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Yrd. Doç. Dr. Abdullah ARSLAN
Akdeniz Üniversitesi, Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu, Yabancı Dil Eğitimi
abdullaharslan@akdeniz.edu.tr

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Salih ÖZENİCİ
Akdeniz Üniversitesi, Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu, Yabancı Dil Eğitimi
sozenici@akdeniz.edu.tr

ENGLISH INSTRUCTORS' BELIEFS, OBSTACLES, AND NEEDS ABOUT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Abstract

The aim of the study was to both identify English instructors' beliefs, obstacles, and needs concerning professional development programs working at state universities in the Mediterranean Region of Turkey in terms of some variables through a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview form constructed by the researcher after a thorough literature review. The integrated results of qualitative and quantitative showed that English instructors in the study hold the beliefs that PDPs are necessary and helpful to review and develop teaching skills, competence, methods, and practices. Workload, cost, and lack of institutional support are among the most crucial factors that impede English instructors to take part in PDPs. Furthermore, among the highest degree of PD needs reported by English instructors were assessment and evaluation, test development, technology use, followed by the need for the CEFR and new approaches and methods.

Keywords: professional development, English instructors, beliefs, obstacles, needs, mixed-method

İNGİLİZCE OKUTMANLARININ MESLEKİ GELİŞİM PROGRAM İNANÇLARI, ENGELLERİ VE İHTİYAÇLARI

Öz

Bu araştırmanın amacı Akdeniz Bölgesinde bulunan üç yükeköğretim kurumunda görev yapan İngilizce Okutmanlarının mesleki gelişim programlarına dair inançlarını, engelleri ve ihtiyaçlarını ortaya koymaktır. Bu bağlamda, araştırmacı tarafından kapsamlı alanyazın taraması sonucunda elde edilen bilgiler ışığında hazırlanan ölçek ve yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu kullanılmıştır. Bu araştırmada karma yöntemlerden açıklayıcı sıralı tasarım kullanılmıştır. Nicel ve nitel verilerin birleştirilmesi sonucunda araştırmaya katılan İngilizce okutmanları mesleki gelişim programlarına olan inançlarının yüksek olduğunu ve bu bağlamda mesleki gelişim programlarının öğretim becerilerini, yaklaşımlarını ve uygulamalarını geliştirmede gerekli ve faydalı olduğunu vurgulamaktadırlar. Mesleki gelişim programlarına katılımlarını engelleyen en önemli unsurun işyükü, maliyeti, ve kurumun desteklememesi olduğunu ifade etmektedirler. Mesleki gelişim ihtiyaçlarının ise ölçme ve değerlendirme, sınav geliştirme, teknloji kullanımı ve Avrupa Dilleri Ortak Çerçeve metnine yönelik olduğu görülmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: mesleki gelişim, İngilizce okutmanı, inanç, engel, ihtiyaç, karma yöntem

Introduction

The recent changes of educational policies, the new expectations of the society, the demands of the information era, and particularly recent innovations in language teaching theories and education technologies all require English instructors to be professionally developed in order to both raise the quality of teaching-learning process and prepare students for future educational and professional possibilities in an economically competitive age. The term "professional development", in a broad sense, is defined as a continuous process for personal and professional growth (Desimone et al. 2007; Glatthorn, 1995; Guskey, 2000; Igawa, 2002; Richards, 2002; Smith et al. 2005; Richards & Farrell, 2005; Thompson & Zeuli, 1999), a long-term investment in expansion of teaching skills (McDonough, 1997; Richards & Lockhart, 1995; Villegas-Reimers, 2003), and an essential mechanism for both deepening professional knowledge (Desimone, et al. 2006) and adjusting it to the needs of students (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004). In order for English instructors to adequately and effectively develop themselves professionally, establish positive mutual working relationships with colleagues, and raise improvement in educational outcomes and standards, according to Mann (2005) the most important characteristics of professional development programs of language instructors are summarised as;

• is a bottom–up process and as such can be contrasted with top–down staff development programmes,

• values the insider idea rather than the outsider idea,

• is independent of the organisation but often functioning more successfully with its support and recognition,

• is a never-ending and ongoing process,

• is a process of articulating an inner world of conscious choices made in response to the outer world of the teaching context,

• is wider than professional development and includes personal, moral and value dimensions,

• is encouraged and integrated in both training and education programmes (Mann, 2005, p. 105).

