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# ***Praxis***

**A Peer-Reviewed Journal of  
The Department of English  
University of Rajshahi**

**Editor**

Dr. Md. Sakhawat Hossain

**Associate Editors**

Dr. Mahbuba Hasina

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**VOLUME 15  
December 2025**

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## Editorial Preface

*Praxis: Journal of the Department of English, University of Rajshahi* is committed to maintaining rigorous academic and ethical standards in the publication of scholarly research in the English language, linguistics, and literature. As a double-blind peer-reviewed journal, *Praxis* ensures that all submitted manuscripts undergo an impartial and thorough evaluation process, safeguarding both academic integrity and intellectual merit.

The journal adheres strictly to a policy of originality. Submissions are unpublished and not be under consideration for publication elsewhere. Any form of plagiarism, including self-plagiarism, is considered a serious breach of academic ethics and results in immediate rejection. Authors are responsible for ensuring the authenticity of their work and for properly acknowledging all sources in accordance with recognized citation standards.

To maintain disciplinary coherence while encouraging intellectual diversity, *Praxis* accepts contributions primarily within the fields of English studies, linguistics and English Language Teaching. Interdisciplinary work is welcomed, provided it demonstrates a clear and substantive engagement with these core areas. All manuscripts are written in English and follow either the MLA (9th edition) or the APA (7th edition) style, depending on the disciplinary orientation of the paper.

The journal enforces a structured submission protocol. Manuscripts fall within the prescribed length and include an abstract and a brief author bio-note. Submissions are accepted in both print and digital formats, prepared according to specified formatting guidelines. To ensure equitable representation, each author is permitted to submit only one manuscript per volume. In cases of joint authorship, full disclosure of all contributors and their institutional affiliations is required.

The editorial board reserves the right to make necessary revisions for clarity, coherence, and consistency without altering the substantive argument of the work. Final decisions regarding publication rest solely with the editorial board, based on reviewers' recommendations and the journal's standards. Individual authors, and not the Editorial Board, are responsible for the views expressed in their writing.

Through these policies, *Praxis* seeks to uphold excellence, transparency, and fairness in academic publishing, fostering a scholarly environment that values critical inquiry, methodological rigor, and intellectual responsibility.



## **In Memoriam: Professor Dr. Idris Ahmed Md. Sakhawat Hossain**

I had the privilege of being a direct student of Professor Dr. Idris Ahmed, and the memory of his classroom remains one of the most formative experiences of my intellectual life. He was not a teacher of abundance in number, but of precision and distinction; he took relatively few classes, yet each one bore the mark of rare excellence. His lectures were events that were often animated, lucid, and deeply engaging, without ever obscuring the depth of his scholarship.

What set him apart most strikingly was his method. He had the remarkable ability to render even the most extended and complex texts into something graspable without diminishing their intellectual weight. With a lightness of touch and a finely tuned sense of humour, he guided students into the depths of a text as if it were the most natural of movements. His wit was never ornamental; it was pedagogical and it was an instrument through which difficulty dissolved and insight emerged. Many of his students would testify that his classes were filled with mirth, yet never lost their seriousness of purpose.

In demeanour, he was at once formal and disarmingly intimate. His English was impeccable, measured, and refined, reflecting a deep command of language and tradition. Yet he was not bound by rigidity; at moments, he would slip into Bangla, often to delightful effect, using humour to draw students closer into the discussion. He had a characteristic habit of addressing students as “thou,” a gesture that seemed to collapse distance while invoking an older, almost Shakespearean intimacy. Standing before the class, he maintained an alert and penetrating gaze so that no student could afford inattentiveness, yet none felt excluded or disengaged. His presence commanded attention without coercion.

His intellectual range was formidable. He possessed a sharp and integrated knowledge of English literature, history, philosophy, and the broader Christian and Western intellectual traditions. Yet his scholarly vision was not confined within conventional disciplinary boundaries. His doctoral work on the literary techniques of *Surah Yasin* remains a landmark contribution that demonstrates his courageous attempt to bring Islamic textuality into the sphere of literary criticism. In doing so, he opened a space for dialogue between traditions that are too often kept apart.

Born on 31 December 1938, Professor Dr. Idris Ahmed completed his MA in English from the Department of English, University of Rajshahi, in 1960, and qualified in the then Special East Pakistan Civil Service (EPCS) examination. He joined the Department of English at the University of Rajshahi on 10 March 1973 and served there with distinction until his retirement as Professor on 30 December 2004. He passed away on 16 May 2022, leaving behind a legacy of intellectual brilliance, pedagogical excellence, and humane values.



## ***Dedication***



**Professor Dr. Idris Ahmed**  
(31 December 1938-16 May 2022)

This Volume is dedicated to the cherished memory of Professor Dr. Idris Ahmed—a teacher of rare brilliance, a scholar of profound humanity.



