session in QwaQwa in October 2020, 42 teachers completed the survey. Thus, in the Thabo Mofutsanyana district, a total of 47 teachers participated in the induction training and completed the baseline survey. These two training sessions were held so far apart due to the lockdown limitations in SA, which prevented everyone besides essential workers from travelling. Thus, the training sessions were rescheduled to comply with the COVID-19 regulations.

The main objective of this short survey was to determine which parts of the induction model were regarded as crucial and which were considered less interesting (as this is important to have an idea to further improve the model). Participants were given a questionnaire to complete the survey and were required to manually fill out the brief questionnaire, which was then collected. This was done to ensure that no technical issues or malfunctions prevented anyone from completing the survey.

Even though my study is qualitative, I drew on some data from the baseline survey to sketch a background picture of what components BTs deemed more or less important to their professional development as BTs. These included self-efficacy, sense of belonging, job satisfaction and motivation. These components of the induction programme are essential measuring scales linked to BTs' professional identity (Flores, 2017). I thus drew on these elements as part of my study, since they are linked to the focus of my research topic. In so doing, a more comprehensive analysis and discussion of traits that hinder or support BTs' professional identity and the problems they face could be undertaken.

3.8.4 Semi-structured interviews

According to Windsong (2018), an interview is a dialogue between an interviewer and an interviewee (researcher and participant). Although an interview is a discussion, DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019) argue that the interviewer is the one who asks the questions, depending on the researcher's aim. In this qualitative study, the use of interviews offered the advantage of allowing participants to freely express themselves (Vasileiou et al., 2018).

Semi-structured interviews are guided by a set of pre-determined questions, with most of them being open-ended questions that allow participants to answer in any manner (Evans & Lewis, 2018). Researchers are free to ask as many follow-up questions and inquiries as they deem necessary (Sim & Waterfield, 2019). Semi-structured interviews were ideal for this qualitative study, because they provide flexibility and allow participants to bring their own experiences and personalities to the topic.

This qualitative study drew primarily on interviews to learn about the challenges that BTs face and how an induction model programme influenced BTs' professional identity throughout their induction. The semi-structured interviews were conducted for me to obtain insight and a better understanding of the teaching experiences and viewpoints of BTs in light of their professional identity (T1 and T2 – see Appendices E and F).

Initially, all interviews were to be conducted face to face. However, owing to COVID-19 and SA's lockdown limitations, the plan was revised. Therefore, the first round of interviews (T1) was conducted telephonically and lasted approximately 15 minutes per interview. The second round of interviews (T2) lasted about 30 minutes per interview and consisted of both telephonic and face-to-face interviews. This was done to accommodate all participants, as some found it impossible to meet in person due to a lack of time due to the increased workload of COVID-19. The third round of interviews (T3 – exit interviews) is scheduled for January 2022, but is not included in my study because it falls outside the timeframe of my study, concluding in November 2021.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed to prevent the data from being lost or distorted. Furthermore, recording the interview was critical since it allowed for reviewing the data multiple times during the analysis process. Since all of the interviews were done in English, a language barrier was recognised as a limitation. In some instances, I had to ask questions repetitively before the message became clear. This may have been due to the participants' restricted ability to express

themselves clearly and freely during the interviews due to English being their second language.

3.9 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of summarising, analysing and organising data logically and understandably (Sivarajah et al., 2017). According to Elliott (2018), early data analysis lowers data overload issues and prioritises critical components for future attention. According to Mohajan (2018), good data analysis is dependent on how a researcher understands, displays and discusses their collected data. As indicated in section 1.7, I chose to use a narrative method to analyse the data.

I chose thematic narrative analysis, which entails categorising data into themes, phrases, frequently used terms or patterns (Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019). Thematic narrative analysis is a versatile way of analysing, identifying and reporting themes (patterns) and falls under the purview of interpretative qualitative research (McAllum et al., 2019). Interpretative qualitative research asserts that human beings' social realities are constructed through their interactions and connections with others (Nowell et al., 2017).

Semi-structured interviews and a baseline survey were used to collect data. The texts (transcriptions) were double-checked for clarity, and the surveys were analysed using SPSS software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). In addition, SNT also served as an analytical lens during the analysis process. This section provides an in-depth discussion of how data from the baseline survey and semi-structured interviews were analysed.

3.9.1 Baseline survey analysis

The quantitative data from the baseline field survey, which was part of the larger project, was analysed using SPSS software. Even though my study is qualitative and highly dependent on interviews as primary data, I also drew from some quantitative data that were used in the larger project, as stated in section 1.7.2. I

specifically drew data on BTs' self-efficacy, work satisfaction, sense of belonging and motivation to teach.

I chose SPSS software to analyse the survey components due to its adaptability, versatility, range of analysis, output formats and data conversion methods (Zou, Lloyd & Baumbusch, 2020). I utilised SPSS software to analyse the quantitative data from the baseline survey, which is discussed in further detail in Chapter 4. The SPSS programme was fully capable of performing its functions while also contributing to the overall purpose of my research, that is, to ascertain whether the necessary components hindered or enhanced BTs' professional identity.

3.9.2 Interview analysis

Semi-structured interviews are essential data collection methods in qualitative research since they are utilised to explore research topics and new themes in phenomenographic study areas (Henriksen, Englander & Nordgaard, 2021). In traditional phenomenological analysis, data from interviews are used to extract the essence or core of people's experiences (Neubauer, Witkop & Varpio, 2019). When selecting relevant words with a specific relationship to a study, researchers should consider if participants' statements have meaning when presenting their experiences, especially whether the phrases describe their experiences (Alase, 2017).

To better understand and identify significant statements, I applied SNT as an analytical lens and tool to examine descriptive accounts of participant experiences. I used SNT to examine the interactions and experiences of participants' teaching networks and how they understand them to influence their learning opportunities and experiences (Makovec, 2018). Their connections with other teachers and colleagues in their school networks will undoubtedly have influenced their views, experiences and attitudes (Thomas et al., 2019).

Social network structures are neither permanent nor static; they change over time due to contacts with employees and the availability of resources and professional development opportunities for BTs in schools (Liu et al., 2017). To understand and

identify the connections that BTs share through their experiences, a distinctive perspective, such as the SNT perspective, is required. It was necessary to use the SNT perspective as a lens to analyse these patterns of BTs' connections, also known as their network structures. BTs' network structures influence their view and decision to stay in or leave their job. Inadequate teacher development, for example, may result in BTs receiving insufficient resources from their colleagues, leading to negative attitudes and a decision to quit the workplace.

Focusing on BTs' social relationship patterns provided a framework for determining whether or not (and to what degree) teacher collaboration or support occurs in the workplace (social network structures). As an analytical lens, SNT has the potential to help BTs develop their professional identity and teaching abilities. Grounded by SNT, the first step in the data analysis process was the organisation and planning phase.

The generated data were categorised into common themes and subthemes for each participant. This organisation was required since a good analysis relies on a thorough understanding of the generated data (Nieuwenhuis, 2017). To steer clear of bias, any non-verbal clues, gestures and laughter were transcribed instead of only the interesting or relevant information that may have seemed important to the study. Furthermore, participants were given pseudonyms, and all information that may have led to identifying them was excluded from the study.

I started by making sense of the material, guided by the SNT perspective and how participants attached meaning and patterns to their experiences through their connections (social network structures). During this step, I double-checked all of the transcripts for any identifying information. This was achieved by regularly reviewing the transcripts and referring to the audio recordings. In addition, I kept a reflection journal that assisted me in critically analysing and exploring insights and ideas when patterns in the data emerged. I penned down my impressions and progressively built up a set of reflection notes on what I had learned from the data. I strived to maintain integrity throughout the process by always acknowledging and respecting my

participants' diverse experiences and skills. Coding was the last step in the data analysis process, and I chose to do it manually for the interviews.

Despite the availability of software programmes for qualitative data analysis, I preferred to do my data analysis manually. Elliott (2018) defines coding as the process by which a researcher examines transcribed data word for word and breaks it down into intelligible components. They do this by labelling the data with symbols, defining particular names or descriptive phrases, and emphasising any recurrent terms, patterns and ideas. This was both relevant and noteworthy for the research.

Guided by my study objective, I retrieved and generated all the codes associated with participants' construction of their professional identity. The data interpretation step was made more accessible using keywords and repeated phrases to cluster and compare trajectories.

I began categorising codes into a system and creating a code list to help me make sense of my created data after the first transcript was coded. Creating categories is an essential aspect of qualitative data analysis (Nieuwenhuis, 2017). I organised the codes into themes.

In qualitative research, the primary objective of data analysis is to dive into the study's central topic (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). During the data description phase of the narrative analysis, I looked at categories and their codes to see any overarching concepts or themes that may explain how the induction programme has impacted the participants' professional identity. The literature emphasises the diversity of BTs' professional identity and the challenges they face in their first year(s).

3.10 Trustworthiness of the Study

According to Aspers and Corte (2019), qualitative research is the study of various methods for assessing participants' views and making sense of their lives to understand a phenomenon better. Despite the importance of qualitative research in education, researchers must establish techniques and protocols to verify that their

studies are reliable (Mohajan, 2018). The term “trustworthiness” describes the faith one can have in the research methods used to ensure the quality of a study (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). In this regard, I adhered to three requirements: transferability, dependability and conformability (Mncadi, 2017).

3.10.1 Transferability

According to Nowell et al. (2017), transferability refers to the extent to which a study’s conclusions and findings may be used across multiple contexts. According to Smith (2018), transferability allows readers to connect the findings of the research with their own experiences. It also has to do with how individuals evaluate the connections between what is being done in a study and their own lives.

Several variables were considered to ensure transferability throughout the participant selection process in this qualitative study. Participants came from various schools, reflecting their varying levels of teaching experience (teachers in their first years of teaching). Males and females were among those who volunteered to take part in the study.

Even though participants came from different schools, they were all located in the QwaQwa and Bethlehem regions of the Thabo Mofutsanyana district, limiting generalisation (Smith, 2018). I thus cannot promise that my research methods will be applicable in all circumstances. Nonetheless, my objective was to offer readers a comprehensive description of the research framework, study design, study participants and the entire research process to determine whether the findings applied to their situations.

3.10.2 Dependability

McDonald, Schoenebeck and Forte (2019) define dependability as data consistency over time and within a research context. I considered the research design, implementation and thorough analysis (Nowell et al., 2017). Three researchers (two other master’s students and I) worked on the same data set (interview transcripts and survey data) to further increase dependability. This allowed me to analyse the consistency and validity of my findings by cross-verifying my data from numerous

sources (Mohajan, 2018). To ensure consistency between the study findings and the acquired data, I also kept a notebook reflecting on the findings I reached during the study.

3.10.3 Conformability

Stewart, Gapp and Harwood (2017) define conformability as the extent to which study outcomes are influenced by participants rather than the researcher's interest and motivation. To reduce my own prejudice, I first acknowledged my own preconceptions as a researcher. I built an audit trail so that observers could track the study's progress from beginning to end. Furthermore, because having a large number of individuals analyse data improves quality assurance, my supervisor maintained an eye on the data that had been generated (Mohajan, 2018).

3.11 Ethical Considerations

In this study, semi-structured interviews, a baseline survey and narrative analysis were employed. According to Roth and Unger (2018), comprehensive research includes substantial efforts to protect and defend participants from any potential harm that may arise during the research process. To emphasise the importance of ethical considerations in qualitative research, I concur with Fleming and Zegwaard (2018), who state that ethics should be considered at all stages of the research process.

Research ethics is a complicated matter that entails more than following a set of rules or adhering to the regulations of institutional or professional review boards (Zyphur & Pierides, 2017). It must therefore be a primary concern, not an afterthought, and it must be at the forefront of any research agenda (Arifin, 2018). The ethical considerations are more closely linked to data collection and reporting and report distribution than any other study phase (Clark-Kazak, 2017).

Participants were not subjected to any mental or physical harm throughout the data collection process (Roth & Unger, 2018). Before signing an informed consent form, participants were provided information about the study's aims, objectives and

relevance. Participants were informed in advance that their participation in the study was completely voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. I emphasised that whatever information they disclosed to me is strictly confidential and would be treated as such. Under the supervision of my supervisor, the data were safely preserved on a password-protected laptop.

Before any of the above was done, ethical clearance from the UFS Ethics Review Committee was requested and awarded. The ethics clearance number is UFS-HSD2019/1371/2110 (see Appendix A). Since the participants were teachers from the Free State province, permission was also sought from and granted by the FSDoE.

3.12 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I described the study methodology, analytical tools and data analysis procedure employed in the research. In addition, the study's goals, participants, sample and ethical concerns were all discussed in this chapter. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, with some components of the baseline survey related to my research question also used.

I used SNT as theoretical framework, since I believe that BTs' experiences and ability to construct meaning are socially formed. SNT and the interpretative paradigm both subscribe to the view that prior experiences and circumstances affect BTs' conceptions of themselves as practising teachers and their social interactions within their social network structures.

During the data analysis process, I identified four themes that could determine how an induction programme could affect the development of BTs' professional identity. These are 1) BTs' experiences in the teaching profession, 2) importance of BTs' professional identity, 3) the impact of induction programmes on BTs, and 4) BT induction programme recommendations for enhancements. The following chapter will utilise these themes to analyse and present the findings from the semi-structured

interviews and survey. This presentation highlights BTs' experiences during their first year(s) of employment to assist them in developing their professional identity.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter presented the research methodology and paradigm of this study. This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the semi-structured interview and survey data. It is necessary to analyse and evaluate the collected data in order to answer the research questions provided in section 1.4. I performed an analysis of the data using thematic narrative analysis, as indicated in the prior chapter.

From the ontological assumptions that informed my study, it is assumed that the social reality of individuals is interpreted and understood through the words that they create in their minds based on individual experiences (Mohajan, 2018). I subsequently acknowledge that the construction of teachers' professional identity is different for each teacher, varying in knowledge, experiences, interpretation and views (Van Lankveld et al., 2017). Accordingly, SNT frames humans (in this study, BTs) as interdependent rather than independent and embedded in social structures (Sannen et al., 2021). Thus, instead of explaining a social phenomenon though individual traits, the focus should be on the social relationships of individuals in which that phenomenon is embedded (Marz & Kelchtermans, 2020). Studies have found that network structures play essential roles in employees' intentions of remaining in their profession (Thomas et al., 2019).

Accordingly, professional identity has been characterised as the foundation for developing a teacher's professional identity (Titu, 2019). As teachers participate in numerous events and activities within their social network structures, their identity evolves. Teachers' personal and professional experiences, as well as their self-efficacy, professional commitment and job satisfaction, all have an impact on how they construct their professional identity. Therefore, quantitative data regarding these factors, collected from the baseline survey of the larger project, are used and analysed in the first phase of this study, the quantitative phase (Richter et al., 2021).

The quantitative phase is followed by phase two, the qualitative phase, where data from the semi-structured interviews are analysed. The data here relate to BTs' interactions in their working environments (schools) – their experiences, motivation levels and job satisfaction – as well as how an induction programme could influence the development of BTs' professional identity. This selection aims to see how these induction model components correlate with teacher perceptions of professional development (Adewusi, 2018). Additionally, my interest is to determine the components that hindered or supported the induction model. Furthermore, these components are also related to my research question about how teachers' professional identity develops during an induction programme.

4.2 Phase One: Quantitative Approach – Baseline Survey

4.2.1 Analysis of baseline survey data

The initial plan was to survey about 100 BTs in 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were certain limitations on how many teachers could attend the induction and training sessions, and only 47 responded to the questionnaire in the end. The findings of the 47 questionnaires are discussed and analysed in this section (see section 3.8 for more details).

The responses to the questionnaire were analysed in terms of their frequency of occurrence (how many times a specific response occurs). The quantitative responses to the questions are shown in percentage form. Some quantitative data of the survey components are presented and analysed narratively, while others are presented and analysed graphically. All quantitative data were analysed using the SPSS programme. A subset of the analysed data was transferred to an Excel spreadsheet to construct and depict the graphical data for a more presentable presentation.

The quantitative data (components) from the baseline survey were used to supplement the qualitative data from the interviews (discussed further in section 4.3)

to address the research question of how BTs can develop their professional identity during an induction programme.

4.2.2 Background information of participants

As previously mentioned, all 47 respondents (BTs) were from the Thabo Mofutsanyana district. Respondents in this study consisted of males and females. Females made up 72 percent of the respondents in the survey, while males made up 28 percent. Therefore, female teachers constituted a larger percentage of the teacher workforce in schools form this district compared to male teachers.