In the light of the aforementioned characteristics of professional development programs of English instructors, prior to the process of planning of professional development programs, more effective professional development programs could be accomplished when they are based on the views and needs of English instructors instead of solely their institutional preferences and decisions (Lee, 2005). In other words, English instructors' perceptions, expectations, and needs firstly have to be identified and then in line with their views and needs developing and designing professional development activities will be more appropriate and effective. Since English instructors are highly aware of their own professional strengths and weaknesses, in the process of determining the content of professional development activities the decisions and suggestions made by English instructors should basically be taken into consideration as an initial step (Evans, 1998). Likewise, according to Bubb (2005), the professional development cycle is composed of six stages: identifying and analysing needs, designing and implementing some professional development activities, monitoring them and evaluating their impacts on teachers. The first two stages play crucial roles in the specification of needs and their analysis, considering what teachers already know and are able to do. Identifying and analysing professional needs of teachers can be time consuming but the effort is worthwhile.

Planning, identifying needs and assessing effectiveness of PDPs should be done frequently, consistently and constantly over time owing to the fact that new ideas, knowledge and technological progress and practices spread rapidly over time, and it is almost impossible to follow resulting educational changes that happen around us (Kennedy 2005; Loucks-Horsley et al. 2003). Guskey (2000) assumes that teachers' needs of PD activities are quite frequently neglected, and their needs are rarely given the attention they deserve. This is mainly because teachers are not given chances to articulate their needs and interests. Thus, PD activities or programs should be designed and implemented according to the needs and dispositions of teachers in order for teachers to be able to get the utmost benefit from these activities and grow personally and professionally in a desired environment. The needs of English teachers, when the issues discussed above are taken into consideration, are expected to be determined through surveys, interviews, and other assessment instruments, and effective professional development programs could be designed based on the outcomes of data obtained through those kinds of instruments, which is importantly highlighted by Karaaslan, (2003), Alan (2003), and Ozen (1997) in their studies as well as by the statements of aforementioned researchers. Hence, this study, different from the previous studies, is carried out with the aim of identifying the beliefs of English instructors, their obstacles to taking part in professional development programs, and their professional development needs through a mixed method approach by examining such variables as gender and teaching experience.

The main purpose of this study is to both specify English instructors' beliefs about professional development programs, their obstacles to taking part in these programs, their professional development needs, and to examine whether there is a significant difference in their beliefs, obstacles, and needs about professional development programs by gender and teaching experience.

Research Questions

1- What beliefs do English instructors hold about professional development programs?

2- What are the obstacles for English instructors to participating in professional development programs?

3- What are the professional development needs of English instructors?

4- Do English instructors' beliefs, obstacles, and needs about professional development programs significantly differ by gender and teaching experience?

5- How do the qualitative data help to explain quantitative data concerning professional development beliefs, needs, and obstacles of English instructors?

Method

The use of mixed method in a single study that can be traced to the early 1980s (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003) has great popularity in recent years to provide a better understanding of research problems (Creswell, 2009). As a mixed method research, explanatory sequential mixed method design, which consists of two distinct phases, is employed in this study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Ivankova & Creswell, 2009).

In the first stage, the quantitative data were collected through the questionnaire prepared by the researcher, and were then analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics based on the results. To account for the results of quantitative data obtained via the questionnaire to the core, the researcher collected the qualitative data through employing semi-structured interview forms and then the qualitative data were analyzed by means of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) in order to be able to expound the results of the quantitative data. In this study, the quantitative and qualitative data were equally emphasized.

Quantitative Research Process

Participants

In the process of selecting the samples, two hundred and eighty-one English instructors (137 females and 144 males) working at three state universities situated in the Mediterranean region were selected for the purpose of the study by the researcher based on convenience or opportunity sampling in order to meet these rational criteria: 'geographical closeness', 'easy accessibility', and 'availability at any time' (Dörnyei, 2010).

All the English instructors in three state universities the Mediterranean Region of Turkey were recruited for the survey. Table 1 summarizes the demographic information about the participants.