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# Challenges Faced by Early-Career EFL Teachers at the Tertiary Level in Bangladesh

**Dilshad Jahan Mumu**

Lecturer, Department of English, Rajshahi University

**Shawly Sarker**

Lecturer, Department of English, Gopalganj Science and Technology University

**Noor E-Zannat Nusha**

Erasmus Scholar in Clinical Linguistics, University of Groningen, Netherlands;  
University of Gent, Belgium

## Abstract

Novice teachers often encounter challenges that hinder their professional growth in the early stages of their academic careers. The barriers faced by these teachers are further complicated by socio-cultural and political issues related to learning a foreign language in a country like Bangladesh. This study aims to explore and assess the primary factors hindering the early development and advancement of Bangladeshi novice teachers teaching English as a foreign language at the tertiary level. Based on qualitative and quantitative insights, this study sheds light on the challenges related to classroom practices, collegial relations, and institutional contexts. The findings reveal that challenges such as managing chaotic classrooms, engaging students, the lack of mentorship, and limited collaborative support from colleagues are major obstacles for early career EFL teachers, whose professional growth is further hindered by the lack of proper teacher training facilities. Considering all these hurdles, this study emphasizes the importance of introducing structured mentorship and teacher training programs alongside collaborative teaching environments for novice teachers' professional development, which will ultimately contribute to enhanced EFL teaching and learning practices at the tertiary level in Bangladesh.

**Keywords:** novice teachers, classroom management, collaborative practice, mentorship, practicum

## Introduction

“Teachers are often overworked and underpaid”

“Senior colleagues often try to dominate”

“Teaching often becomes secondary as we are bombarded with other administrative or similar tasks”

“Lacking scopes for self-development as a teacher”

Such statements are often used in reference to the teaching profession. Indeed, teaching is an ongoing and dynamic endeavour that requires an educator to manage a complex set of responsibilities. These responsibilities go far beyond the sole performance of teaching, encompassing a myriad of covert activities. For most teachers, the workdays never truly end. Early career teachers are required to manage a variety of instructional, administrative, and classroom management responsibilities, in addition to planning and assessment. Besides these tasks, they are also required to give academic guidance and emotional support to their students, and at the same time, they should maintain professionalism and commitment as their institutions' full-time employees. Considering these demands, the teaching profession poses even more demands for

novice educators. Given this, early-career teachers (those with between 0 and 3 years of full-time teaching experience and a teacher education degree) often find themselves in a high-stakes “sink or swim” situation (Varah et al., 1986).

On the other hand, novice teachers enter the profession with new energy and knowledge and understanding, not knowing what the teaching scenario looks like and that would lead to a reality shock. According to Kozicoglu (2017), the early years of the teaching profession are often referred to as ‘on-the-job training’. As a result, chaos, confusion and tension are predominant factors in the initial years of their teaching careers (Farrell, 2003; Farrell, 2006; Loughran, et al., 2001; Veenman, 1984). Veenman (1984) outlines the main areas of challenges faced by novice teachers, including classroom management, assessment, relationships with parents, administrators, and colleagues, heavy teaching loads, inadequate guidance and support, and large class sizes (Sali & Kechik, 2018). Both Faez & Valeo (2012) and Farrell (2019) claim that early career teachers struggle to eradicate the immense gap between their expectations and the reality that greets them once they begin teaching, causing them to undergo emotional stress and burnout in their teaching practice.

There has been a great deal of research on the problems encountered by novice teachers. Despite this, relatively little attention has been paid to the unique challenges faced by early career English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. In addition to sociocultural barriers and the pressure to overcompensate for their non-native status, teaching English in non-native contexts presents significant challenges. Horwitz (1996) found that non-native ESL instructors often feel inadequate and uncomfortable even though they are relatively proficient in the target language. Likewise, Farrell (2003) identified that novice teachers face challenges such as increased teaching load, more responsibilities outside the classroom, marking exam scripts, and a lack of collegial support. Farrell (2006) also mentioned that novice teachers face internal conflicts between their preferred teaching methods and institutional demands. Therefore, targeted support systems to assist early career EFL teachers in adapting and flourishing in their professional roles should be emphasized.

Although the challenges of early career EFL teachers have been neglected for a long time, recent research has begun to shed light on this underexplored issue in recent times. In Turkey, a study was conducted to investigate the challenges of novice EFL teachers, revealing major concerns such as managing the classroom, planning lessons, and motivating learners (Korukçu, 1996). Similarly, a study by Akcan (2016) found that implementing a communicative approach in the classroom presents challenges for teachers, particularly when working with students who lack motivation and necessary language skills.

Unfortunately, the condition in Bangladesh is even more concerning due to the absence of quality teacher-education programs, a lack of structured mentoring, overcrowded classrooms, poor institutional management, and inadequate budget allocation for the educational sector. Therefore, the challenges of Bangladeshi early career EFL teachers at the university level should be examined more closely. Specifically, two research questions guided this study:

1. What are the major challenges faced by novice EFL teachers at the tertiary level in Bangladesh?
2. How do novice teachers address these challenges?

### **Background of the Study**

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching in Bangladesh has evolved significantly over the years, transitioning from the traditional Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and more recently to blended learning, technology-enhanced learning, and plurilingual approaches. However, despite these developments, many educators who lack

training in advanced methodologies still depend on GTM, emphasizing translation over and above communication. Teachers with diverse educational, cultural, and social backgrounds bring different teaching styles, expectations, and levels of adaptability, which ultimately influence the overall education system.