This is consistent with Davids and Waghid's finding (2020) that teaching is a female-dominated career in primary and secondary schools in SA. It is portrayed as a feminist profession since it involves hands-on responsibility for others. Given that women are naturally characterised as having "natural mothering" characteristics, they are considered more likely of becoming primary caregivers of children, and caring is regarded as a "fundamental female characteristic" (Tašner, Žveglič & Čeplak, 2017:6).

Respondents were divided into three age groups, 20–30 years, 31–40 years and 41–50 years. The 20–30 year age group was the largest and accounted for 78.8 percent of the respondents.

Regarding academic qualification, the most prevalent qualification obtained by respondents was a bachelor's degree in education, which accounted for 62.2 percent of respondents. This was followed by a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE), with 24.4 percent, and an honours degree, with 11.1 percent. This demonstrates that most BTs from the sample of 47 were certified teachers.

Respondents indicated having some sort of teaching experience, either as assistant teachers or as experienced teachers. Specifically, 40 percent said they gained their expertise through teaching practicums as part of their undergraduate education. Thirty-six percent classified themselves as former teachers, while twenty-two percent identified as assistant teachers.

In response to whether or not they received orientation when they started teaching, 63.8 percent of respondents said that they did not, while only 34 percent stated that they received orientation. Furthermore, only 45 percent indicated that their orientation programmes were formally structured, while the rest characterised their orientation programmes as informal or did not receive any orientation at all.

The subsequent section of the baseline survey explored how respondents perceived the four components of the induction model, self-efficacy, job satisfaction, sense of belonging and motivation. These are considered important factors that influence BTs' decision to remain in the teaching profession (Bjorklund et al., 2020).

4.2.3 Beginner teacher characteristics – Baseline survey

This section aims to explore four characteristics related to teachers' sense of professional identity: self-efficacy, job satisfaction, sense of belonging and motivation. Second, I analyse the relationship of the induction model's four components and the degree of relatedness of these characteristics. I specifically want to determine which factors hinder or support the relationship between the induction model and these indicators. This will enable me to understand which components of the induction model are regarded as vital and which are considered less relevant (as this is important to have an idea for further improvement of the model).

Research shows that BTs with high levels of self-efficacy have higher levels of job satisfaction, motivation and commitment and are better able to cope with stressors such as misbehaving learners, which can reduce teacher turnover (Barni, Danioni & Benevene, 2019). As such, the study attempted to investigate respondents' perception of their self-efficacy, specifically whether they enjoyed teaching or not. The findings are illustrated in Figure 4.1.

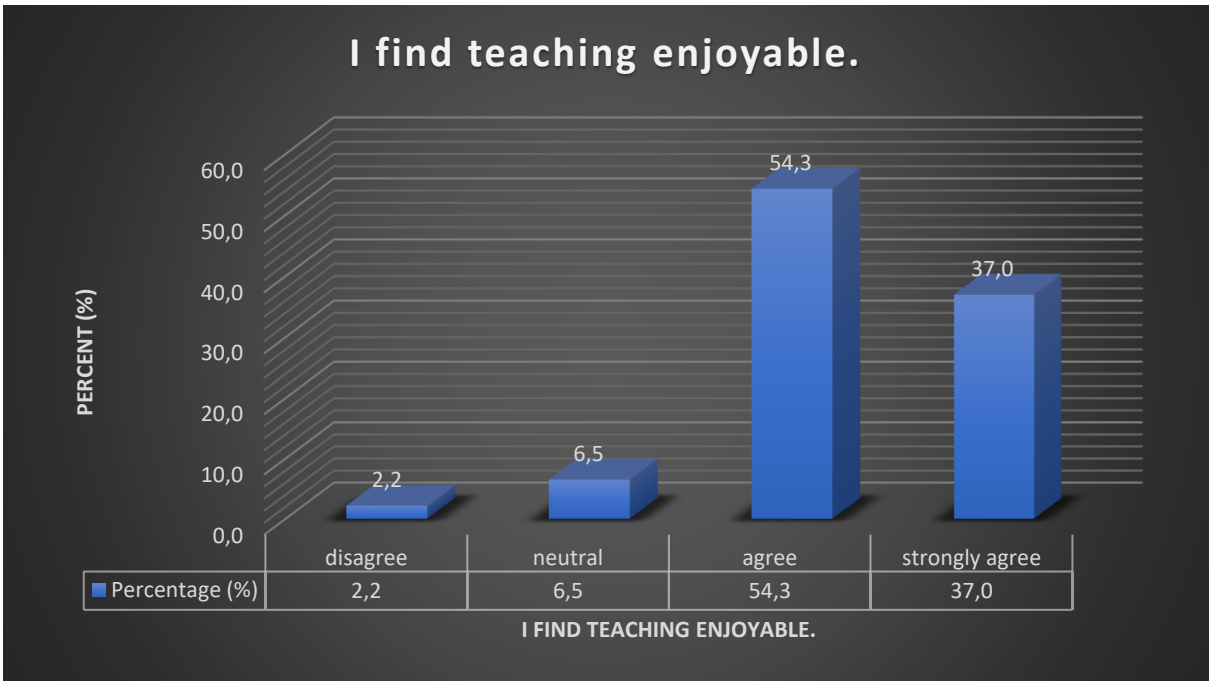

Figure 4.1: Respondents' job motivation and self-efficacy

The statistics show that 91.3 percent of respondents agreed that their jobs were enjoyable, which is a significant percentage. The relevance of self-efficacy, especially for BTs, is crucial to their job aspirations and readiness to learn, commitment, tolerance, motivation, behaviours and overall performance (Flores, 2017). The perception of having high levels of these characteristics in play also has an impact on BTs' job satisfaction levels.

Given that BTs' self-efficacy is linked to their job satisfaction and overall performance, the study sought to analyse whether respondents were satisfied with the work they achieved or not. The findings are illustrated in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2: Respondents' job satisfaction

The results indicate that 63.8 percent of respondents reported being satisfied with their work, which is a significantly high rate. Thus, the findings corroborate Barni et al. (2019) and Flores' (2017) assertion that teachers with high levels of self-efficacy have more job satisfaction and are more committed to remaining in their profession.

Teachers' sense of belonging within their social network structures (working environments) is related to their self-efficacy and job satisfaction (Bjorklund et al., 2020). As such, the study wanted to explore to what extent respondents felt a sense of belonging (or not). The findings are illustrated in Figure 4.3.

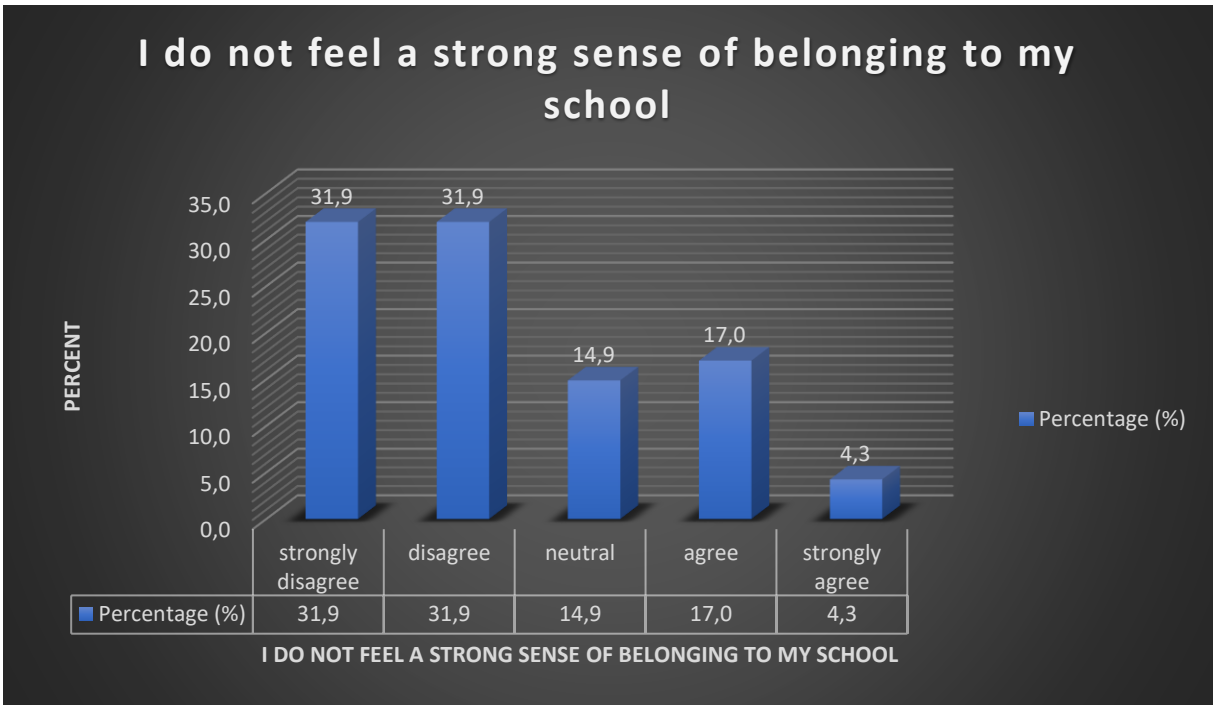

Figure 4.3: Respondents' sense of belonging

The importance of BTs' sense of belonging in sparking innovation and increasing commitment, motivation, self-efficacy and overall teaching performance, as well as influencing their decision to remain in their job, cannot be overstated (Bjorklund et al., 2020). The findings illustrate that 63.8 percent of respondents generally felt a sense of belonging in their schools.

Overall, respondents indicated high levels of the four components of the induction model, self-efficacy, motivation, job satisfaction and feeling a sense of belonging in their school. The four components of the induction model were proven of being substantially important and relevant indicators to respondents, which is an important analysis of the induction model and an essential aspect for further improving the model.

Notably, SNT enables us to understand how BTs are supported and how support is provided within their network structures, all of which are linked to their self-efficacy, job satisfaction, motivation and sense of belonging to teaching. This assertion is supported by research that shows relationships between BTs' self-efficacy,

increased confidence, resilience and motivation within their social network structures contribute to the development of their professional identity and improve their overall classroom practices (Bjorklund et al., 2020).

Furthermore, most respondents (95.7 percent) viewed the New Teacher Induction Programme as relevant. Among the many reasons for this was the desire to improve their teaching methods and strategies and implement them in their classrooms.

Most respondents indicated a need for practical opportunities and experience, indicating a lack of developmental opportunities in their schools. They stressed that they learned most of what they knew from their own experiences and difficulties, highlighting the gap between theory and practice. The findings reinforce the literature by emphasising the discrepancy between theory and practice, which causes most BTs to experience reality shock. This is evident given that some respondents indicated that they do not even know how to apply for leave or allowance (such as housing or medical aids), magnifying their reality shock.

On the other hand, other respondents saw the New Teacher Induction Programme as a forum to express their emotions, since they are usually reluctant to share their thoughts and feelings with other teachers in school. Lastly, respondents in the baseline survey indicated that the New Teacher Induction Programme would not only assist them in enhancing their teaching methods and approaches, but it will also “help us as new teachers in enjoying, having fun, and finding teaching and learning more interesting”, as noted by a respondent.

4.3 Phase Two: Qualitative Approach – Semi-Structured Interviews

This section consists of the analysis and discussion of data from the two rounds of semi-structured interviews referred to as T1 and T2 (see Appendices E and F). The goal of the semi-structured interviews was to gain insights into potential changes during the induction year in the relationship between the four components of the induction model and BTs’ sense of professional identity. This helped me to gain a

better understanding of how BTs' professional identity can develop during an induction programme.

The 15 BTs that were invited to participant were a representative sample from the Thabo Mofutsanyana district, stratified by gender, age and level of qualification. The obtained data are presented in this chapter as a thematic narrative, comprising a description, presentation and analysis of the findings.

Fourteen BTs were interviewed in the first round of interviews (T1) in January 2021. The second round of interviews (T2), or follow-up interviews, was conducted in August 2021. Only eight participants were interviewed during this phase, which included both face-to-face and telephonic interviews. The initial intention was to interview all 14 of the BTs that were interviewed in the first round. However, when approached about meeting up for follow-up interviews, some participants did not reply. The eight participants who responded to the invitation were subsequently interviewed using their chosen method, either by phone or in person.

This study excludes the third round of interviews (T3 – exit interviews) that is planned as part of the bigger research project, for 2022. For the purposes of my study, the preliminary data from the first two rounds of interviews provided sufficient insight to answer my research questions. In addition, it was sufficient to allow me to make future recommendations on my research question of how BTs' professional identity develops during an induction programme.

This study section details the qualitative approach to fill in the gaps and supplement the baseline survey findings. The qualitative approach was deemed the most suitable since it offers in-depth insight into participant experiences (Tracy, 2019). The qualitative approach was most suitable since it elicits a clear understanding and reveals more comprehensive information about the topic under inquiry than data gathered only from a questionnaire (Alase, 2017). Furthermore, this methodology is widely used to uncover what people know and think and how they behave and feel about a certain phenomenon.

To achieve the aim of the study, to obtain an in-depth exploration of how BTs develop their professional identity during an induction programme, participants were prompted certain questions during the interviews. These related to their expectations of the induction model, the induction model and its different components and how they perceived these components of the induction programme in relation to the indicators of professional identity. It also related to what they learn during the school year and what conditions have a supporting or rather inhibiting effect. The themes and subthemes that emerged from the interviews are presented and analysed under the given topics.

As previously explained, SNT serves as a theoretical and empirical framework for exploring teachers' social networks in depth in a more nuanced manner by focusing on the characteristics and patterns of relationships (Hangul & Senturk, 2019). SNT offers valuable insights into the extent to which BTs collaborate and interact in schools (Froehlich, Van Waes & Schäfer, 2020). Furthermore, the theoretical framework of SNT focuses on network structures, instruction, learning and relationships in such depth.

As such, SNT served as theoretical underpinning for this study. The subsequent sections elaborate on the findings of the semi-structured interviews. The analysis and presentation are centred on participants' verbal responses from the two rounds of interviews, which took place in January and August of 2021, respectively.

4.3.1 Beginner teacher experiences

Unlike people in other professions, new teachers rarely receive gradual progression opportunities for professional development into the teaching profession. They are expected to take on the same roles and responsibilities as their more experienced colleagues on their first day of work. Literature reports that many BTs experience various challenges and difficulties in their first years, which has an adverse effect on the development of their professional identity, leading to BT attrition (Gaddy, 2020). Thus, this analysis investigates and reports on BT experiences, highlights common challenges, and explores how an induction programme can support and develop

their professional identity and possibly retain them in the teaching profession. Analysis and discussion in this section relate to participant responses to the prompt: **How did you experience your first year(s) of teaching? What went well and what did not go well in your first year?**

A few participants indicated that their university teaching practicums (practicals) prepared them for the challenges they were likely to face in the classroom:

> Well, it was quite **not so challenging** due to the **practicals** that we had **at varsity**, because from our second year up to our fourth year, we have been going to practicals. (T1: Participant 1)

Despite the fact that a few participants acknowledged the beneficial impact their teaching practicums had in their transition into the teaching profession, most participants lamented the difficulties they faced in their first year. This is seen in the responses of the following three participants:

> It was so difficult, it was **very much difficult**. I completed my studies in 2018, neh? I got the job two months later. (T1: Participant 9)

> It was difficult to get along with the children because we **didn't get induction**. I did everything by myself. (T1: Participant 8)

> I didn't even teach for the whole year. During October, I was **diagnosed with major depression**. **That's how difficult** it was for me in my first year of teaching. (T1: Participant 9)

There is consistency with Botha and Rens' (2018) findings. They assert that, although BTs are equipped with fundamental skills during their teaching practicums, the practical and implementation aspects in the classroom are often seen as the most challenging for BTs with no previous teaching experience. When BTs are not adequately prepared or supported, they may experience praxis shock as their confrontations with the realities and responsibilities of being classroom teachers are put to the test (Gaddy, 2020). This often challenges some, while confirming others, as illustrated by two participants:

> I didn't know anything about **registers** or to control absenteeism; at university, we were not taught on how to complete a **class register**. So, there was a lot of **shock** for me. (T1: Participant 9)

> I think it was **implementing the curriculum**, implementing the process, the **planning into the real class environment**. (T1: Participant 1)

Some participants attributed their difficulties to curriculum issues such as not knowing how to implement the curriculum. Others emphasised the reality shock they experienced when faced with responsibilities such as completing class registers and controlling absenteeism, which they were never taught in universities during their undergraduate studies. Furthermore, aside from the challenges they indicated, participants also emphasised the lack of support and mentorship:

> I was just given a class to teach **without a mentor** or somebody to show me how things work and, you know, as a new teacher in a school, I think you need someone who will work next to you, as your mentor, who will show you the way, how to do things, how to teach – **I didn't get that**. (T1: Participant 13).