Table 1: Demographic information of the participants

Variables	*F*	*%*
Gender		
Female	137	48,8
Male	144	51,2
Teaching Experience		
0-5 years	60	21,4
6-10 years	50	17,8
11-15 years	95	33,8
16-20 years	44	15,7
21- 25 years	32	11,4

Instrument

The quantitative data of this study are gathered through a professional development scale constructed by the researcher by reviewing and examining the related literature along with the existing studies (Arikan, 2002; Ekşi, 2010; Gültekin, 2007; Karaarslan, 2003) regarding professional development area. In the development of the scale, an item pool including 35 items was created based on theoretical knowledge and other research studies about English instructors' professional development. The items of the questionnaire are rated by a five-point Likert scale, ranging from five points (strongly agree) to one point (strongly disagree).

To begin with, 35 items of the questionnaire were reviewed by experts in the fields of measurement and evaluation, curriculum development, and teaching English as foreign language. These experts came to an agreement regarding the appropriateness of the items of the questionnaire. Secondly, to ensure the construct validity of this questionnaire, The SPSS software package version 13.0 was used. The Cronbach's alpha for the scale was .885, and the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the three dimensions (beliefs about professional development programs, obstacles to participating in professional development programs and professional development needs) were .794, .798 and .797, respectively, which reveals a reasonably high internal consistency (Hair et al., 1998). In the process of the appropriateness of the data for the analysis, corrected item-total correlations were performed for each item in the scale, and 6 items were eliminated as their correlation with the corrected item total was ≥ 0.25 or below. Then, the remaining items were subjected to factor analysis, and it was found that KMO = .889 and Bartlett Test = 2005.090 (p= .000), which shows the data is appropriate for factor analysis, three dimensions with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were obtained with the remaining 30 items. This resulted in a total explained variance of 53.187%. When the factor loadings of three dimensions with a total of 30 items were examined, 2 items were eliminated since the difference between the factor loadings of those items was found to be .10 (Tavşancıl, 2002), and as a result of varimax orthogonal rotation, a structure with three dimensions and 28 items was obtained. Three dimensions explained 51.712% of the total variance. However, as a result of this rotation, one item with a factor loading below .30 (Hair et al., 1998) was eliminated, and finally a scale with a total of 26 items was obtained. As a result of factor analysis, the scale explained 50.954% of total variance and the percentage of variance explained by each dimension was 18.141%, 15.241% and 13.814%, respectively. Factor loadings for the items range between .703 and .476 for the first

dimension, between .700 and .403 for the second dimension, and between .750 and .444 for the third dimension. The KMO value was calculated to be .890, and the result for Bartlett test of sphericity was 1593.194 and p = .000 (p<0.001). In the current study, KMO value and Bartlett's sphericity test result were found to be significant, meaning that exploratory factor analysis could be conducted for the scale according to Jeong (2004) who points out that Bartlett's sphericity test results are statistically significant when KMO value is .60 or above.

Data Collection

The data collection process through the questionnaire took place approximately 5 months (from 1st February to 30th June, 2016). First, the researcher contacted the department directors of the selected state universities in the region by making a phone call for the permission of this study. After getting requried permissions , the researcher went to each of the selected state university to distribute the questionnaires to the participants. The researcher informed the participants about the research questionnaire, gave directions how they should fill in the forms, and gave some explanations concerning the procedures.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the quantitative data of this study SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 13 was employed for the first, second, and the third research questions. As for the fourth research question, One-Way ANOVA analysis was carried out to find out if English instructors' beliefs, obstacles, and needs about professional development programs significantly differ by gender and teaching experience. $P < 0.05$ is used as a statistical significance criterion for this study. For the last research question, the researcher tried to account for the quantitative data of the study through triangulation that assures the validation of quantitative data by using a one of qualitative research methods as semi-interview form for the interviews.