Therefore, the absence of skills training programs deprives new teachers of the opportunity to prepare themselves to use the advanced and engaging teaching methods. Reflective teaching practice is often absent, and when combined with social and administrative challenges within institutions, the situation becomes even more difficult for the novice teachers. As a result, they may lack confidence and motivation, and students may fall behind despite their teachers' efforts. This, in turn, makes both teachers and students less competitive in regional and global contexts.

The declining quality of English language teaching still persists as untrained teachers continue to teach students who may themselves become educators in the future. These systemic issues are closely connected with the challenges novice teachers encounter. Novice teachers often lack support from institutions, colleagues, students, and even their families, which hinders their professional development. However, with proper guidance and encouragement, these teachers can gradually become competent educators, much like saplings growing into strong trees, capable of overcoming challenges and nurturing future generations of learners.

## **Literature Review**

### **Global and Local Challenges**

In the early years, teaching is often marked by confusion, challenges, and tension (Farrell, 1999, 2006; Loughran et al., 2001). Korukcu (1996) mentioned that classroom management, lesson planning, and student motivation are important challenges for pre-service and novice EFL teachers. Veenman (1984) reviewed eighty-three studies and identified several problems faced by novice teachers, including classroom management, assessment, relationships with parents, administrators and colleagues, heavy teaching workloads, inadequate subject knowledge, poor school resources, lack of guidance, and large class sizes. Bureaucratic policies, the absence of mentorship, and social dynamics in academic institutions also obstruct novice teachers' professional development to the extent that they may become frustrated and experience burnout (Horwitz, 1996; Korukcu, 1996).

Similar challenges exist in Bangladesh where, despite having academic expertise and pedagogical training, novice teachers encounter institutional constraints, classroom management difficulties, and a lack of professional support, which complicate their transition into teaching. According to Côté and Levine (2002, as cited in Krzywacki, 2009), novice teachers struggle with identity, ego, and personal beliefs during their early careers. As they question "Who am I as a teacher?", challenges arise due to the gap between their beliefs and their teaching practices. When teachers in Bangladesh shift from educational studies to real-life teaching (Senom et al., 2013), they often reinterpret or doubt their previous experiences (Beijaard et al., 2000; Thompson, 1992), reflecting that the relationship between beliefs and practice is often dialectical.

### **Institutional Regulations Related Challenges**

Despite the increasing demand for qualified EFL instructors in Bangladesh, the challenges faced by novice teachers have not yet been adequately addressed. Unlike experienced teachers, they often struggle to balance institutional expectations with classroom realities. Moreover, administrative barriers restrict their autonomy and impede their capacity to develop effective teaching practices (Richards & Pennington, 1998). Early career educators are often expected to perform at the level

of experienced professionals despite being new to administrative systems, diverse student populations, and evolving curricula.

When there is no structured guidance, many novice teachers feel uncertain, isolated, and unable to adjust to institutional expectations (Farrell, 2003; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Lacy & Guirguis, 2017; Warford & Reeves, 2003). Caspersen and Raaen (2014) conclude that if novice teachers are unable to cope with these pressures, they may experience burnout, increased stress (Karproovich et al., 2020; Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008), or attrition (Le Maistre & Paré, 2010), which may ultimately affect both the individual and the institution.

### **Classroom Management Related Challenges**

Effective classroom management is a major concern for novice teachers, especially in large and diverse EFL classrooms. Horwitz (1996) mentioned that non-native language teachers often feel pressurized when teaching the target language and that, despite their qualifications, non-native teachers often perceive themselves as continual learners. Takahashi (2014) pointed out that teaching anxiety is often related to teachers' self-perceived language ability and anxiety levels. Managing student behaviour, fostering engagement, and maintaining an inclusive classroom environment require experience and confidence that many early career teachers have yet to develop (Lomi & Mbato, 2020; Richards & Pennington, 1998).

Novice teachers in Bangladesh often find it difficult to implement differentiated instruction and manage classroom disruptions due to differences in student proficiency levels and learning styles (Farooq, 2016). According to Richards and Pennington (1998), common challenges include large class sizes, low proficiency learners, and misbehaving students. Further studies reveal that lack of classroom authority, limited experience with classroom management, and difficulty sustaining student motivation are major factors causing difficulty in classroom management for novice teachers (Ahmed & Julius, 2015; Ali, 2011; Desouky & Allam, 2017; Horwitz, 1996; Parsons, 1973; Robinson & Clay, 2005; Wang, & Wang, 2019; Yazıcı & Altun, 2013).

### **Social Relations Related Challenges**

Novice ELT teachers face several hurdles to improve their professional social relationships within academic institutions. Social dynamics in a new academic environment involve complex relationships with colleagues, senior faculty members, and students (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). As a result, many novice teachers feel professionally isolated due to the absence of mentorship and peer support (Tran, 2021). Early-career teachers in hierarchical institutions often struggle to assert their own ideas or seek guidance from senior colleagues (Rahman et al., 2019). Moreover, teachers who are close in age to their students sometimes find it difficult to maintain professional boundaries while building positive relations. According to Farrell (2016), new teachers need support from colleagues and mentors to improve professionally and feel satisfied in their roles.