> We just had to get in class and do **without being mentored**. (T1: Participant 5).

Regarding being faced with the reality and shock of teaching in real-world settings, Participant 2 (T1) said: "It was a shock to learn that teaching was not what I anticipated it to be. I was literally thrown in the deep end." This finding concurs with that of Botha and Rens (2018:5). In accordance with what this participant remarked, another participant confirmed the gap she felt:

> I think **there's a gap** between what we are taught at the university and what we experience at school. (T1: Participant 8)

The difficulties mentioned by participants, such as not knowing how to complete class registers, controlling absenteeism and lacking the knowledge to implement the curriculum into their classrooms, are consistent with Woest's (2018) assertion that most BTs experience reality shock in their first years, which quite often leads to additional challenges if not adequately prepared. Some participants indicated that

they had to do everything by themselves during their first year as they navigated their way into the teaching profession.

However, it is important to note that the first round of interviews was in January 2021, before the actual induction programme had begun. Despite the two introductory training sessions and workshops held in 2020, the induction programme was not implemented until February 2021, when mentor teachers were trained and assigned to BTs, due to COVID-19. Thus, most participants indicated not receiving support or mentorship. Most of their support narratives and experiences are based on their own educational experiences.

Even though most participants lamented a lack of support through mentorship in their schools, a few stated that they were inducted. Others indicated receiving developmental opportunities and informal support through workshop programmes and from their HODs:

> We were inducted, it **wasn't that difficult**. (T1: Participant 2)
>
> What went well is I got **support by workshops**. (T1: Participant 5)
>
> I had a very supporting **HOD, who was helping me work**, who made things much easier for me. (T1: Participant 3)

This finding is consistent with that of Günes and Uysal (2019). They state that BTs should be adequately supported and equipped to address first-year challenges through professional development opportunities and social contacts with other teachers, through collaborative workshops, reflective practices and seminars.

Evidence shows that professional support from colleagues can positively influence BTs' attitudes and retain them in the teaching profession (Craig, 2017; Mbhele, 2018). As such, the SNT perspective also correlates this assertion that BTs can be provided with adequate support through the exchange of resources and knowledge with other teachers, mentors, principals and HODs (social network structures).

Furthermore, the development of BTs' professional identity should be viewed as a learning process through which BTs engage with, observe, participate with and learn

from their senior teachers in order to aid them in developing their professional identity (Marz & Kelchtermans, 2020). Accordingly, SNT as a theoretical lens considers learning a social process in which teachers can develop knowledge and skills by engaging with other teachers in their network circles (Sannen et al., 2019). Thus, developing BTs' professional identity is crucial for securing their motivation, job satisfaction, self-efficacy and sense of belonging (Karaolis & Philippou, 2019).

While most participants indicated a lack of support, which resulted in administrative challenges such as completing class registers, controlling absenteeism and implementing the curriculum, common contextual challenges were also highlighted. This is the next topic to be discussed.

4.3.2 Contextual challenges

This section reports and highlights prevalent contextual challenges narrated by participants. The most prevalent challenge experienced by participants was the issue of overcrowded classrooms:

> **What we were taught in university, like, was not the same** exactly from what we experienced in class; for example, like, when we were doing practicals, the **classes were not overcrowded** as they were in school, so I was a bit scared and nervous. (T1: Participant 12)

> For me personally, when you get into the classroom as a first-time teacher, **you find 42 learners and you are on your own**; and so, you know, it was a little **bit tricky** because you are even afraid to discipline these learners because you are told that you **mustn't be too strict**, you mustn't do this, you mustn't do that. (T1: Participant 2)

> We have quite a **lot of number of learners** and we're sort of, like, **overcrowded** … It was like **80 learners in one class**. And it was **quite challenging**, especially when it comes to **disciplining** and sharing of duties and everything, so it was quite hectic. (T1: Participant 1)

This finding supports the literature on overcrowded classrooms being a common problem for most teachers in SA primary and secondary schools (Matsepe et al.,

2019). Overcrowded classrooms can quickly become unbearable, especially for BTs with limited experience and who have not been adequately trained, while dealing with high workloads (Köhler, 2020; Nkuna, 2017). This assumption is reflected in the comments of participants who found themselves on their own as they faced large classes. This exacerbated learner disciplinary issues, as participants mentioned being afraid even to discipline learners because they were told not to be too strict, which proved difficult, especially in a class of 80 learners.

Besides disciplinary issues, overcrowded classrooms also exacerbated other additional obstacles, such as controlling and marking learners' books:

> It was so hard for me to manage such **huge number of learners** as well as to **control the books**, because when you are still at varsity doing practicals, it is so easy to control the books and mark the books. We used to teach a few learners and mark the books and when I came to work, there were **50–60 learners**. So, **it was hard for me to get used to them and mark all of them**. (T2: Participant 4)

Aside from issues related to overcrowded classrooms and discipline, some participants also reported their school management as another contextual challenge:

> Ja, I feel **good, but not 100%**. I feel like the management is a lot – okay, how can I put it? – The management of the school is **not managing the school** the way… in a good way. I can say that. (T1: Participant 4)

> They **don't design programmes** and there is no way you as a teacher can question your senior, unless you want to work in a new environment. (T2: Participant 3)

Similarly, others pointed out school policies that led to student disciplinary problems:

> It's like, the **policies** … or the policy of the private schools **versus us**, I think the policies are not the same. For example, where I'm teaching, there are **learners** who are **misbehaving**. For example, when I arrived, there were learners who were **vandalising the school bus** after several times, but **they**

> **are still there** because they say that … the department and the what-what **allowed them to be there** with the school bus. (T1: Participant 8)

The highlighted contextual challenges – overcrowded classrooms and learner discipline issues – are intertwined problems that most teachers experience. Even though not all participants experienced these issues, they were highlighted by most participants and hence were investigated further.

Only 34 percent of respondents in the baseline survey indicated that they received orientation, while 63.8 percent received no orientation. It is therefore clear that most BTs are inadequately prepared and supported to teach and face all aspects of teaching, which leads to the aforementioned challenges.

4.3.3 New Teacher Induction Programme – Expectations

The opening prompt in the first round of interviews inquired about participants' expectations (if any) for the induction programme. This was before induction had started and mentors were assigned in February 2021. Participants shared their expectations of the induction programme in their narratives:

> My expectations – I think maybe I **expected to be inducted**, because, I think, this is my second year, **I am still new**, so I, maybe, when I heard the word *induction*, I expected a **formal induction**, maybe programme, yes. (T1: Participant 3)

In their narratives, participants anticipated a formal induction programme with a particular emphasis on the curriculum and the teaching profession:

> I thought that it would be based more on, like, maybe, the **curriculum**. (T1: Participant 2)

> Oh, my expectation was to be given **more knowledge** about teacher **profession**, like what is expected from a teacher. (T1: Participant 4)

Similarly, some participants also expected the induction programme to address their concerns about learner misconduct and supervisors. Suppose that their supervisors mistreat them to decide the appropriate course of action that they may take:

> My expectations is that this new teacher induction model, that they will **tackle the daily challenges we face as teachers**, you know. We **don't know much about the misconduct** and so forth, you know, whether, if we are **mistreated by our supervisors**, we don't know what steps we should take. (T1: Participant 11)

A few participants also indicated a desire to receive emotional support and advice to help them deal with the difficulties they face, since they found it challenging to communicate with their older peers:

> As a new teacher, there are things that we go through and I feel like we need **emotional support** due to the things that involve education and everything. I think we are okay because we have our immediate supervisors; we have educators that we work with; we have peers; we have HODs. But due to emotional support, **I do not really think we are able to open up freely because some of our HODs are way older and we cannot really interact in such a way that we are freely**. (T1: Participant 1)

Finally, some participants anticipated receiving help in coping with overcrowded classrooms as well as practical suggestions for addressing real-world problems in schools:

> Maybe they can just tell us more on **how to handle these clustered classrooms, because that one is hard and you have to produce results** in a clustered classroom. (T1: Participant 5)

> I expect it to be **more practical**, like to give us the ideas that are practical that we can be able to **apply in real-life situation** which we face in a school environment. (T1: Participant 4)

In general, participants had high hopes for the induction programme. To start, participants expected the induction model to be formal. They expected to gain knowledge and skills on how to execute the curriculum in their class presentation properly. Second, they expected it to help them in managing challenges such as student disciplinary issues and overcrowded classrooms. They also expected the

induction model to provide a forum to discuss their challenges and grievances openly.

After sharing their expectations of the induction model, participants were asked about the four components of the New Teacher Induction Programme: school-based mentoring, peer support, training sessions and a personal development plan (see Appendix F: 1.2). These components have been proven to improve teachers' motivation, commitment, job satisfaction and resilience. Therefore, they were included in the induction model. The findings from the interviews as related to the four components are presented and discussed next.

4.3.4 The four components of the induction model

This section explores the efficacy of the induction model and the extent to which the model, specifically the interplay of its four components, is related to teachers' self-efficacy, motivation, sense of belonging and job satisfaction as indicators of their professional identity.

The selection and analysis of the four components of the induction model are based on the ontological notion that teachers' (in this case, BTs) opportunities to learn and develop their professional identity are moulded by the relationships they have in their teaching network structures (Van Waes et al., 2018). Interactions and support among peers and school personnel, communication and information sharing are examples of informal learning relationships that are increasingly recognised as crucial drivers of continuing professional development. As such, peer support was identified as the first component of the induction model.

4.3.4.1 *Peer support*

Peer support in this context is described as reflective practices and collaboration between BTs and experienced teachers and social support in which teachers discuss work-related issues (informal support: feedback, teaching strategies, lesson observations) (Aarts, Kools & Schildwacht, 2020). The significance of including peer support in the induction programme is that support from other teachers has been shown to positively affect BT satisfaction and commitment in their jobs. Most

participants indicated that they received peer support in 2020, as shown in the next excerpts:

> I did get the **support,** I will say, it was **adequate**. (T1: Participant 4)

Most of the support they reported was from other BTs and experienced teachers in their schools.

> Ja, **I got peer support**, I can say, **from the new teachers** who were also, ja, entering the field. (T1: Participant 3)

> There was a new teacher that I was **working closely** with. (T1: Participant 5)

> I had one teacher who was **experienced**, so he helped, he **helped me with lesson planning**, **using the CAPS documents and all those things**, and we had what we call, is it peer support? Ja, where we have all the **teachers teaching the same subjects, we had meetings quarterly, we discussed**, ja, all those things, ja. So, for peer mentoring, I would say, it really did work for me. (T2: Participant 14)

The findings indicate that peer support is prevalent among BTs, specifically between BTs and other BTs or experienced teachers. The second component of the induction model focused on school-based mentorship, which is discussed next.

4.3.4.2 *School-based mentoring*

School-based mentoring is a relationship between a BT (mentee) and an experienced teacher (mentor), whereby they are jointly engaged in reflection and discussions regarding student learning and teaching (Beutel et al., 2017). Mentorship at the school level aims to assist BTs in developing their professional identity and improving their teaching expertise. Most participants who received school-based mentorship said that their HODs were the ones who mentored them at their schools.

> **I had to go to my HOD's class** by about three months, for the first quarter, for the whole quarter. I was in her class and **she showed me how to plan and how to implement the curriculum** and how to interact with my colleagues and the learners as well as the faculty staff. (T1: Participant 1)

> **I got mentorship at school from my HOD**, from my colleagues, the teachers who were already there. (T1: Participant 2)

While some participants reported good experiences and benefits from mentoring, others, however, reported inconsistencies with their mentors. This is because the mentors did not properly execute their duties and did not provide the participants with subject-specific needs:

> **We have a mentor**, but then the thing is that **our mentor is teaching different subject**, not the same subjects as mine, so **I can't say I have a mentor who is allocated to me** according to my subjects. (T2: Participant 5)

Some participants, on the other hand, reported not receiving any school-based mentorship and being left to do everything for themselves:

> **I didn't get much of the mentoring**, you know, ja. Like, okay, when I came to school, I was told, "**Okay, you have arrived, here is a contract, okay, these are the classes that you are going to teach**." (T1: Participant 4)

> Mentorship was not available, guidance was not available. **I had to do everything by myself**. So, each and everything I learned, some of the experiences I had to learn them in a very hard way, because I **didn't have any guidance or mentorship or support** from, maybe, management or the HOD or. So, it was a bit hard. **There is still no support, just that now I am used to everything**. (T2: Participant 1)

Two aspects of school-based mentoring were highlighted from the findings. First, if effectively conducted, school-based mentorship can assist BTs in developing their professional identity and improving their teaching practices.

Second, there are discrepancies with some mentors not adequately performing their roles and duties in meeting the specific needs of BTs, because they are poorly trained or lack knowledge in the subjects assigned to the BTs they mentor. According to Christie and Monyokolo (2018), this is attributable to one of two factors. The first is that in most schools mentoring is done by HODs rather than mentors who are meant to be trained to mentor BTs. In most SA schools, HODs are mainly responsible for mentoring BTs, yet they are not provided with training programmes

to mentor BTs, which is a flaw in their roles to induct BTs. The second factor is that HODs and experienced teachers are burdened with their own workload, leaving little to no time to mentor BTs (Daniels, 2019).

The third component of the induction programme included training sessions for teachers, BTs, mentors, principals and district officials. As discussed in the next section, not all mentors were adequately equipped to mentor and train BTs.

4.3.4.3 *Training sessions*

External experts, notably the DBE, the FSDoE, and the VVOB, planned regular training sessions and workshops to identify BT needs as part of the induction programme. The training sessions also aimed to improve the quality of trainers and mentors and to reflect on the induction approach (based on these reflections, adaptations to the model can be made accordingly). However, since the induction model's inception, BTs have only attended two face-to-face training sessions in Bethlehem and QwaQwa in the Thabo Mofutsanyana district in 2020 (see section 3.6) due to COVID-19 and social distancing regulations.

Most participants stated in their narratives that they attended training sessions at the beginning of the year prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, which some felt were beneficial:

> Yes, **we did have workshops**, it was on ATPs, because the curriculum had to be, you know, changed a little bit because of the COVID, but it was good because our **LF** (learning area facilitator, also known as subject advisor) explained, we read things through, we were able to, we were given **chances to ask questions if we didn't understand**, so it was **beneficial**, very good. (T1: Participant 2)

> I think yes; I think I did. Yes, earlier last year, the start-up workshops. (T1: Participant 3)

Some participants mentioned the impact of unions at their schools, which prevented them from hosting face-to-face seminars. Due to COVID-19 and social gathering

restrictions, training sessions were moved online through virtual workshops that their subject advisors mostly piloted.

> Yes they did, at the beginning of the year. The business studies subject advisor did an **online workshop due to COVID**. **SATU[1] said no meetings**, so we had a workshop on **Zoom**. The workshops were mostly held by the subject advisor. (T2: Participant 5)

However, other participants indicated that the only training sessions they attended and received was the introductory sessions:

> It was **last held in 2019** and that was that. **In 2020 nothing, in 2021 still nothing**. We **only had it once**. We only went once in 2019 before COVID-19, so there is nothing that I can really say. (T2: Participant 1)

Despite the fact that regular training sessions were scheduled to identify and assist BTs' needs during the induction programme, few BTs benefited from them. Many participants just attended the introductory training sessions provided at the onset of the induction programme. When asked about the training sessions, most participants had little to say. The few who attended visual training workshops, on the other hand, recognised their benefits and stated that their subject advisors typically hosted them.

Aside from training, another component of BT mentorship was the development of a personal development plan for BTs as an additional tool of learning, which comprises the fourth component of the induction model. The findings are reported in the following section.