### **Administrative Support Related Challenges**

Administrative support is significantly important in shaping the professional lives of novice teachers. According to Richards and Pennington (1998), the excessive workload assigned to new educators, including both teaching and administrative responsibilities, inhibits their professional growth. Unfortunately, many teachers feel unsupported and overwhelmed due to insufficient institutional support, limited opportunities for professional development, and the absence of structured feedback (Korukcu, 1996). Many tertiary institutions in Bangladesh tend to place more emphasis on student performance metrics than on teacher development, which often leads to unrealistic expectations for early career educators (Rahman et al., 2019).

Research shows that institutions that provide strong administrative support, including orientation programs, pedagogical training, and regular feedback, are more likely to retain novice teachers (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). On the contrary, without such support, new educators face difficulties in meeting institutional demands and often experience reduced job satisfaction and teaching effectiveness.

### Theoretical Framework

The challenges faced by early-career EFL teachers in Bangladeshi tertiary institutions are examined using a combination of theoretical perspectives. Bandura’s (1986) Social Cognitive Theory explains how novice teachers develop classroom management and teaching skills through observation, imitation, and interaction, emphasizing the importance of mentorship and peer collaboration. Teacher Self-Efficacy Theory (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) explains how teachers' confidence influences their teaching effectiveness, stress management, and motivation, as teachers with lower self-efficacy may find it more difficult to adapt to classroom environments. Additionally, Sweller’s (1988) Cognitive Load Theory explains how the burden of diverse institutional responsibilities can affect teachers’ performance and well-being. Furthermore, Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978) supports the need for mentorship, as novice teachers need guidance to transition from theoretical knowledge to practical teaching skills. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the challenges faced by early-career EFL teachers in Bangladesh, and suggest ways to improve teacher training, support, and professional development.

### Methodology

To examine the array of hurdles encountered by early-career teachers during the onset of their teaching careers, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were adopted. Data were collected through a survey questionnaire, including three demographic questions, fourteen Likert-scale questions, and two open-ended questions.<sup>5</sup> For data analysis, both descriptive and statistical methods were used to identify the most common and recurring challenges faced by novice teachers.

### Participants

The participants in this study were early career teachers with teaching experience ranging from less than one year to five years. The participants reflected on their early career experiences through the questionnaire used in this study. The variation in teaching experience provided a comprehensive understanding of the patterns and changes in the challenges faced during the early-teaching years. *Table 1* presents the range of teaching experience of the participants.

In total, fifty teachers from different public and private universities responded to the online survey questionnaire, including participants from six public universities and nine private universities. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants who met the early-career teaching experience criteria and could provide relevant insights for the study.

| N  | Mean | Median | Standard Deviation | Variation | Range |
|----|------|--------|--------------------|-----------|-------|
| 50 | 3.20 | 2.00   | 3.06               | 9.34      | 12.5  |

*Table 1: Duration of Teaching*

---

<sup>5</sup> The questionnaire is given in the Appendix.

The sample consisted of N = 50 teachers. On average, they had been teaching for 3.2 years (M = 3.20), with a median teaching experience of 2 years (Md = 2) years. This means that half of the teachers had taught for two years or less, while the other half had taught for two years or more. Teaching experience varied considerably, with a standard deviation of 3.06 years (SD = 3.06), indicating a relatively wide spread of data around the mean. The variance (9.34) also indicates a considerable amount of variability in the given teaching durations among the participants. The range of teaching experience was 12.5 years, indicating that the difference between the teacher with the least experience and the teacher with the most experience was 12.5 years. Overall, most teachers had relatively few years of experience (around 2 to 3 years on average), but a small number of teachers had considerably more experience, contributing to the increase of the overall variability of the data and resulting in a larger SD and range.

### Data Collection

To measure novice EFL teachers' challenges faced in academia, a questionnaire was developed based on Lory Olafson and Gregory Schraw's (2006) article "Teachers' beliefs and practices within and across domains". By exploring teachers' beliefs, challenges and practices, the basic probable challenges were traced and adapted into the questionnaire, which was categorized into three sections: classroom-related challenges, collegial relationship-related challenges, and practicum-related challenges.

To ensure the validity of the instrument, firstly, the questionnaire was sent to three English language teaching experts, who were asked to review the items to identify any inconsistencies or ambiguities in the items. According to the experts' feedback and suggestions, the questionnaire was revised and refined. After revision, fourteen (14) items were finalized and approved for the study.

The reliability of the final version of the questionnaire was measured using Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach's alpha value for the questionnaire was 0.741, indicating acceptable internal consistency. According to Cortina (1993), a Cronbach's alpha value above 0.70 indicates acceptable reliability of the scale. Therefore, the Cronbach's alpha value of this questionnaire shows a good interrater reliability of the items in this study.

### Data Analysis

After the data were collected through the questionnaire, they were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The results were retrieved by descriptive statistical analysis. Here, the three (3) categories of questions were dealt separately with distinct interpretations and implications. The challenges were classified into three (3) categories based on their mean scores: major, moderate, and minor challenges.