4.3.4.4 *Personal development plan*

As part of the induction model, BTs were required to create a personal development plan to monitor and structure their learning goals, needs and plans of action to assist

[1] The Democratic Teachers Union of South Africa (SATU) is the country's largest democratic educators' union. It was designed to ensure educational quality by motivating educators to improve and in maintaining high educational standards and teaching approaches (Mafisa, 2017).

them in developing their professional identity. This is considered a continuing process of growth (Coenders & Verhoef, 2019). Most participants reported that they had developed a personal development plan from the first training session of the induction model in 2019 and that it was linked to the IQMS:

> Yes, I did. I did at the end of 2019, I had my own **personal development plan**. (T1: Participant 2)

> Yes, we did **IQMS**, but for last year, it was just self-evaluation only … due to COVID. They said we should only do **self-evaluation**. (T1: Participant 4)

> Yes, I did, **I developed it through the IQMS**, because each and **every year we have to do IQMS**. So, there is this part (development programme), so I **had to sit down and identify my weak areas** and I also had to **come up with the intervention strategies**. So, I identified them and tried to come up with **strategies to improve**. (T2: Participant 1)

While some participants said that they created their personal development plans using the IQMS model, others stated that they had other developmental opportunities in their schools that helped them in developing their personal development plans:

> There is now a new … I think it's a **new programme about coding and robotics**. And we were selected that we should join, and … it's something like a **short course**. And we were selected and doing it. And, also, the workshops that we go to, that we attend. (T2: Participant 8)

However, a few participants stated that they did not create a personal development plan since they were not provided with any mentorship in their schools:

> No, we **didn't get any chance** to develop a personal plan. (T1: Participant 11)

> School-based mentoring, this year I don't have any, as well as peer support, I didn't get any, I didn't develop any plan yet. (T2: Participant 4)

Overall, although not all participants created a personal development plan, those who did demonstrated its advantages in that it allowed them to reflect on their

practices, especially their strengths and flaws (what they struggled with more or needed assistance with). This component of the induction approach is crucial because it identifies the specific needs of BTs, enabling mentors to support them better as they construct their professional identity.

Among the pre-existing challenges, the impact of COVID-19 on BTs' experiences were probed, specifically BTs' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. The following section discusses these results.

4.3.5 Experiences in the context of the COVID 19 pandemic

The participants were prompted about their experiences in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in the third phase of the interviews (see Appendix E: 1.3). It is important to note that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the induction programme was not implemented as were intended in 2020. As such, the project was revised to explore BT experiences related to COVID-19.

Most participants lamented the difficulties they experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, as they commented on the various challenges they faced:

> There was a **lot of challenges**. (T1: Participant 6)
>
> We had to teach **more classes**, we have to do a **lot of work** because **classes were subdivided**. (T1: Participant 4)
>
> We were **always scared** that, "**What if I contract COVID-19 while I'm teaching?**" you know, "**What will happen to me?**" you know, those things. They made us to be sort of, I don't know, **traumatised**. (T1: Participant 4)

Many participants stated that, due to the size of their classes, they were obliged to divide them into smaller groups in order to comply with social distancing regulations. Despite class division, some teachers with excessively large class sizes were still faced with huge groups inside the class, making it difficult to maintain social distancing in line with COVID-19 regulations:

> We had **many learners**, there was **no social distance** some days, and we all **ended up getting sick**. (T1: Participant 13)

Furthermore, teachers were also required to remove visual aids from their classrooms as a result of COVID-19, which was problematic for teachers of younger pupils:

> The time was very limited, and the resources as well, **because we were told to take off, like, every teaching aid from the wall.** So, **imagine in a grade 1 classroom** that it's clean – the walls – there's nothing, **no picture**, due to the pandemic, the COVID-19. (T1: Participant 10)

Apart from the additional difficulties posed by overcrowded classrooms and resource scarcity, participants also expressed their vulnerability and anxiousness at the prospect of teaching amid a worldwide pandemic:

> As a novice teacher, with my **experience of depression** and all that, it was like **a chance that I could get depression again** … after a year. Because **everything was just too much**; it was triple everything. So, **COVID** had a **bad impact** on me as a new teacher. (T1: Participant 9)

It is critical to highlight that this participant was readmitted to the hospital for depression for the second time in 2021, just a few months after the first interview. During the second round of interviews, she recounted her experiences in her narrative of being in the psychiatric facility for the second time within two years:

> Now in March, my HOD **sent the papers** with my former flatmate and then I said to her before the second week of **admission**, "I just want to mark my accounting learners …." She brought the whole, it was **grade 10s, grade 9 papers** and then **I even had to mark business studies. I marked work as if I am still on duty while I was on sick leave**. (T2: Participant 5)

While some participants shared how COVID-19 exacerbated their depressive episodes, others emphasised why COVID-19 was more challenging for them as a BT:

> It has **put so much strain on me**, I think it's new to everyone, yes, the fact that this thing, this pandemic, is new to everyone, but I think it was **more hard for people like us**, people **who are starting to get into the field**, **people who need support**, they **need guidance**. (T1: Participant 13)

Participants still felt relatively new and inexperienced and indicated that they still needed guidance and support to teach amid COVID-19 while already dealing with their existing challenges. Along with the classroom difficulties presented by COVID-19, participants lamented the lack of support they received at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic:

> There was **no support** given to us! There was **no support from the department, the school, or anyone** else; it was **everyone for himself**, everything was just difficult! (T1: Participant 9)

> We did not get any support from the district or the department due to **COVID**. (T1: Participant1)

> Well, I did not really see any **support from the district**, because, as I mentioned before, they didn't give us extra stuff in order to help us with learners. (T1: Participant 4)

While most participants bemoaned teaching during COVID-19 and the difficulties they experienced, they also expressed the hindrances of COVID-19 on the implementation of the induction programme. According to participants, these hindrances interfered with face-to-face training sessions, workshops and social interactions that were postponed due to social distancing:

> It was not quite ready because we **could not really interact** with those people that came to **introduce the programme**. And due to COVID-19, we don't even have that time to **sit down with them and ask questions** and everything. (T1: Participant 1)

> **We can't go and meet, sit in one room, get inducted**, ask **questions face to face**, you know, so it was a little bit tricky. (T1: Participant 2)

> I don't know how I can explain that one, but I think it has impacted in such a way that our **induction has to be cut short**, and there were not much things that we did. (T1: Participant 4)

Overall, participants stated that COVID-19 played a pivotal role in their experiences as BTs, which affected them professionally and personally, as shown in their narratives.

While many participants lamented the lack of support in their schools while teaching during the COVID-19 outbreak, a few did acknowledge the support and opportunities presented, as well as the benefits of teaching during such a period:

> Yes, we were **given masks**, obviously, we had **meetings, the SMT would regularly update** us on COVID what, things, you know, like when we had to fill in forms about [inaudible] and stuff, so yes, **we were supported**. (T1: Participant 2)

> Okay, ja, maybe we did **manage to have a little number in classes**, so it was an **opportunity for me to help those learners who are struggling**, because, you know, public schools are overcrowded, so it's not easy to help everyone to that point that you would like to. (T1: Participant 3)

> **An opportunity** that I found was that because, you know, **we now know technology**, because as new teachers with **technological advances**. So, there was this thing called **Zoom** that was used, and experienced teachers were like, "Oh, what do we do now?" So, with us knowing technology, I was like, "No, let us just press here," so I was able to bring out my technological know-how. I can say yes. (T1: Participant 2)

When asked whether they had any good experiences of teaching during COVID-19, only a selected few highlighted the benefits of COVID-19, while most participants stated that:

> There are **no opportunities** that I experienced. (T2: Participant 4)

> I **can't think of any, except** that it **inhibited our functionality**. (T2: Participant 1)

Many participants considered COVID-19 a significant crisis because many challenges arose from it. Numerous difficulties were identified, including a lack of support, lack of resources, anxiety, overcrowded classrooms and class breakdowns,

all of which necessitated more teaching and administrative time. Some participants even said that they were diagnosed with depression, while others stated that they fell sick at some point.

Given the difficulty of this shift and the insights gained from BTs' experiences during COVID-19, it is critical to understand how BTs shape their professional identity while adapting and remaining coherent. Their dissonance or conflicts at this period might have a negative impact on their decision to leave the profession. It can, however, have a positive effect, such as motivation for change and learning new things, all of which contribute to the development of BTs' professional identity.

Thus far, I explored BTs' contextual challenges, their expectations of the New Teacher Induction Programme, the interaction of the programme's four components, and their teaching experiences during the pandemic. I will subsequently also analyse BT characteristics (self-efficacy, motivation, sense of belonging and job satisfaction), which are considered important indicators of BTs' sense of professional identity. The succeeding section explores which factors hindered or supported the relationship between the induction model and these indicators.

4.3.6 Beginner teacher characteristics

This section sought to ascertain which components of the induction model were viewed as essential or less important by participants. These characteristics are also significant indicators of a teacher's professional identity, including their self-efficacy, job satisfaction, sense of belonging and motivation.

Participants were asked about the four measures of the induction model during the interviews. As previously stated (and formerly assessed in the baseline survey), these measuring scales are internationally validated measurements. The purpose of this analysis is to ascertain the degree to which these components contribute to BTs' professional development and how they affect BTs' sense of professional identity during an induction programme.

Participants were prompted about their job satisfaction, self-efficacy, sense of belonging, resilience and motivation, specifically the aspects of their jobs they

enjoyed and those they found challenging and demotivating (see Appendix F: 2.4). These aspects are critical for BTs' attitudes, beliefs and behaviours and are related to developing their professional identity, job satisfaction, sense of belonging and motivation to coping with day-to-day challenges (Titu, 2019).

The results from the baseline survey and the findings from the T2 interviews are consistent, indicating high levels of job satisfaction. Overall, despite the challenges mentioned in T1 interviews, findings in T2 interviews suggest that all participants had high levels of job satisfaction, since they all stated that they loved their jobs, with the most enjoyable aspect being just teaching and doing things with their students. They cited their primary source of motivation for working as their students:

> I **enjoy teaching**, even if my job was all about teaching just **to stand in front of learners** teaching. (T2: Participant 3)

> The part of being in class and **doing things with the learners**. (T2: Participant 2)

> **Seeing my learners that happy to see me motivate me a lot**, even if sometimes I feel small and I belittle myself, **I don't feel confident** about myself, **I am someone who they can look up to**. (T2: Participant 5)

Furthermore, participants showed high levels of resilience and stated that they believed they had the necessary skills to succeed in their job. In their narratives, they characterised themselves as life-long learners who are open to learning new things as they gain new experiences:

> Yes! **I believe I have what it takes to succeed as a new teacher**, because each and every day, I am **gaining more experience** and I **reflect on my teaching**. (T2: Participant 4)

> I think **I have what it takes to succeed as a beginner teacher**, because we are now living in a technological world. **We know more about projectors**, **we know more about the means of finding information from the internet**, so I believe we have what it takes. (T2: Participant 4)

Findings from T2 interviews (see Appendix F) reveal that participants were highly motivated, satisfied, committed and resilient in their jobs. These findings complement the results of the baseline survey (T0 – see Appendix D). These revealed that 91.3 percent of participants enjoyed teaching and 63.8 percent were satisfied with their jobs, reflecting positive attitudes and beliefs in their professional identity (see section 4.2.3).

Research shows that the extent to which BTs are committed, motivated and satisfied in their jobs and how they overcome day-to-day challenges and experiences are profoundly influenced by their beliefs and their social practices and interactions with others (Mansfield, 2020). Consequently, their retention decisions, job performance and, most crucially, their students' achievement and learning are all influenced by their personal beliefs and practices within social settings (schools). This was verified by some participants:

> **Most of my support I get it from my peers**. For example, it's my first time teaching creative arts, so I get around and **talk with teachers who taught it before**, how are they doing it, what should I do. So, most of the support I get it from my peers. (T2: Participant 2)

> **What I have achieved is so much compared to the fact that I am new in the field** and I had **no supervision, no mentorship, but I did achieve great things** because during my first year in **grade 12, my learners got 100 percent pass**, in 2019 my learners got 100 percent pass and last year only one learner failed. So, it was about **95 percent passed with a few distinctions amongst them**. So, even though I am a beginner teacher, even though I have no mentor, but up to so far I see some great things. I think my results speaks volume. (T2: Participant 1)

The results clearly indicate that, although not all participants received school-based mentoring or adequate support, the majority of them stated that most of their support was peer-based through informal collaboration with their fellow BTs and experienced teachers. SNT as a theoretical lens reinforces one to view teaching as a culturally embedded field and practice. BTs' interactions with peers, their sharing of knowledge, resources and information, and their sense of professional identity are

influenced and reflected in their job satisfaction, commitment, resilience, motivation and self-efficacy (Shwartz & Dori, 2020).

For example, BTs who receive peer support often exhibit increased motivation, self-efficacy and commitment, as well as a sense of belonging. This assertion is supported by research that demonstrates that positive interactions and relationships between colleagues within social network structures increase a BT's sense of belonging (Bjorklund et al., 2020). This further demonstrates that increased sense of belonging increases interactions, which further increases a BT's motivation, commitment, satisfaction and resilience (Bjorklund et al., 2020). Additionally, BTs who have a sense of belonging are more likely to seek support if necessary. They are more committed, resilient and motivated to pursue developmental opportunities and remain in their job.

The findings revealed that the majority of participants felt a sense of belonging in their schools. The results from the baseline survey also support this, where 63.8 percent of respondents reported feeling a sense of belonging in their schools.

> Yes definitely, **we are a family at our school**. Maybe it's **because we are a small group**. (T2: Participant 2)

However, a few participants reported a sense of disconnection from their schools:

> What demotivate me a lot it's **the disconnection here at work**. **Sometimes I feel like I don't belong here**, most of the teachers call me last born, **I am the youngest here**. **I am not sure if I belong here or not**. (T2: Participant 5)

Overall, there is strong evidence that the four induction model components (self-efficacy, work satisfaction, motivation and sense of belonging) are linked and play an essential role in the development of BTs' professional identity. Despite the reported challenges, all participants indicated they felt they had the resilience and commitment necessary to succeed. Furthermore, as an analytical lens, SNT proposes that BTs' learning opportunities are moulded in their teaching-network circles, recognising the significance of formal and informal learning as key drivers for ongoing development towards the development of BTs' professional identity.

Therefore, the social network structures of BTs (schools) should be seen as a “web of relationships embedded in which people both constrain and receive opportunities” of development (Bjorklund et al., 2020:3).

BTs’ sense of belonging in their jobs and the extent of support they receive are critical components of developing and maintaining their professional identity. BTs who have positive relationships with their peers and receive adequate support within their network circles, for example, may exhibit an increased sense of belonging, as evidenced by the findings presented above. As such, a stronger sense of belonging in their network circles increases their motivation, job satisfaction, commitment, performance and involvement in development opportunities, culminating in the development of their professional identity.

However, BTs who are not adequately supported and do not have collaborative relationships with their peers may adversely experience a disconnect in the workplace and have lower levels of job satisfaction, commitment, motivation and self-efficacy. This consequently inhibits the development of their professional identity (Barni, Danioni & Benevene, 2019).

Thus, through their network structures, BTs may be provided with developmental opportunities to develop their professional identity, or they can be constrained, adversely impacting the development of their professional identity.

4.3.7 Development of teachers’ professional identity

When BTs transition from being learners to being teachers, they often experience an identity shift. BTs’ teaching practices and beliefs significantly change throughout this process, which has an effect on the development of their professional identity (Huang, Wang & Teng, 2021). Thus, this subsection investigates how participants developed their professional identity from the inception of the induction model.

The first question asked participants whether they had changed (or not) throughout their first year as teachers. If so, they were to characterise how or what they had changed since the beginning of their career as a teacher. Participants said the following in their narratives:

> **I definitively improved**, because **I have changed my way of teaching completely** since my first year. **My first year I stood there and I told them a bunch of knowledge**, **knowledge and knowledge**, and now I am teaching them to experience it to themselves to figure out, to try doing it themselves to learn better, so I think your **teaching style changes** from where you start up to what you see is working. In my **first year, I was wondering how I am going to stand in front of a class; now I can walk into any class and start teaching**. I don't even think about, "Oh, there's many learners in a class." (T2: Participant 2)

> **When I was still a new teacher, I was not confident enough** and **now I think I am confident.** Whenever I am presenting those lessons, I am pretty sure that with this content or topic, they will pass. (T2: Participant 4)

All participants acknowledged their changes since beginning to teach. As they encountered varied contextual realities, their beliefs, confidence and teaching strategies changed compared to their initial years of teaching. Furthermore, research suggests that how BTs deal with and adapt to challenging situations as they begin to teach relies on the development of their professional identity (Huang et al., 2019).

Furthermore, BTs' beliefs and professional identity are shaped within their social-network circles through reflective practices and interactions (with their peers and experienced teachers). These further attribute to and influence BTs' educational decision to stay in or leave their profession (Titu, 2019). SNT provides a conceptual perspective of teaching as a social world, encompassing collaborative engagements, practices and developmental opportunities.

Participants reported that the majority of their developmental opportunities for professional development occurred through school workshops:

> **We have a lot of workshops**, now it is virtual workshops. There is a lot of workshops you can attend so that they can **help you to see how you can change**, maybe **explaining this work or things like that**. (T2: Participant 2)

> There were now **workshops**, but my **HODs** what they try to do is to **show me how things are done**. They ask me for my challenges and I tell them and they try to **propose solutions**. (T2: Participant 3)

On the other hand, other participants indicated that the IQMS model provided them with developmental opportunities:

> **IQMS** once in 2019 and once last year. (T2: Participant 5)

The findings demonstrate the benefits of professional development opportunities which aided in the development of participants' professional identity as professional teachers:

> I am **more professional now**. (T2: Participant 3)

> I am **working very hard**, and I **am open to new things** or challenge. (T2: Participant 1)

The study findings highlight the benefits, importance and need of providing BTs with adequate time and developmental opportunities rather than expecting them to do duties traditionally allocated for their more experienced peers. Therefore, through collaborative practices and developmental opportunities in their network circles, BTs could develop their professional identity while carrying out their required duties.

4.3.8 Benefits of and suggestions for the New Teacher Induction Programme

This section reflects on some of the benefits and future suggestions that participants highlighted regarding the New Teacher Induction Programme. Although the induction model was not fully implemented as planned, due to COVID-19, and some participants reported not being assigned mentors, the following benefits were recognised in their narratives:

> It's **helped me a lot**, because now, when it started, I made sure that everything I do is organised, my files. You know, then, when we started, I did not know where to start, where to go, but it **gave me that motive** of asking the senior teachers and those who at least have more than two years, even one year experience, because they will also let you know that they also struggled, but **if you ask, you will know more**. Because at least **they will**

> **let you know which way you should start and where you should go**. (T2: Participant 6)

Some participants alluded to how the induction model helped them to be more organised and attentive in the organisation of their work, while others mentioned how it helped them with administrative tasks:

> I think it **helped me in a lot of things, more especially in administration work**. Because when you read the manuals and everything, you get to know; and also, after reading, you ask your mentor, I ask my mentor, I ask even my HOD on, maybe, what can they say concerning what is missing, and it has helped me a lot, I **have improved a lot into doing my paperwork** and everything. So, I can say that **this induction programme is opening my mind more about, you know, being in this profession as a teacher**. (T2: Participant 8)

Overall, despite the unprecedented challenges of COVID-19 and social distancing, which were a setback in implementing the induction model, training sessions and scheduled workshops between mentors and mentees (BTs), the findings are encouraging. Furthermore, the four components of the New Teacher Induction Programme have been shown to be highly essential and effective indicators for the development of BTs' professional identity during an induction programme.

Participants were also requested to provide suggestions and recommendations for improving the induction programme for the benefit of other BTs joining the teaching profession based on their specific needs and challenges:

> **It should start with the mentors, they should know what they need to do, because you can't mentor someone if you don't know the meaning of mentorship**. In order for this thing to be a success, they first need to start by training their mentors and from the mentors I think everything will be fine, because we really need these mentors. They should host some programmes, workshops for the mentor so that they know what to do when there's a new teacher in the school. (T2: Participant 2)

Some participants emphasised the need to thoroughly train mentors before they begin mentoring new teachers in order for them to better grasp their duties and responsibilities of what it means to be a mentor. They cited examples of mentors who did not effectively mentor BTs. Furthermore, all participants were unanimous in their belief that the induction programme should be made obligatory and implemented in all schools:

> **Each and every school should have a mentor or a mentoring programme** whereby when a new teacher come, they will be **formally orientated** and also guide them and be there and monitor them on their first classes at least for a week until they are comfortable enough to do it on their own. (T2: Participant 4)

Furthermore, participants suggested that the induction programme should be consistent in providing numerous training sessions to BTs, rather than just one session, to assist them to overcome first-year challenges and stay motivated:

> There should also **not just be one training, there should be some trainings, because you can't master one thing by just one single session.** There should be sessions so that the teachers can come together with other teachers and talk about their experiences so that they can be able to develop. (T2: Participant 3)

> **It should be consistent**, they shouldn't just introduce and let us be. They should be consistent. **Host the workshops at least twice in a semester or once every term just to motivate this new beginning teachers**. So that they can help them **to overcome the challenges they come across as beginner teacher** so that they can motivate them so that they can know that there is at least a support system behind them – so consistency. (T2: Participant 1)

Overall, participants demonstrated enthusiasm and willingness to be inducted to be better equipped with the first-year challenges and develop their professional identity. Induction programmes can help and equip BTs to overcome the challenges they face in their early years and to stay in the teaching profession by providing professional development opportunities and regular feedback and support. The

findings and analysis from the baseline survey and interviews showed positive outcomes and addressed my study question of how BTs' professional identity can be developed during an induction programme by highlighting crucial components to consider.

4.4 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the data from the baseline survey and semi-structured interviews were analysed. The goal was to understand BTs' professional identity and explore how it could be developed during an induction programme (section 1.5.1).

The data analysis demonstrated a strong connection between BTs' professional identity and these four components: job satisfaction, motivation, self-efficacy and sense of belonging. The findings were evident in data from both the baseline survey and the interviews. Furthermore, adopting SNT as the study's theoretical underpinning demonstrated that participants' professional identity, beliefs and self-perceptions were shaped by their everyday interactions with peers and experienced teachers. Peer support (from other teachers and HODs) and professional development opportunities through workshops and the IQMS model were identified as significant components. These components supported participants in developing their professional identity and positively influenced their capacity to overcome contextual challenges.

Despite the recognised challenges in the first round of interviews (T1), the findings in the second round of interviews (T2) demonstrated positive results in the development of participants' professional identity. Participants recognised that, compared to their first year, when they lacked confidence during the presentation of their lessons, they were now more confident and can teach any class without regard for the number of students present.

Furthermore, participants emphasised changes in their teaching approaches and delivery methods, which resulted in positive grades in their learners' performance and achievement. Some highlighted the high percentage rates they had achieved

while dealing with contextual challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, learner disciplinary issues, administrative workload and the prevailing, conspicuous impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, the New Teacher Induction Programme and its four components (peer support, school-based mentoring, training sessions and personal development plan) emerged from the data as a means of preparing, supporting and positively influencing the participants' professional identity. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and late rollout of the induction model, not all participants were allocated mentors.

Given the already demanding and challenging nature of the teaching profession, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated complexities that challenged the development of participants' professional identity. This left them with anxiety, distress, increased demands and concerns about their health and safety, and depression. Additionally, findings showed that participants were busier than ever before as a result of having to divide their classes into smaller groups owing to overcrowded classrooms.

The development of participants' professional identity was also directly linked to their emotions and attitudes, which put into question their conception of their teacherhood amid a global pandemic. Participants experienced difficulties that challenged the development of their professional identity during this crisis. Despite this, their narratives, self-perceptions and attitudes remained positive and visible in their accounts as they engaged and shifted their professional selves and teaching methods and skills in response to COVID-19 changes.

One of the most significant findings was that all participants emphasised the benefits of peer-based support. On the other hand, not all participants received school-based mentoring; those who did said that their HODs and subject advisors mostly provided school-based mentoring. Considering that HODs are not trained to mentor BTs, participants thought that training HODs as mentors would be more beneficial and relevant, given that their HODs were in charge of mentoring them. Nonetheless, provided that not all mentors received training for mentoring BTs, and taking into account untrained HODs and COVID-19 and the postponement of scheduled

training sessions, a few participants expressed dissatisfaction with mentors who did not adequately support them with their needs and challenges.

Nonetheless, some participants mentioned the potential and efficacy of school-based mentoring. Essentially, all participants recognised and advocated the need for making school-based mentoring obligatory in schools, even if what they perceived as mentorship did not always come from qualified mentors. Thus, participants highlighted a need for trained and experienced mentors who can assist them in developing their professional identity as they transition from students to teachers. Subsequently, in the next chapter, I will suggest how an induction programme can better support BTs in developing their professional identity.

CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the study's purpose and method. It also reflects on the findings, makes recommendations and gives suggestions for future research. Furthermore, this chapter discusses the study's limitations, provides a personal reflection on the overall study and offers comments on my personal and academic journey and growth as both a teacher and a researcher as it relates to this study.

5.2 Study Purpose and Method

This study aimed to investigate how BTs' professional identity can develop during an induction programme. The study also sought to uncover the challenges that BTs experience in their first year(s) and to understand how BTs' professional identity influences professional development and teacher retention in the teaching profession.

Unlike other professions, BTs seldom have progressive and development opportunities for professional development in the teaching profession in SA. Given that BTs are expected to take on the same duties and responsibilities as their senior colleagues, they encounter various challenges and difficulties that adversely affect the development of their professional identity, resulting in BT attrition.

Although the DBE is busy with prospective pilot field tests in KZN and North West provinces, the investigated induction programme field test was the first to be chosen as one of the pilot sites in the Free State. Aside from that, there are currently no formalised induction programmes in SA, and BT induction is a school-to-school initiative that has proved unsuccessful (see section 1.2).

The purpose of this research was therefore to acquire conceptual knowledge and an understanding through an exploration of BTs' challenges and professional

identity and induction programmes in international and local studies (see Chapter 2). The goal is to support BTs in developing their professional identity.

SNT served as the theoretical framework for my study, enabling me to make sense of BTs' challenges and experiences and to explore how an induction programme can develop their professional identity. SNT helped me to frame BTs as interdependent and embedded within their social network structures (schools) rather than as independent individuals. SNT was relevant in this study, since the evidence showed that network structures are crucial in people's decisions to remain in their job. Using SNT as a theoretical framework, I recognised that the development of BTs' professional identity should not be considered something they should naturally possess upon entering the teaching profession. Instead, development of BTs' professional identity should be understood as a socially negotiated and constructed process in which their professional identity is continually shaped and reshaped within their network circles.

Furthermore, an interpretative paradigm was employed premised on the assumptions that human performance and development are socially constructed and influenced by one's social position in society (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). SNT and the interpretative paradigm underpinned this study, since they could encompass BTs' worldviews and experiences. They both support the notion that human experiences influence an individual's social reality and the meaning they attach to phenomena in social settings.

The adopted methodology was a qualitative approach, which included semi-structured interviews and some components from the baseline survey of the larger project. The qualitative research method was used to supplement the interpretative paradigm, enabling participants to share their teaching experiences through semi-structured interviews. The interviews for this research comprised of two phases of semi-structured interviews (T1 and T2 – see Appendices E and F) that were conducted in January and August of 2021, respectively. A combination of telephonic and face-to-face interviews was used due to COVID-19 and the lockdown limitations in SA (see section 3.6).

Forty-seven BTs participated in the baseline survey, and from these, a sample of fifteen BTs was invited to participate in semi-structured interviews conducted by me and two other master's students. The participants were all from the district of Thabo Mofutsanyana. In this research, purposive sampling was utilised, and participants were chosen based on their teaching experiences and educational background as BTs (see section 3.7).

The findings from the semi-structured interviews and baseline survey questionnaire were presented and analysed in Chapter 4 in two phases. The first phase involved analysing the data from the baseline survey (see Appendix D), and the second phase involved analysing the data from the semi-structured interviews (T1 and T2 – see Appendices E and F). During the data analysis process, my ontological assumptions were underpinned by SNT and helped me make sense of the collected data, with the assumption that BTs' professional identity is socially constructed and developed within their social network structures (schools). Finally, emergent themes and subthemes were used to analyse the data using thematic narrative analysis.

This study sought to investigate how an induction programme could influence the development of BTs' professional identity. To achieve this, I explored BT characteristics such as job satisfaction, motivation, self-efficacy and sense of belonging and the relationship between these components and BTs' perceptions of professional development.

In this chapter, I comment and make recommendations on how BTs can develop their professional identity during an induction programme by taking into account their individual needs, experiences and challenges in their schools. I also take into account the interplay of their job satisfaction, motivation, self-efficacy and sense of belonging, as these components have been shown to influence BTs' decision and commitment to remain in their job. Furthermore, I provide recommendations on how BTs can be supported with the challenges they face in developing their professional identity in their first years.

5.3 Main Findings

The literature demonstrates that the challenges experienced by BTs in their first years stem from a discrepancy between their initial teacher preparation education and the reality encountered in real-world contexts (school environments) (Botha & Rens, 2018). Additionally, literature also shows that most BTs feel they are not adequately supported and prepared in their schools, contributing to the high attrition rate of BTs in SA, as in other countries.

The data supported the disparity between theoretical knowledge and the reality that BTs encounter when teaching. Participants reported experiencing reality shock when they found themselves solely responsible for teaching while dealing with large classes. This was challenging for them, since they reported having no prior experience teaching big classrooms since they were used to teaching smaller classes and were usually accompanied by mentor teachers during their teaching practicums. Furthermore, some participants expressed experiencing reality shock as they did not know how to implement the curriculum or even complete absenteeism and class registers.

Thus, in order to retain and support BTs during their initial years, this study sought to investigate and propose recommendations for supporting them in developing their professional identity through an induction programme. This is because BT induction has been identified as an effective strategy for retaining and supporting BTs.

From a sample of 14 BTs that were interviewed, many reported that they struggle to deal with the day-to-day challenges and realities of teaching. These include teaching strategies, curriculum implementation and delivery, overcrowded classrooms, ill-disciplined learners and excessive administrative workload. Moreover, aside from the teaching aspect, participants acknowledged a lack of administrative knowledge, for example not knowing how to apply for leave, housing allowances and medical aids.

SNT as theoretical lens reinforced viewing teaching as a culturally embedded field and practice. BTs' interactions with peers, their sharing of knowledge, resources and

information, and their sense of professional identity are influenced by and reflected in their job satisfaction, commitment, resilience, motivation and self-efficacy (Shwartz & Dori, 2020).

Although not all participants received school-based mentoring or adequate support, the majority stated that most of their support was peer-based through informal collaboration with their fellow BTs and experienced teachers. The majority of participants indicated that developmental opportunities and support (such as workshops and the IQMS model) and peer-based support from their colleagues (BTs, senior teachers and HODs) significantly influenced the development of their professional identity.

Against this backdrop, the study's findings were informed by SNT, which asserts that interactions between individuals in social settings are key determinants in their beliefs, motivation, work satisfaction, behaviours, performance and decision to leave their position. Overall, the results of the baseline survey and interviews supported this assertion. Participants showed high levels of job satisfaction, commitment, motivation, resilience and self-efficacy, all of which are connected to their sense of professional development.

Essentially, mentored participants indicated their discontentment with the mentoring programmes. The majority suggested that priority should be given to mentors first, whether they are HODs or trained mentors, to fully learn and grasp the process of mentoring prior to taking on the duties of mentoring BTs. Additionally, they recommended that schools in the country include mandatory mentoring as part of the induction process, with the objective of helping BTs in navigating the difficulties they face during their first years of professional identity development.

The above findings were the main findings of the study. However, additional findings about the New Teacher Induction Programme were also made and are discussed next.

5.4 Additional Findings – New Teacher Induction Programme

The objective of the New Teacher Induction Programme was to support BTs in developing their professional identity. The induction programme mainly consisted of four components designed to support and retain BTs in the teaching profession (school-based mentoring, peer support, training sessions and the creation of a personal development plan). The relevance of these components has been characterised in the literature as highly relevant, but they have not yet been brought together in an overall and holistic framework.

The intention was to provide BTs with opportunities for reflective practices (collaboration with other teachers, workshops, personal development plans, regular training sessions and mentorship) to develop their professional identity. However, not all proposed objectives were accomplished due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the late rollout of the induction programme and the cancellation of face-to-face workshops.

Some participants reported that they had only attended the introductory training sessions since the commencement of the induction programme. While peer-based mentoring (informal support among colleagues) was regarded as beneficial by all participants, they voiced dissatisfaction with the induction programme's lack of developmental opportunities, specifically face-to-face workshops. Furthermore, some participants reported that they were not given mentors, while others noted that the mentoring offered to them was inconsistent, with others stating that some of their mentors did not even teach or specialise in the areas they were teaching.

Furthermore, personal development plans for BTs were viewed as an alternative tool for BTs in evaluating their progress and needs. Despite this fact, a few participants said that they did not create personal development plans since they were not provided with mentors.