### Findings on Classroom Related Challenges

| <b>Classroom Management Related Challenges</b>                                   | <b>Mean</b> | <b>SD</b> |
|--|-------------|-----------|
| I find it difficult to manage class during pair/group activity                   | 2.90        | 1.389     |
| Administering testing and evaluation is difficult for me                         | 2.82        | 1.335     |
| It is difficult to manage disruptive classes                                     | 3.82        | 0.941     |
| It is difficult to address students' problematic behaviour                       | 3.74        | 1.121     |
| It is difficult to choose between a teacher-centered or a student-centered class | 3.10        | 1.474     |

*Table 2: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of Classroom Management Related Challenges*

### Interpretation of the Data

The descriptive statistics indicate that early-career lecturers in Bangladeshi universities face varying levels of difficulty in managing classroom-related challenges. Overall, the results highlight that discipline-related challenges, such as handling disruptive behaviour and addressing student-related issues, are the most pressing concerns for early-career lecturers. In contrast, instructional and assessment-related challenges, such as group activity management and evaluation, appear to be comparatively less problematic, although they still vary across individuals. Therefore, professional training programs focusing on classroom discipline strategies, student engagement techniques, and flexible pedagogical approaches should be introduced for novice tertiary-level educators in Bangladesh.

### Major Challenges: Discipline and Student Behaviour

According to the data, *managing disruptive classes* ( $M = 3.82$ ,  $SD = 0.941$ ); is the most frequently reported challenge. Thus, it is obvious that maintaining classroom order to ensure a suitable learning environment is a major struggle for novice teachers. The second highest challenge for new teachers is *addressing students' problematic behaviour* ( $M = 3.74$ ,  $SD = 1.121$ ), while the relatively higher standard deviation ( $SD = 1.121$ ) suggests that though many teachers find these issues challenging, some may have developed strategies to manage such behaviour more effectively. In fact, institutional differences may also influence the level of difficulty experienced by teachers. Therefore, these findings indicate the need for training in classroom discipline techniques.

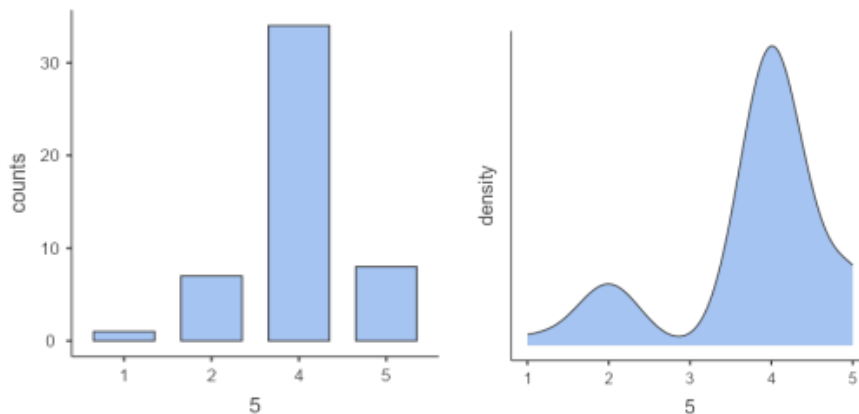


Figure 1

### Difficulty in Managing Disruptive Classes

### Moderate Challenges: Pedagogical Approaches

Many early-career lecturers struggle with deciding on the appropriate teaching approaches for their classes, especially whether to adopt a teacher-centered or a student-centered approach. The findings for this challenge show a mean score of  $M = 3.10$  ( $SD = 1.474$ ). The relatively high standard deviation ( $SD = 1.474$ ) indicates variations among lecturers; some may have clear preferences regarding teaching approaches, while others may feel uncertain about balancing teacher authority with structured instruction and student participation in the class. Thus, it is necessary to arrange pedagogical training programs that help new teachers adapt their teaching styles to different learning environments.

### Lowest Challenges: Classroom Activities and Evaluation

Novice lecturers face fewer difficulties in *managing classes during pair/group activities* (M = 2.90, SD = 1.389) and in *administering testing and evaluation* (M = 2.82, SD = 1.335). However, the relatively high standard deviations indicate significant differences in respondents' experiences, possibly due to factors such as class size, subject matter, or institutional assessment policies.

### Findings on Collegial Relation Related Challenges

| Collegial Relation Related Challenges   | Mean | SD    |
|---|------|-------|
| I do not get enough mental support from my colleagues                             | 2.94 | 1.476 |
| I feel I am not accepted properly by my colleagues                                | 2.72 | 1.471 |
| My senior colleagues rarely share their experience of their early years           | 3.10 | 1.389 |
| I do not get enough help from my colleagues to prepare lesson plans and materials | 2.96 | 1.456 |
| There is barely any collaborative work among colleagues                           | 3.22 | 1.502 |

Table 3: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of Collegial Relation Related Challenges

This section presents the descriptive analysis of collegial relation-related challenges faced by early-career EFL lecturers in Bangladeshi universities. According to *Table 3*, the mean scores and standard deviations for each item in this category are based on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree).

### Interpretation and Implications

The statistical findings suggest that collegial relation-related challenges among early-career lecturers in Bangladesh primarily stem from limited collaboration and mentorship rather than outright rejection by colleagues.

### Major Challenges:

#### ***Lack of faculty collaboration***

As shown in the results, the mean (M) score for *lack of faculty collaboration* is 3.22 and standard deviation (SD) is 1.502. Thus, it indicates that novice lecturers mostly experience a lack of cooperative environment in academic work. It is needless to say that to enhance professional growth and job satisfaction, collaboration of faculty members is essential. However, the relatively high standard deviation indicates that institutional policies and departmental cultures have varying impact to support collaborative environments. Some universities may encourage teamwork and peer collaboration, while others may lack faculty engagement initiatives.

#### ***Limited Mentorship from Senior Faculty***

The challenge of *limited mentorship from senior faculties* (M = 3.10, SD = 1.389) demonstrates how novice lecturers rarely have both formal and informal mentorship opportunities. Without guidance from experienced faculty members, new lecturers may struggle with classroom management, pedagogical strategies, and professional development. Creating structured mentorship programs could solve this problem, where experienced teachers could share their knowledge and provide professional support to new lecturers.

### Moderate Challenge: Professional and Emotional Support

*Insufficient help with lesson planning and materials* (M = 2.96, SD = 1.456) and *lack of mental support from colleagues* (M = 2.94, SD = 1.476) were found to be moderate concerns among young teaching professionals. These results imply that while some lecturers have access to

supportive colleagues, others may find themselves isolated in their teaching responsibilities. Therefore, to reduce this problem, a culture of shared resources and peer assistance must be maintained.

**Lowest Challenge: Acceptance by Colleagues**

Compared to other “collegial relation related challenges,” *feeling not properly accepted by colleagues* has the lowest mean score (M = 2.72). It suggests that novice teachers mostly feel accepted and integrated with their colleagues. Nevertheless, as the standard deviation is high (SD = 1.471), it suggests the experiences to be quite different among institutions. Some universities with a supportive and welcoming faculty culture may be more inclusive, while others may make fewer efforts to integrate new lecturers into the academic community.

**Findings on Practicum-Related Challenges**

The data show that novice lecturers face issues concerning mentorship, resource availability and the balance between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

| <b>Practicum Related Challenges</b>  | <b>Mean</b> | <b>SD</b> |
|--|-------------|-----------|
| Mentoring session for new teachers is neglected                                | 4.08        | 1.192     |
| Inadequacy of resources and materials put me at difficulty                     | 3.88        | 1.256     |
| Teacher training programs put too much attention on theory neglecting practice | 4.54        | 0.788     |
| I find discrepancy between my belief and real-time practice                    | 3.96        | 1.087     |

*Table 4: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of Practicum Related Challenges*

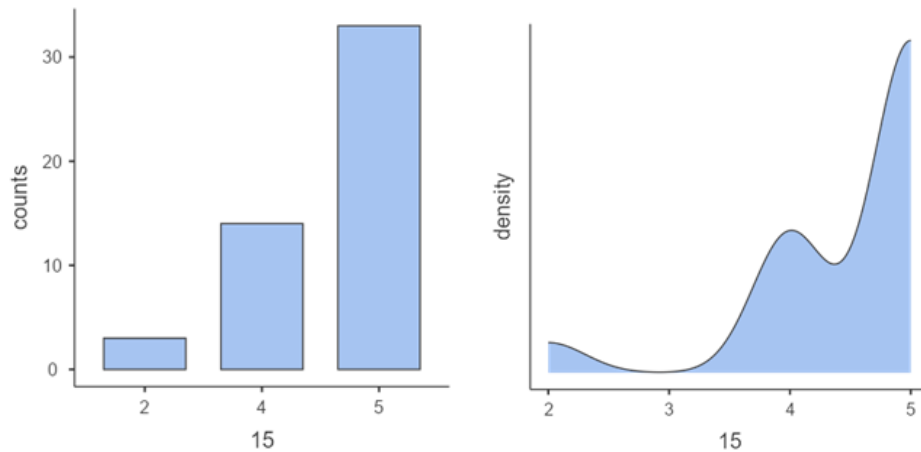
**Interpretation and Implications**

The findings highlight critical issues in the preparation and professional development of early-career lecturers, particularly regarding the lack of practical training, mentorship, and resource availability.

**Major Challenges**

***Inadequate Practical Training in Teacher Education***

Inadequacy of practical training is the highest rated challenge (M = 4.54, SD = 0.788) here. This result suggests that teacher training programs may place greater attention to theoretical knowledge than practical application. Thus, in real life teaching-learning situations, such as managing disruptive students, handling diverse classrooms, and preparing effective lesson plans, early-career lecturers may find themselves unprepared. To support novice lecturers in real-life teaching experiences, teacher training curricula in higher education institutions should include more practicum-based learning, teaching simulations, and classroom observations.



**Figure 2** *Emphasis on Theory over Practical Training*

### **Lack of Mentorship for New Teachers**

The statistics show that the *neglect of mentoring sessions* ( $M = 4.08$ ,  $SD = 1.192$ ) is one of the highest-rated challenges, which suggests that many institutions fail to provide structured guidance to new lecturers. Without formal or informal mentorship, early-career lecturers may struggle with pedagogical challenges, professional development, or institutional expectations. Also, guidance and support of experienced faculty members towards new lecturers in their first years of teaching is a great support. Besides, formal mentoring and teacher guidance sessions should be introduced in tertiary-level educational institutions.