Overall, participants expressed a desire for regular meetings to be included in the induction programme so that mentors and stakeholders are aware of their specific needs. One of the primary findings was that participants were assigned mentors who

lacked subject-matter expertise, with most being mentored by HODs, who were not necessarily trained to mentor them. The HODs thus failed to perform their roles and responsibilities in supporting BTs in the development of their professional identity. In essence, although the four components of the induction model were deemed relevant in developing BTs' professional identity, certain aspects should be reinforced to successfully implement the induction programme to effectively support and retain BTs in their professional identity development. The subsequent section provides comments on the development of BTs' professional identity during an induction programme.

5.5 Comments on Beginner Teacher Professional Identity Development During an Induction Programme

Learning to teach is a challenging endeavour fraught with self-doubt and insecurities, impelling many BTs to abandon the teaching profession if they are not adequately supported or prepared. Teaching is an inherently demanding and vulnerable profession, particularly for BTs. They often have to undertake the same tasks and responsibilities as their senior teachers on the first day of work while having limited experience and facing contextual challenges and demands. Consequently, this often has an adverse effect on the development of their professional identity, resulting in BT attrition.

The demand for professional development opportunities emanates from the gap that exists between theory and practice once BTs begin to teach. The findings clearly demonstrated that although BTs enter the teaching profession with a strong theoretical foundation, they struggle to deal with the day-to-day teaching reality (curriculum implementation and delivery, overcrowded classrooms and ill-disciplined learners).

The results demonstrated that BTs who receive professional development assistance, guidance and peer-based support from their colleagues (from fellow BTs, senior teachers and HODs) see positive outcomes in the development of their professional identity. Participants reported feeling more confident than they did in

their first years, which was reflected in their overall performance as they overcame contextual challenges and achieved excellent results in their learner performances. Contrarily, those who received little to no developmental support reported experiencing aggravated difficulties.

One participant substantiated the aggravation of her first-year challenges as she reported that she was hospitalised for depression more than once during her first two years of teaching. However, participants who reported receiving support and development opportunities showed high levels of job satisfaction, commitment, motivation, resilience and self-efficacy, which were linked to their sense of professional identity.

Provided that identity is constantly being constructed and reconstructed, BTs should be given opportunities to learn while developing their professional identity through an induction programme. Since developmental and learning opportunities are provided within their social circles, more emphasis should be placed on BTs' social network structures (schools) and how (or if) they are supported. This is where the availability of support and learning is demonstrated, which influences the development of their professional identity.

5.6 Recommendations for the Strengthening of Induction Programmes

My first recommendation is for the induction programme to include frequent feedback meetings with mentors and mentees (BTs) to monitor and identify any flaws and collectively address BTs' individual needs and challenges. Furthermore, these feedback sessions may be seen as a method of preparing BTs for unforeseen challenges, the most conspicuous of which being the COVID-19 pandemic.

Second, since most schools rely on HODs to mentor BTs, training sessions for HODs should be prioritised above training sessions for mentors who do not actually mentor BTs.

Third, since HODs have their own workloads and may not have time to mentor BTs, they should be relieved of teaching duties and responsibilities in order to fully mentor BTs. Mentors and mentees should be paired in the same subject areas, since participants observed disparities in being assigned mentors who had specialised in different disciplines, resulting in inadequate assistance.

Finally, all schools in SA should consider implementing mandatory, formalised induction and mentoring programmes (if not, perhaps peer-based support) to retain and support BTs in developing their professional identity. This has been shown to yield positive results in BT retention in the teaching profession.

5.7 Reflection

While completing my honours degree, I became interested in pursuing a master's degree in curriculum studies. It was not an easy feat to complete a full-time degree, given my stated objective was to secure employment as soon as possible after my honours degree due to financial constraints. However, after applying for and being accepted to pursue a master's degree, I felt prepared to go on the road while continuing to seek bursaries and scholarships with little luck. Fortunately, I was approached to participate in a research project owing to my academic merit and overall performance of my grades. The FSDoE had devised an induction programme to assist and retain BTs in their roles.

Gent University and the UFS collaborated on this research project funded by the VLIR-UOS. I was one of three master's students that participated in the research project. My dissertation focused specifically on the development of BTs' professional identity during an induction programme. I investigated the challenges experienced by BTs and identified how an induction programme could support them in developing their professional identity.

My research journey was both challenging and rewarding. For example, since it was my first time learning about induction programmes, it was hard to formulate research questions. This was a learning experience for me, and I found it challenging to select

the most appropriate theory for my research that could link to my research questions and study focus. Nonetheless, with my supervisor's support and guidance and further reading on induction, I was able to clearly align my research aim and objectives and theory and to overcome these barriers.

As my research findings indicate, my participants expressed an interest in participating in this study. In essence, one might argue that this study belongs to them, since some texted me to remind me of our scheduled interviews. They were eager to participate in the interviews in order to share their experiences. They hoped to shed light on the challenges and reality of teaching for other new teachers so that they do not have to join the teaching profession blindsided. Furthermore, part of their eagerness stemmed from a lack of platforms where they could openly speak up and share their feelings and frustrations.

During our interviews, I drew inspiration from their resilience as they narrated the difficulties of their first years. Still being resilient, they remained passionate about their jobs despite these challenges. Some were even hospitalised for depression, yet found the motivation to teach. As a BT myself, I could relate to their challenges, seeing we were all in the same boat, with the most conspicuous impact of COVID-19 on our teaching. Overall, despite the challenges, all participants showed resilience and gathered their inspiration from seeing their learners perform, which makes their jobs rewarding.

The study supports the idea that professional identity development happens collaboratively when peers participate in reflective practices, which is consistent with the SNT perspective. This research helped to develop me personally and professionally, not just in terms of integrating developmental opportunities into my classroom, but also in developing collaborative relationships within my community.

This study provided me with various skills that influenced my teaching methods and general behaviour as a teacher. Prior to this study, I had never realised the relevance of network structures. Instead of seeking help from my peers, I would suffer alone whenever I encountered challenges. I had assumed a world wherein people are

autonomous rather than dependent. Thus, this study informed me of the significance of social engagements in the face of challenging circumstances.

5.8 Study Contribution

The targeted goal in this research was to improve BTs' professional identity as an essential condition for professional learning through the implementation of an induction programme. Put differently, it was to better understand the challenges that BTs experience and how their professional identity develops during their first years of teaching.

There is an international body of knowledge on the importance of BT induction programmes that support and prepare novice teachers to develop their professional identity in securing them into the teaching profession through the implementation of formalised induction programmes. Despite this, research in SA is minimal. This dissertation is one of the few in SA that provides insights into how BTs can develop their professional identity during an induction programme to help them transition smoothly from being students to school practitioners. Furthermore, this study highlights formal and informal aspects (peer-based support, personal development plans, training sessions for both mentors and BTs) while taking into account the interplay of the four characteristics of BTs – job satisfaction, sense of belonging, motivation and self-efficacy – in one study. My dissertation attempted to do this, providing a more holistic understanding from both quantitative and qualitative data.

In essence, local stakeholders will benefit directly from this study, as the mentorship and professional development components of the induction model offer them the opportunity to enhance the model to support BTs in developing their professional identity. Other critical stakeholders include the DBE, FSDoE, novice teachers, mentors and trainers.

Given that this is the DBE's first pilot field test of the induction model in the Free State, this study will inform future implementation of induction in other provinces that have yet to conduct potential field tests, such as in KZN and North West. In addition

to this, the department will have a better idea of planning induction, allocating mentors and training the responsible people in charge of mentoring BTs, whether HODs or mentors, in respective schools.

Moreover, the BTs who participated in the induction model are direct beneficiaries of the induction model at the outcomes level. Specifically, as they further their professional learning, this study can positively impact their sense of professional identity indicators.

Ultimately, the mentors who participated in the induction model are direct beneficiaries since they gained new skills and a better understanding of the experiences of new teachers and will be better equipped to help them. Furthermore, prospective mentors of BTs will gain insights into the challenges that BTs face and might improve their own mentoring skills to develop BTs' professional identity during an induction programme.

5.9 Study Limitations

Although I am proud of the contribution of my research, the research had some limitations which need mentioning. First, this study included 14 BTs, whom I met at the start of the induction programme at the introductory training session. However, I was unable to interact with them at the time due to COVID-19 and the constraints of social distancing. Due to COVID-19 and the lockdown restrictions, the semi-structured interviews were conducted mainly over the phone, with only one in-person interview. Due to the fact that the interviews took place on school working days, I also struggled with time management and rescheduling numerous sessions. Face-to-face interviews were just not feasible for the majority of participants. I believe I could have collected more comprehensive data with fewer participants and more interview time, given that semi-structured interviews are lengthy and participants should be given enough time to narrate their stories and experiences. I feel that if all narrative interviews had been conducted face to face, more detailed data would have been provided.

The primary factor that limited this study was the COVID-19 pandemic. This was the most challenging aspect that inhibited the overall implementation of the New Teacher Induction Programme and the different role-players involved (trainers, trainees, mentors, myself and the BTs). The baseline survey intended to engage approximately 100 BTs in a field test of the induction model; however, due to COVID-19 constraints and social distancing, only 47 BTs participated. Additionally, the induction programme was not completely implemented until February 2020, which resulted in some BTs not being given mentors and mentors not receiving adequate training to mentor BTs, which was also mentioned as a barrier by some participants. Additionally, face-to-face workshops, training sessions and meetings had to be adapted to be held online due to social distancing restrictions. However, through perseverance and willpower, I was able to continue with virtual interviews, resulting in the completion of my dissertation.

5.10 Recommendations for Further Research

I propose that this study (or a similar one) be conducted over three years utilising a longitudinal research approach to see if the participating BTs continued in the teaching profession (or not). In addition, the study should cross-verify the research results for transferability to evaluate the extent to which the findings can be generalised and whether they can still be transferred to other contexts at that stage in the development of their professional identity.

5.11 Concluding Remarks

The initial years of teaching force BTs to confront their professional identity on a daily basis, as they encounter difficulties such as overcrowded classrooms, challenges with discipline, administrative workload and curriculum implementation and delivery, among other challenges. Based on international successes of induction programmes to support and retain BTs in the teaching profession, this study provided insights into how BTs can develop their professional identity during an induction programme.

The semi-structured interviews provided further insight into how participants developed their professional identity as they learned to teach in real-world contexts in their first year(s) and recognised their social network structures (schools) as key traits. BTs' network structures play an essential role in the development of their professional identity, since this is where support and resources are made available, which ultimately influences their decision to stay in or leave the profession.

The study revealed that BTs are not adequately supported, inducted and prepared in their first years. The teaching profession necessitates that BTs (and teachers at all levels) be equipped not just with theoretical knowledge but also with skills and expertise that can only be taught and acquired on the job. Using SNT as theoretical underpinning, supportive and developmental opportunities exist in BTs' social network structures (schools), where their availability of support and resources is distributed.

This study recommended that in order for BTs to develop their professional identity, they must participate in formal and informal professional development opportunities and experiences as part of an induction programme. In this study, the key supporting component that was identified and which aided in the development of BTs' professional identity was peer support from co-workers (fellow BTs, HODs, senior teachers). Thus, this study recognised and valued the interwoven relationships between BTs and their peers within social settings through reflective practices that played a critical role in the development of their professional identity.

The findings further revealed that BTs' job satisfaction, sense of belonging, motivation and self-efficacy were proven interconnected characteristics maintained and developed within social settings. Thus, how BTs are supported (or not) in their social circles can negatively impact the development of their professional identity. Participants who were supported in their network structures, for example, showed more motivation, commitment, resilience and high levels of self-efficacy and sought and engaged in developmental opportunities in their schools. Meanwhile, those who were not supported laboriously experienced an acute reality shock, leading to BT burnout.

This assertion was supported by how participants bemoaned the difficulties of their first years, with some revealing their experience of being diagnosed with severe depression during their first two years of teaching. Their challenges were exacerbated by overcrowded classrooms, disciplinary issues with learners and curriculum implementation, among other factors. Furthermore, the conspicuous impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was characterised as an inhibiting challenge that inhibited their functionality while they were already battling with existing challenges.

To support BTs experiencing first-year challenges and alleviate these challenges, this study thus sought to analyse and better understand the challenges they encounter and investigate how their professional identity can be developed during an induction programme. Put differently, this research proposes that BTs' professional identity is necessary for professional learning by implementing an induction programme designed to support and secure them in the teaching profession. An induction programme is not only requisite for securing BTs in the teaching profession, but it also serves as a supportive toolkit for BTs to succeed in their jobs. In furtherance, SA has a lack of research on induction programmes and an absence of mandated and formalised induction programmes. Given these facts, developing BTs' professional identity during an induction programme can serve as a tool for future research focusing on BTs, professional identity development and induction programmes.

To summarise, the first years for BTs will undoubtedly be demanding. As such, prospective stakeholders (school team members of BTs: colleagues, principals, HODs, mentors; and provincial and district officials) need to learn about the development of BTs' professional identity and provide them with developmental opportunities. The more they do this, the better prepared BTs will be to meet the demands of the teaching profession in a professionally satisfying and positive manner.

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Appendix A: Ethics Statement

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA

UFS UV

GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

02-Dec-2020

Dear Dr Muller, Marguerite M

Amendment Approved

Research Project Title:
Strengthening beginning teachers' professional identity: An exploratory study into the efficiency of an induction model in South Africa

Ethical Clearance number:
UFS-HSD2019/1371/2110

The following UFS students will be conducting the research as per the protocol approved by the ethics committee:

Justice Chabedi - 2004204943
Amanda Ndabankulu - 2010141725
Nasaret Tjirumbi - 2013166471

We are pleased to inform you that your amendment application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for notifying the ethics committee of the changes/amendments that have been made to your study; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Outcome: Approved

Please ensure that you adhere to all government and UFS protocols regarding COVID-19 when conducting the research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Adri Du Plessis
Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

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Appendix B: Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA
UFS UV

RESEARCH STUDY INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM

DATE

20 May 2019

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Being, belonging and becoming: A narrative exploration of tutor and student identity, memory and experience with social justice at the UFS

PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR / RESEARCHER(S) NAME(S) AND CONTACT NUMBER(S):

Marguerite Müller 0873122 051 401 9683

FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT:

Faculty of Education
School of Education Studies

WHAT IS THE AIM / PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The aim of the study is to explore the memories and experiences of students in the Education Faculty at UFS in order to gain insight into the transformative possibilities of identity, curriculum and pedagogy in social justice education. In the recent years there has been much emphasis on transformation, social justice and decolonisation in South African higher education spaces. Thus the objective of our project is to explore how identity, curriculum and pedagogy are expressed, understood and experienced during a time of transformation and change. We hope to create narrative accounts of staff and student experience that can give insight into the entanglement of identity, curriculum and pedagogy in relation to social justice education.

WHO IS DOING THE RESEARCH?

We are academic staff members that have been/are involved in the design, administration and teaching of various modules that deal with content on social justice and education. Furthermore, we are part of the Critical Inquiry for Social and Ecojustice in Education (CISEJE) research group at UFS. As such, our teaching responsibilities and research interests align and center on issues of identity and social justice in education.

WHY ARE YOU INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT?

You are invited to participate in this study because your involvement and/or participation on modules that deal with social justice in the Faculty of Education at UFS.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

You will be invited to participate in an open ended narrative interview (group session). In the narrative interview you will be asked to share some of your experiences with social justice issues in education and to elaborate on these.

CAN THE PARTICIPANT WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY?

You may withdraw from this study at any point.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

You will be contributing to the body of knowledge on memory, identity and experience in relation to social justice in education. You will help us shape and further develop the EDUB 1613 module.

WHAT IS THE ANTICIPATED INCONVENIENCE OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

Participation in the study should not inconvenience you and all interviews will be arranged at a time of your convenience.

WILL WHAT I SAY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Your contributions to this project will be kept confidential. You will be asked to choose a pseudonyms that will be used instead of your own name in all published versions of the research. The final versions of the research will be shared with you for final input before anything is published.

HOW WILL THE INFORMATION BE STORED?

Information will be stored on a secure and password protected computer.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICPATING IN THIS STUDY?

You will receive no payment or incentives to participate in this study.

HOW WILL THE PARTICIPANT BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS / RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

All the findings will be shared with you for final input before anything is published.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable). I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings.

I agree to the recording of the *insert specific data collection method*.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Full Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Full Name(s) of Researcher(s): _____

Signature of Researcher: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C: Permission Letter for Interviews

(DATE)

Dear (PRINCIPAL TITLE and SURNAME)

We have invited (NAME OF TEACHER) of [NAME OF SCHOOL] to participate in the research project "Strengthening beginning teachers' professional identity: An exploratory study into the efficiency of an induction model in South Africa". This study is being conducted by the University of the Free State in collaboration with Gent University, VVOB and FSDoE.