### **Moderate Challenge: Discrepancy Between Teaching Beliefs and Real-World Practice**

There is a mismatch between early-career lecturers' theoretical beliefs and practical teaching constraints ( $M = 3.96$ ,  $SD = 1.087$ ). Institutional policies, students' expectations, or the rigid structure of traditional education systems may contribute to the issue. Workshops on adaptable teaching strategies could be useful to meet the gap between lecturers' beliefs and classroom realities. Reflective teaching practices (e.g., self-assessment, peer reviews) should also be encouraged to help the new teachers better understand teaching realities so that they can adapt their teaching beliefs to practical classroom contexts.

### **Lowest Challenge: Inadequate Teaching Resources and Materials**

*Inadequate teaching resources and materials* has received the lowest mean score ( $M = 3.88$ ,  $SD = 1.256$ ). Still, the relatively high SD indicates that some lecturers may not have well-equipped classrooms, technological tools or books. This problem may inhibit the effectiveness of lesson delivery and affect teaching quality. Therefore, institutions should invest in better resources, digital tools and updated materials for teaching, especially for novice lecturers. Most importantly, open educational resources (OER) and resource-sharing initiatives among faculty members could be promoted to address resource limitations.

### **Qualitative Data Analysis**

In addition to the previously identified challenges, early-career lecturers in Bangladesh face several other difficulties. These include excessive administrative workload, lack of technology-based training, outdated library resources, pressure to publish, and difficulties managing large and diverse classrooms. Discriminatory dynamics in the workplace, salary inequity, and institutional

politics make the list longer. On the other hand, some students face financial and psychological struggles that affect their academic performance, tactical struggles resulting in rote learning etc., which further complicates the teaching environment. As one participant opined, “Teachers are often overworked and underpaid. Even after sacrificing their personal lives for professional responsibilities, they are not appreciated enough.”

To face the challenges, the participants suggested defined mentorship programs, effective teacher training, and balanced workload distribution. They also suggested that administrative staff should handle clerical tasks to help the teachers focus on pedagogy. Institutions should encourage spontaneous communication and collaborative work environments, and also address teachers’ roles to reinforce positively. One participant emphasized the need for a supportive work culture saying, “Positive reinforcement should be better internalized. At times the incentives don’t suffice either, so that could also be considered.” To create a more sustainable and supportive academic environment, issues such as salary imbalances, heavy research workloads, and stagnant professional growth should be properly addressed to ensure a sustainable and encouraging academic environment.

### **Overall Implications**

As per the findings, early career lecturers in Bangladesh are deprived of hands-on training, lack of guidance, and insufficient practicum-resources. To address such issues, it is a must to reform curriculum, develop mentoring programs and provide institutional support to reshape and support novice teachers in their professional journeys.

### **Discussion**

The findings of this study reflect on the early-career EFL teachers’ challenges in Bangladesh, particularly in classroom management, collegial dynamics, and practicum experiences. The quantitative data indicate that disruptive classroom management is the most significant challenge, with a high mean of 3.82. Aligning with Wilkins and Lee (2011), it shows that novice teachers often struggle with classroom discipline and management related issues. Additionally, handling students’ problematic behaviour (M = 3.74) is also particularly challenging for novice teachers (Bates & Morgan, 2017). Thus, they face significant challenges to establish authority and address diverse student behaviour. These findings show classroom management to be particularly difficult for novice teachers in Bangladesh, aligning with challenges faced by novice teachers worldwide.

Balancing teacher-centered and student-centered teaching approaches (M = 3.10) is also a significant challenge, as these teachers may not yet have sufficient experience to confidently apply different teaching strategies. This outcome is in contrast with Smith and Ingersoll (2004), who found that more experienced teachers eventually adopt more flexible teaching methods. Thus, a lack of experience and the need for additional professional development for improved pedagogical skills could be connected to the challenges Bangladeshi early-career teachers face in this field.

Regarding collegial relationships, the study showed that novice teachers reported feeling marginalized by their colleagues (M = 2.94), aligning with earlier findings by Ingersoll (2001) and Williams and Lawson (2001) that new teachers often experience loneliness and a lack of cooperation during their initial years. However, according to Kim and Lee (2014), new teachers faced many difficulties in receiving support from their institutions—which is quite different from the responses of the participants regarding getting help from colleagues to prepare lesson plans and materials (M = 2.96). However, this difference may be due to variations in institutional culture or availability of resources in different places.

The practicum-related challenges stood out from the rest of the findings in this study, with *mentoring sessions for new teachers being neglected* receiving the highest mean score (M = 4.08). Hennessy et al. (2016) addressed the importance of mentorship for novice teachers to grow effectively, which contradicts the finding and highlights the need to support new teachers during their initial years. Additionally, there is a lack of practical teacher training programs (M = 4.54) which indicates the need for it, aligning with the study of Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001). Real-time classroom practice and teachers' beliefs (M = 3.96) also appear to conflict with each other, reflecting on the inherent gap between theoretical knowledge and practical teaching, aligning with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where new teachers need guidance and support to overcome the gap.

Therefore, the findings of this study align with previous literature on novice teachers' challenges, especially in classroom management, collegial support, and practical teaching experience. However, the results also reveal some differences, particularly regarding collegial support and the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical teaching. These findings highlight the importance of targeted professional development programs to support novice ELT teachers in Bangladesh, particularly through mentorship, peer collaboration, and increased opportunities for practical teaching experience.

### **Limitations**

Despite providing valuable insights into the challenges faced by early-career EFL teachers in Bangladesh, this study has several limitations that should be considered to have an extensive understanding of the problems faced by novice teachers. First, the study may not be the total representation of the novice EFL teachers across Bangladesh, as it investigated a relatively small sample of 50 early-career lecturers from both public and private universities. Additionally, the study may be subject to response bias, such as social desirability bias or inaccurate self-assessment, affecting the reliability of the responses, since the data were collected through a self-reported questionnaire.

Another limitation is that the study primarily focused on three main categories of challenges: classroom management, collegial relationships, and practicum-related challenges, disregarding other possible challenges, such as, the impact of institutional support or cultural factors, that could also influence novice teachers' experiences. Furthermore, the study did not provide scope for a longitudinal examination of how these challenges evolve as teachers gain more experience. Future research could address these limitations by including a larger and more diverse sample, adopting a longitudinal approach to capture a more comprehensive and nuanced view of the challenges faced by early-career EFL teachers over time.

### **Recommendations**

According to the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made to facilitate early-career EFL teachers in Bangladesh. To begin with, strengthening mentorship programs can play a crucial role in supporting new teachers who often feel isolated and unsupported in their professional development. Challenges related to classroom management and pedagogical skills could also be alleviated by pairing novice teachers with experienced colleagues under structured, long-term mentoring systems.

Additionally, teacher training programs should be designed to give practical, hands-on experiences rather than focusing solely on theoretical insights. This training would prepare novice teachers for real classroom challenges by bridging the gap between theory and practice. Moreover, institutions should also endorse collaborative practices to improve collegial relationships where teachers can

easily share lesson plans, teaching strategies, and classroom management techniques among themselves.

Furthermore, teachers should be provided with sufficient teaching materials and technological tools for better and less stressful teaching experiences. Finally, future research should explore the role of institutional support and cultural factors to determine better interventions and support systems to the unique needs of novice EFL teachers in Bangladesh.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, this study investigated the challenges related to classroom management, collegial relationships, and practicum-related difficulties faced by early-career EFL teachers in Bangladesh. According to the findings, managing learners' disruptive behaviours, maintaining student engagement, and balancing different teaching strategies in the classroom pose major obstacles for novice teachers. In addition, they often deal with limited collegial support and inadequate mentoring programs, which further complicate their professional experiences.

The study suggests that well-designed mentorship programs, collaborative teaching environments, and practical teacher training can facilitate the professional growth of early-career teachers. Educational institutions can better support novice EFL teachers and improve teaching outcomes by providing such facilities. Future research should consider the varying challenges faced by early-career teachers and develop strategies to create a more supportive and effective teaching environment.

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## Appendix

### Demographic Questions

1. Duration of Teaching Profession
2. What level do you teach?
3. In which type of institutions do you teach?
  - Private
  - Public
  - other

### Likert -Type Questions

#### **Classroom Management Related Challenges**

| Statements  | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Undecided | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|-----------|-------|----------------|
| 1.I find it difficult to manage class during pair/group activity                |                   |          |           |       |                |
| 2.Testing and evaluation is difficult to administer for me                      |                   |          |           |       |                |
| 3.It is difficult to manage disruptive classes                                  |                   |          |           |       |                |
| 4.It is difficult to address students' problematic behavior                     |                   |          |           |       |                |
| 5.It is difficult to choose either a teacher centered or student centered class |                   |          |           |       |                |

#### **Social Relations Related Challenges**

| Statements   | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Undecided | Agree | Strongly agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|-----------|-------|----------------|
| 1.I do not get enough mental support from my colleagues                            |                   |          |           |       |                |
| 2. I feel I am not accepted properly by my colleagues                              |                   |          |           |       |                |
| 3.My senior colleagues rarely share their experience of their early years          |                   |          |           |       |                |
| 4.I do not get enough help from my colleagues to prepare lesson plan and materials |                   |          |           |       |                |
| 5.There is barely any collaborative work among colleagues                          |                   |          |           |       |                |

### Administrative Support Related Challenges

| Statements  | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Undecided | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|-----------|-------|----------------|
| 1. Mentoring session for new teachers are neglected                               |                   |          |           |       |                |
| 2. Inadequacy of resources and materials put me at difficulty                     |                   |          |           |       |                |
| 3. Teacher training programs put too much attention on theory neglecting practice |                   |          |           |       |                |
| 4. I find discrepancy between my belief and real-time practice                    |                   |          |           |       |                |

- The question's response scale is 5 = strongly agree; 4 = agree; 3 = undecided; 2 = disagree; and 1 = strongly disagree.

### Open-ended Questions

1. Is there any other challenge you faced but not mentioned above? If yes, please mention it and describe it in your own words.
2. How can these challenges be addressed according to your perspective? (60-80 words)