The need for teacher induction in South Africa was first raised in 2005, when the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education issued its report entitled '*A National Framework for Teacher Education in South Africa'* (DoE, 2005a). The subsequent Department of Education (DoE) report '*Teachers for the Future: Meeting Teacher Shortages to Achieve Education for All'* (DoE, 2005b) expressed concerns about the quality of initial teacher education (ITE), ongoing teacher professional development and teacher induction. This report stated that "every new teacher should be required to participate in a formal induction and/or mentoring program for at least two years" (DoE, 2005b, p.14). This led the DoE to conceptualise and implement a teacher induction program for beginning teachers. The purpose of this study is to determine the perceptions of teachers who are part of an introduction programme in the Free State province.

[TEACHER NAME] is currently part of the field test for teacher induction in the Free State and has attended a training session in 2021. Furthermore, [TEACHER NAME] participated in an electronic interview about the induction programme in January 2021. We have now invited [TEACHER NAME] to participate in a face to face interview to be scheduled at times that do not interfere with their teaching duties. With your permission we would like to conduct this interview on your school grounds. The study has received ethical clearance from UFS and

FSDoE (**UFS-HSD2019/1371). Please note that t**he names of participants and schools will be kept strictly confidential and not shared in the research report or findings. All participation is voluntary, and participants may withdraw from the study at any time. The following three UFS M.Ed students have registered on the project and has clearance to conduct interviews for the project:

Nasaret Tjirumbi

Amanda Ndabankulu

Justice Chabedi

The potential benefit of this study is to assist the FSDoE to establish the impact of induction model and to better understand the experiences of beginner teachers and mentors in order to make improvements to the induction programme. A good induction programme will contribute to better support structures for beginner teachers as well as better retention of qualified teachers.

Thank you for taking the time to read this request to allow [TEACHER NAME] to participate in this project. Please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Marguerite Muller (PI) if you have any further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Dr. M. Muller

0724450955

mullerm@ufs.ac.za.

Appendix D: Baseline Survey (T0)

Baseline survey (T0)

Survey: For New Teachers in the NTI Field test

Please complete this survey, your answers will remain confidential and will help us to learn about the programme's successes and failures. We ask for your name so that we can link your answers in this survey to the survey at the end.

Benita Williams Evaluation (BWE) is appointed to conduct an independent evaluation of the NTI programme, to provide evidence-based findings on implementation and provide recommendations for the DBE in nationally scaling up the programme.

Contact Person: Fazeela Hoosen

Contact number: 012 140 0123

Biographic Information 4.2

1.2.1 What is your gender? ***MARK (X) ONE ANSWER***		1 - Male
		2 - Female
		3 - Other
4.2.2 Which age group do you fall into? ***MARK (X) ONE ANSWER***		20 – 30 years
		21 – 30 years
		31 – 40 years
		41 – 50 years
		51 – 60 years
		> 60 years

Professional Background Information 4.2.2.

4.2.2.1 What is the qualification level you have completed? ***MARK (X) WHERE APPROPRIATE***			1 Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)
			2 National Teaching Diploma
			3 Bachelor's Degree in Education (BED)
			4 Honours in Education
			5 Master's in Education
			6 PhD in Education
			7 - Other (Please specify): _____
4.2.2.2 Have you ever worked in a classroom before this current school year? ***MARK (X)***			1 - Yes
			2 - No
			3 - Not sure
			4- Not applicable
			1 - Yes

4.2.2.3 Have you held a full-time job other than your current teaching job?			2 - No
			3 – Not sure

Beginning teacher characteristics 4.2.3

We present general statement about beginning teachers and teaching below. Please respond honestly to the statements.

4.2.3.1 Please use the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 – strongly disagree, 2 – disagree, 3 – neutral, 4 - agree and 5 – strongly agree to rate yourself on the following statements: ***MARK (X) ONE ANSWER ONLY PER ROW***

	1 - strongly disagree	**2 - disagree**	**3 - neutral**	**4 - agree**	**5 - strongly agree**
a. I am happy with the way my colleagues and superiors treat me.					
b. I do not feel emotionally attached to this school.					
c. I feel good at work.					
d. I am satisfied with my job.					
e. I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my school.					
f. I am satisfied with what I achieve at work.					
g. I do not feel like part of the family at my school.					

4.2.3.2 Please use the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 – strongly disagree, 2 – disagree, 3 – neutral, 4 - agree and 5 – strongly agree to rate yourself on the following statement: ***MARK (X) ONE ANSWER ONLY PER ROW***

	1 - strongly disagree	**2 - disagree**	**3 - neutral**	**4 - agree**	**5 - strongly agree**
I am motivated to teach well because:					
a. I am very interested in teaching					
b. Teaching is fun					
c. I find teaching enjoyable					
d. I find teaching a pleasant activity					

Expectations of Induction Programme 4.2.4

4.2.4.1 When you first started at school, was there an orientation programme?		1 - Yes
		1 - No
4.2.4.2 When you first started at school where you assigned a staff member to guide you?		1 – Yes
		2 - No
4.2.4.3 If yes, how comprehensive would you regard your orientation at the school?		1 – Formal structure
		2 – Fairly informal structure
		3 – No structure
4.2.4.4 On a scale of 1 to 5, rate the extent to which you think the ***New Teacher Induction Programme*** is relevant to you? ***MARK (X) ONE ANSWER***		1 - Extremely relevant
		2 - Very relevant
		3 - Moderately relevant
		4 - Slightly relevant
		5 - Not at all

Appendix E: Round 1 of Interviews (T1)

Interview one (telephonic) "Strengthening beginning teachers' professional identity: An exploratory study into the efficiency of an induction model in South Africa"

1. Questions for the (T1) telephonic interview:

Introduction

Good day. I am ……(your name) and I am doing research for the University of the Free State in collaboration with the Free State Department of Education and VVOB. In 2020 you attended a training session (in Bethlehem in February OR in Phuthaditjhaba in October) for beginner teachers and also signed a consent form to participate in research on the experiences of beginner teachers. If you have some time now I would like to ask you a few questions? It will take about 10 minutes. Yes (proceed with questions). No (when would be a convenient time for you to answer some questions?)

The purpose of the research project is to better understand the experiences of teachers in their first few years of teaching. From this research we hope to make recommendations of how induction programmes and support for beginner teachers can be improved. Please note that everything you say will be kept confidential. This was already explained in the consent form you signed, but I just wanted to re-assure you. Your name or the name of your school will not be used in the research. Pseudonyms will be sued. With your permission I would like to record our conversation. Do you have any questions before we proceed?

Questions

1.1. Introductory questions

- How have you experienced the first years in the teaching profession?
    - What went well?
    - What did not go well?
- Do you feel good at school? Why (not)?
- Praxis shock can be explained as the gap between theoretical knowledge (gained at university/college) about teaching and real experiences once you enter the classroom.

Research shows that beginning teachers often experiencing a 'praxis shock'. Have you experienced this 'praxis shock'? In what way? Can you explain this?

1.2. Expectations of the induction model

- You are part of an induction programme that is being piloted by the Free State department of education. What were your expectations regarding the induction model?
    - How did you experience 'school-based mentoring' in 2020?
    - How have you experienced 'peer support' in 2020?
    - How have you experienced 'training sessions' in 2020?
    - Did you develop a 'personal development plan' in 2020?

- Do you have any other comments about new teacher induction at this stage?

- What do you expect form the induction programme in 2021?

1.3. Experiences in the context of the COVID 19 pandemic

- How did the COVID 19 pandemic (and the lockdown) impact your experiences as a beginning teacher?
- How has the COVID 19 pandemic impacted the indication model?
- What are the challenges/opportunities that you as beginner teacher experienced due to the COVID 19 pandemic?
- Have you as a beginner teacher been provided with support from the district and the school during COVID-19 pandemic?
- How has COVID-19 affected your interaction with your mentor/supervisor at school?
- How has the COVID 19 pandemic impacted the indication model?

Is there anything else you would like to comment on?

Conclusion

Thank you for your time and participation. Your input is crucial to improve the induction programme for beginner teachers. Would it be possible for me to contact you again early next year to arrange for a face to face interview? The interview will be at a time and place of your convenience.

Appendix F: Round 2 of Interviews (T2)

Interview two (telephonic) "Strengthening beginning teachers' professional identity: An exploratory study into the efficiency of an induction model in South Africa"

An Interviews with teachers

2. Questions for the (T2) telephonic/face-to-face interview:

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to speak to me again. As you would remember I am ……(your name) and I am doing research for the University of the Free State in collaboration with the Free State Department of Education and VVOB. In 2020 you attended a training session (in Bethlehem in February OR in Phuthaditjhaba in October) for beginner teachers and also signed a consent form to participate in research on the experiences of beginner teachers. Earlier this year we had a telephonic interview and you answered some questions. Today I would like to ask you some follow up questions. It will take between 20 – 30 minutes.

The purpose of the research project is to better understand the experiences of teachers in their first few years of teaching. From this research we hope to make recommendations of how induction programmes and support for beginner teachers can be improved. Please note that everything you say will be kept confidential. This was already explained in the consent form you signed, but I just wanted to re-assure you. Your name or the name of your school will not be used in the research. Pseudonyms will be sued. With your permission I would like to record our conversation. Do you have any questions before we proceed?

Questions

2.1. Introductory questions

- Since we last talked what has been your experiences in the teaching profession?
    - What went well?

    - What did not go well?
- Do you feel good at school? Why (not)?
- Praxis shock can be explained as the gap between theoretical knowledge (gained at university/college) about teaching and real experiences once you enter the classroom. Research shows that beginning teachers often experiencing a 'praxis shock'. Have you experienced this 'praxis shock'? In what way? Can you explain this?

2.2. <u>Perceptions of the induction model</u>

- You are part of an induction programme that is being piloted by the Free State Department of Education. What were your perceptions regarding the induction model?
    - How did you experience 'school-based mentoring' in 2021?
    - How have you experienced 'peer support' in 2021?
    - Did you develop a 'personal development plan' in 2021?

- Do you have any other comments about new teacher induction at this stage?

2.3. <u>Experiences in the context of the COVID 19 pandemic</u>

- How did the COVID 19 pandemic (and the lockdown) impact your experiences as a beginning teacher?
- What are the challenges/opportunities that you as beginner teacher experienced due to the COVID 19 pandemic?
- Have you as a beginner teacher been provided with support from the district and the school during COVID-19 pandemic?
- How has COVID-19 affected your interaction with your mentor/supervisor at school?
- How has the COVID 19 pandemic impacted the indication programme?

Is there anything else you would like to comment on?

2.4. <u>Job satisfaction and motivation</u>

- What aspects of your job do you enjoy?
- What aspects of your job do you find challenging?
- What motivates you in your job?
- What demotivates you in your job?
- Do you feel a sense of support in your job?
- Do you feel a sense of belonging in your job/at your school?

Is there anything else you would like to comment on?

2.5.Self-Efficacy

- Do you believe that you have what it takes to succeed as a beginner teacher? Please motivate your answer
- Do you believe you have the necessary resilience required for the position you are in? Please motivate your answer

2.6.Support structures

- What are the different support structures available to beginning teachers?
- What are the support and challenges that mentorship offers to begin teachers in an induction program?
- How can an induction programme be tailored to suit the mentorship needs of beginning teachers?

1,7. Professional Identity

- How have you changed during your first years as a teacher?
- What opportunities have you had for professional development?
- In what way did the induction programme help develop you as a teacher?
- Please make suggestions for what you think must be included in the induction programme for the benefit of other beginning teachers?

Conclusion

Thank you for your time and participation thus far. Your input is crucial to improve the induction programme for beginner teachers. Would it be possible for me to contact you again early next year to arrange for a face to face interview? This will be the last interview and the purpose would be to get your views and experiences on the induction programme after you have completed induction. The interview will be at a time and place of your convenience.

END

B Interviews with mentors

The mentors will also be interviewed three times throughout the school year. The mentor teachers completed the base line survey before the start of the induction model ("T0"), and will be interviewed in in August 2020 ("T1") and in January ("T2").

They will be questioned regarding the induction model, and the progress of the beginning teacher.

3. *Expectations of the induction model*

- What were/are your expectations regarding the component 'school-based mentoring' in this induction model?
- What have you/do you hope to achieve together with the beginning teacher?

4. *The induction model and progress of the beginning teacher*

- How have you experienced your mentorship role so far? Positive/negative?
- In what ways do you fill in your role as mentor? Can you describe your daily/weekly tasks regarding this mentor role?
- Which adaptations to the 'school-based mentoring' component would you suggest based on your experience so far?
- How is your relationship with the beginning teacher? Do you consider this relationship as positive/negative?
- Do you have the feeling that your mentoring relationship with the beginning teacher has influence on his/her professional identity? If so, how/in what way? If not, what would be needed to have influence on his/her professional identity?
- What do you consider to be hindering or supporting factors for the beginning teacher to develop professionally?

Appendix G: Quantitative Instruments

Instruments for the project "Strengthening beginning teachers' professional identity: An exploratory study into the efficiency of an induction model in South Africa"

1. Quantitative instruments

For the quantitative part, 4 previously validated (sub)scales from international literature will be used. More specifically, scales for teachers' self-efficacy (1.1), affective organisational commitment (1.2), intrinsic motivation to teach (1.3) and job satisfaction (1.4). These variables are considered as indicators of teachers' sense of professional identity. 15 selected beginning teachers will be asked to fill out these scales three times during the school year. More specifically, before the start of the induction model ("T0"), in June 2020 ("T1") and in November 2020, namely at the end of the school year ("T2"). These teachers will also be interviewed (see part 2: qualitative interviews). Additionally, at T2, 100 beginning teachers will be asked about the induction model and its components via an online survey (1.5).

1.1. Teacher's self-efficacy

This scale is created and validated by Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy (2001). Originally, the answers vary from 1 (nothing), over 3 (very little), 5 (some influence), 8 (quite a bit), to 9 (a great deal). There is a long version (24 items) and a short version (12 items). For the project, the short version of the scale would be used.

The items are as follows:

1. *How much can you do to control disruptive behaviour in the classroom?*
2. *How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?*
3. *How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?*
4. *How much can you do to help your students value learning?*
5. *To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?*
6. *How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?*
7. *How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?*
8. *How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?*
9. *How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?*

10. *To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?*
11. *How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?*
12. *How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?*

To determine the subscale scores, the unweighted means of the items that load on each factor should be calculated

- Efficacy in Student Engagement: Items 2, 3, 4, 11
- Efficacy in Instructional Strategies: Items 5, 9, 10, 12
- Efficacy in Classroom Management: Items 1, 6, 7, 8

More information on this scale can be found in the following publication:

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing and elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 17,* 783-805.

1.2. Affective organisational commitment

This subscale is created and validated by McInerney et al. (2015), and is based on the original scale of commitment from Meyer et al. (1993). This subscale is part of a larger scale in which all 'types' of commitment are questioned. Originally, the answers vary from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

The items are as follows (reverse coded):

1. *I do not feel like part of the family at my school.*
2. *I do not feel emotionally attached to this school.*
3. *I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my school.*

More information on this scale can be found in the following publication:

McInerney, D.M., Ganotice, F.A., King, R.B., Marsh, H.W., & Morin, A.J.S. (2015) Exploring commitment and turnover intentions among teachers: What we can learn from Hong Kong teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education 52,* 11–23.

1.3. Intrinsic motivation to teach

This subscale is created and validated by Soenens et al. (2012) and is based on the 'Self-Regulation Questionnaire' of Ryan & Connell (1989). This subscale is part of a larger scale in which motivation (according to the self-determination theory) is measured. Originally, the answers vary from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The items are as follows and all start with: 'I am motivated to teach because …' :

1. *I am very interested in teaching*
2. *Teaching is fun*
3. *I find teaching enjoyable*
4. *I find teaching a pleasant activity*

More information on this scale can be found in the following publication:

Soenens, B., Sierens, E., Vansteenkiste, M., Dochy, F., & Goossens, L. (2012). Psychologically controlling teaching: Examining outcomes, antecedents, and mediators. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 104*(1), 108–120.

1.4. Job satisfaction

This scale is created and validated by Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogni, & Steca (2003) and is based on the Job Descriptive Index van Smith, Kendall & Hulin (1969). Originally, the answers vary from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

The items are as follows:

2. I am satisfied with my job.
3. I am happy with the way my colleagues and superiors treat me.
4. I am satisfied with what I achieve at work.
5. I feel good at work.

More information on this scale can be found in the following publication:

Caprara, G. V., Barbaranelli, C., Borgogni, L., & Steca, P. (2003). Efficacy beliefs as determinants of teachers' job satisfaction. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 95,* 821–832.

1.5. Online survey for 100 beginning teachers

At the end of the school year (T2), a short survey will be distributed to all 100 beginning teachers that are involved in the induction model. In this short survey, and via descriptive analysis, the main aim is to get an idea which of the components of the induction model are considered important, and what elements were less interesting (as this is important to have an idea for further improving the model).

1.5.1. Regarding their satisfaction with the induction model

- Indicate how satisfied you are with the overall induction model?

Options: 1 (very dissatisfied), 2 (somewhat dissatisfied), 3 (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied), 4 (somewhat satisfied), 5 (very satisfied)

Additionally: there will be an empty white space in which the beginning teachers can type remarks and can give more information regarding their answer.

- Indicate how satisfied you are with the component 'school-based mentoring'?

  Options: 1 (very dissatisfied), 2 (somewhat dissatisfied), 3 (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied), 4 (somewhat satisfied), 5 (very satisfied)

  Additionally: there will be an empty white space in which the beginning teachers can type remarks and can give more information regarding their answer.

- Indicate how satisfied you are with the component 'peer support'?

  Options: 1 (very dissatisfied), 2 (somewhat dissatisfied), 3 (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied), 4 (somewhat satisfied), 5 (very satisfied)

  Additionally: there will be an empty white space in which the beginning teachers can type remarks and can give more information regarding their answer.

- Indicate how satisfied you are with the component 'training sessions'?

  Options: 1 (very dissatisfied), 2 (somewhat dissatisfied), 3 (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied), 4 (somewhat satisfied), 5 (very satisfied)

  Additionally: there will be an empty white space in which the beginning teachers can type remarks and can give more information regarding their answer.

- Indicate how satisfied you are with the component 'personal development plan'?

  Options: 1 (very dissatisfied), 2 (somewhat dissatisfied), 3 (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied), 4 (somewhat satisfied), 5 (very satisfied)

  Additionally: there will be an empty white space in which the beginning teachers can type remarks and can give more information regarding their answer.

1.5.2. Regarding the potential inhibiting and supporting factors

In this part, we would make an overview of the inhibiting and supporting factors mentioned by the beginning teachers in the interviews. Specifically, an overview of the factors that inhibited and/or supported a positive/negative impact on their professional identity e.g. lack of time, quality of the mentor, … are provided. We will then ask the beginning teachers to indicate to what extent they experienced this factor as working rather supporting or inhibiting.

2. Qualitative instruments

For the qualitative part, interviews with 15 beginning teachers and a number of mentors will be conducted. In what follows, a preliminary overview of the questions that will be included in the interviews is provided.

2.1. Interviews with beginning teachers

The beginning teachers will be interviewed three times throughout the school year. Specifically, they will be interviewed at the start of the school year and thus, before the start of the induction model ("T0"), in June 2020 ("T1") and in November 2020, namely at the end of the school year ("T2").

- *Introductory questions*

  - How have you experienced the first three months in the profession?
    - What went well?
    - What did not go well?
  - Do you feel good at school? Why (not)?
  - They often talk about beginning teachers experiencing a 'praxis shock'. Have you experienced this 'praxis shock'? In what way?

- *Expectations of the induction model*

  - What are your expectations regarding the induction model?
    - What are your expectations regarding the component 'school-based mentoring'?
    - What are your expectations regarding the component 'peer support'?
    - What are your expectations regarding the component 'training sessions'?
    - What are your expectations regarding the component 'personal development plan'?

  - What do you aspire to achieve by participating in the induction model?

- *The induction model and its different components*

  - How have you experienced the induction model so far? Positive/negative?
    - How have you experienced the component 'school-based mentoring'?
    - How have you experienced the component 'peer support'?
    - How have you experienced the component 'training sessions'?
    - How have you experienced the component 'personal development plan'?

- Which of the four components have you experienced as the most helpful?

- Which of the four components have you experienced as less helpful?

- Which adaptations would you suggest based on your experience?

- *Beginning teachers' support network*

In this part we want to learn more about the people that support the beginning teacher in his/her first year in the profession. Interesting here is to see if people such as the mentor, principal, … are also included in his/her network. To collect this information we use the method of Van Waes, Van den Bossche, Moolenaar, De Maeyer, & Van Petegem (2015).

We provide the beginning teacher with an A3 paper on which we have sketched concentric circles. In the inner circle the name of the beginning teacher is written down. The first concentric circle represents the space in which all people whom the beginning teacher receives support from on a daily basis should be placed. The next circle are the people whom he/she receives support from on a weekly basis. The following circle is the people whom support the beginning teacher on a monthly basis. And the outer circle are the people that support the beginning teacher once every three months (see Figure 1).

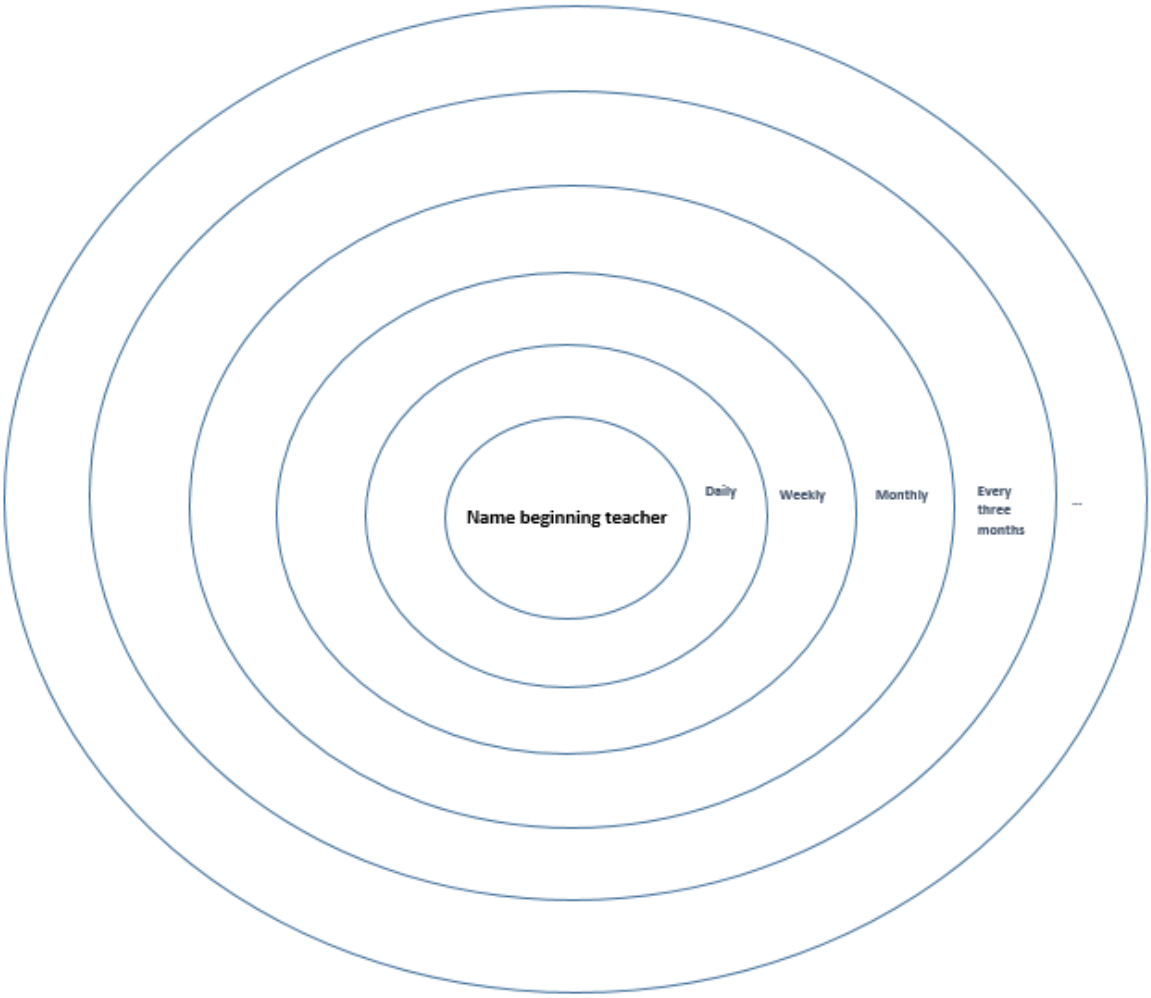
The beginning teacher is asked the following:

> *"Here you have post-its. I would like you to write down all the names of the people that have supported you on these post-its. In a following step I would like you to stick the post-it's on the circles. For example, if you received support from your principal on a weekly basis then you should stick your post-it in the concentric circle that represents weekly support. You don't have to write the specific name of that person, you can also use initials, or a nickname. While doing that I would like to ask you to give more information: what does this support entail? Is the support useful? How does this support impact you?"*

At T1 and T2 we will also show the networks from the previous moments to the beginning teacher and ask questions, such as:

- Person X is no longer included in your network. Can you indicate why?
- Person X is a new person in your network. Can you indicate why? And what does this support entail?

- Do you perceive the changes in your network as positive/not positive? Why?



- *The indicators of their professional identity, relationship with induction model, and supporting & inhibiting factors*

You have filled out a survey concerning how you feel and think about your job (see scales above). Can you tell me more about your answers and why you gave the items that specific score? Additionally, for the three scales the following questions are asked:

- *Job satisfaction*; Who or what is responsible for these high/low scores? Who or what causes you to be satisfied/not satisfied with the job? Does the induction model affect your job satisfaction? And if so, how/in what way (which induction model components matter)? What factors are supporting? What factors are rather inhibiting?
- *Affective commitment to the school*; Who or what is responsible for these high/low scores? Who or what causes you to (not) feel home at school, to (not) feel part of the team? Does

the induction model affect your job satisfaction? And if so, how/in what way (which induction model components matter)? What factors are supporting? What factors are rather inhibiting?

- *Intrinsic motivation to teach*; Who or what is responsible for these high/low scores? Who or what causes you to be (not) motivated to teach? Does the induction model affect your job satisfaction? And if so, how/in what way (which induction model components matter)? What factors are supporting? What factors are rather inhibiting?
- *Self-efficacy*; Who or what is responsible for these high/low scores? Who or what causes you to be (not) confident about your own capacities as a teacher? Does the induction model affect your self-efficacy? And if so, how/in what way (which induction model components matter)? What factors are supporting? What factors are rather inhibiting?

Interviews with mentors

The mentors will also be interviewed three times throughout the school year. Specifically, they will be interviewed at the start of the school year and thus, before the start of the induction model ("T0"), in June 2020 ("T1") and in November 2020, namely at the end of the school year ("T2").

They will be questioned regarding the induction model, and the progress of the beginning teacher.

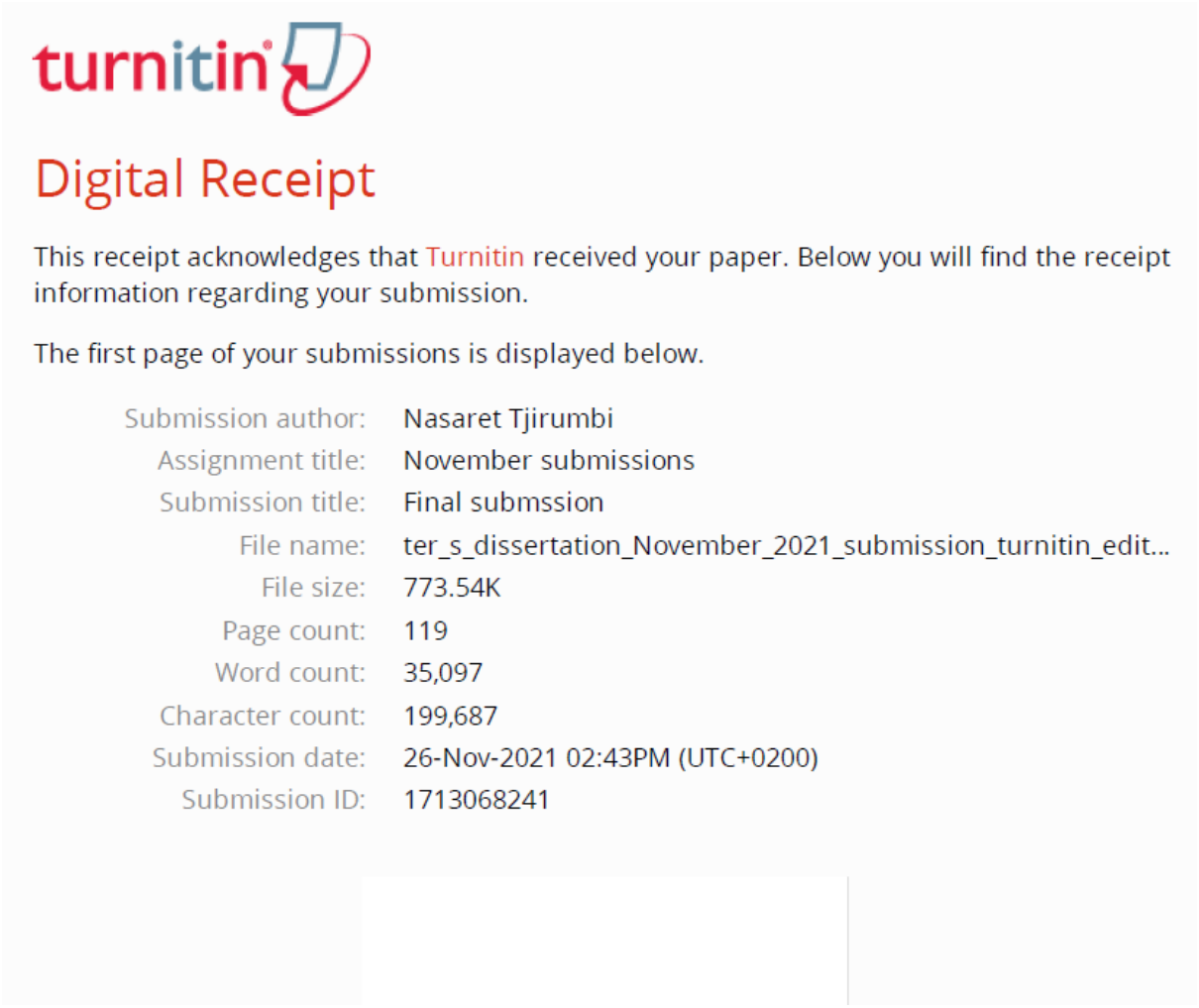
- *Expectations of the induction model*

  - What are your expectations regarding the component 'school-based mentoring' in this induction model?
  - What do you hope to achieve together with the beginning teacher?

- *The induction model and progress of the beginning teacher*

  - How have you experienced your mentorship role so far? Positive/negative?
  - In what ways do you fill in your role as mentor? Can you describe your daily/weekly tasks regarding this mentor role?
  - Which adaptations to the 'school-based mentoring' component would you suggest based on your experience so far?
  - How is your relationship with the beginning teacher? Do you consider this relationship as positive/negative?
  - Do you have the feeling that your mentoring relationship with the beginning teacher has influence on his/her professional identity? If so, how/in what way? If not, what would be needed to have influence on his/her professional identity?
  - What do you consider to be hindering or supporting factors for the beginning teacher to develop professionally?

Appendix H: Turnitin Report



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ORIGINALITY REPORT

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Appendix I: Language Editing

Rephrase it!
Academic Text Editing

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I declare that I language edited the master's dissertation titled, *Beginner teachers' experiences of professional identity development during an induction programme in the Free State*

During the editing process, I looked for and corrected spelling, grammar, punctuation and syntax errors. Where I noticed inconsistencies or unclarities in the text, I made comments to draw the author's attention to the inconsistency or unclarity. I also made suggestions where changes could be made. Lastly, I double-checked the references in-text and in the reference list to make sure that they are consistent throughout. Where sources or source information were missing, I indicated such to the author so that she could locate and add the missing information.

Disclaimer: The ultimate responsibility for accepting or rejecting the changes and recommendations rests with the student and I cannot be held responsible for any layout or language issues that might have emerged as a result of subsequent amendments to the text.

Yours sincerely

Johannes Pieter Odendaal