Qualitative Research Process

Participants

Prior to collecting qualitative data of this study based on the mixed-methods sequential explanatory design (Creswell et al. 2003), the researcher first of all collected and analyzed the quantitative data. In the light of the quantitative data analysis, among three state universities five experienced and five novice English instructors were opted for semi-structured interviews by the researcher in line with maximum variation sampling based on the principle of maximum diversity of interviewees (Dörnyei, 2007) in order to explain the results of quantitative data and have accurate and invalauble understanding in relation to the results of quantitative data of this study (Kajornboon, 2005; Gillham, 2000). The interviews with total 30 English instructors from three state universities were conducted based on three dimensions as a) exploring English instructors' beliefs about professional development programs; b) exploring obstacles to participating in professional development programs; and c) exploring professional development needs. In the process of data collection, all of the participants volunteered to take part in this study. For the purposes of confidentiality, a code name was assigned to each of the participants (P1, P2, P3 etc.). For the interviews at each university the offices of English instructors were preferred. The researcher interviewed each participant for about 15 to 20 minutes by using a tape recorder.

Data Analysis

The transcripts of the interviews were analysed using thematic analysis, which is regarded as a way of identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Quersteret and Robinson, 2012). For the thematic analysis of the data, initially the audio-recorded responses obtained through interviews with the participants were typed as separate texts in MS Office word-for-word, and then each text was carefully analyzed sentence by sentence in order to identify English instructors' beliefs and views about professional development programs and the obstacles that hinder them from participating professional development activities. Secondly, the data were coded by dividing and labelling and then the codes were analysed and gathered to form themes. The themes were constructed on the basis of inductive content analysis, enabling the researcher to identify key themes in the area of professional development as a set of themes or categories. For the accuracy of the qualitative data set, all of the responses in the text format were evaluated and analyzed twice. In addition to the researcher of this study as the first coder, a second trained coder expert in doing content analysis in social sciences performed an independent coding process by working on all interview transcripts. At the end of the coding process, after the comparison and discrepancies were discussed, the level of intra-coder consistency was found to be sufficient (.84 for rater 1 and .82 for rater 2).

Findings

Quantitative Findings

Q.1: What beliefs do English instructors hold about professional development programs?

Descriptive statistics are used to address the first research question, providing mean and standard deviations.

Table 2. Participants' beliefs about professional development programs

Items	Mean	SD
I believe professional development programs help me advance my teaching skills	4.13	0.71
I believe professional development programs help me develop my teaching competences	4.09	0.98
I believe professional development programs hep me review my teaching methods	4.08	0.8
I believe professional development programs meet my teaching needs and expectations	4.04	0.94
I believe professional development programs help me gain practical and useful information	4.01	0.89
I believe professional development programs help me increase my self-confidence in teaching	3.89	1.00

For the first research question, the highest and the lowest mean scores of items belonging to the first part of the questionnaire about English instructors' beliefs in professional development programs are displayed in Table 2 below. The mean scores for each statement vary between

3.89 and 4.13 for the first research question seeking to specify their beliefs about professional development programs, which means that the participants not only deeply believe in professional development programs but also have highly positive attitudes towards them.

Q.2: What are the obstacles for English instructors to participating in professional development programs?

Descriptive statistics including means and standard deviations were used to address the second research question.

Table 3. Participants' beliefs about obstacles to participating in professional development programs

Items	*Mean*	*SD*
I believe workload hinders me from participating in professional development activities	4.49	0.61
I believe cost hinders me from participating in professional development activities	4.28	0.68
I believe lack of institutional support hinders me from participating in professional development activities.	4.18	0.61
I believe inconvenient place hinders me from participating in professional development activities.	3.48	1.20
I believe inconvenient date/time hinders me from participating in professional development activities.	3.21	1.33
I believe unrealistic content hinders me from participating in professional development activities.	2.66	1.37
I believe lack of self-motivation hinders me from participating in professional development activities.	2.35	1.01

As Table 3 illustrates, the mean of each category reported shows that English instructors face obstacles to taking part in professional development activities. The most challenging difficulties that the participants report are "workload" (M=4.49), followed by "cost" (M=4.28) and "lack of institutional support" (M=4.18).

Q.3: What are English instructors' professional development needs?

As regards the third research question investigating English instructors' professional development needs, the descriptive statistics are employed.

Table 4. Participants' beliefs about professional development needs

Items	*Mean*	*SD*
I believe I need to improve my teaching skills in assessment and evaluation	4.46	0.64
I believe I need to improve my teaching skills in test development	4.40	0.78
I believe I need to improve my teaching skills in technology use	4.21	1.03
I believe I need to improve my teaching skills in common European framework of reference for languages (CEFR)	4.04	0.97
I believe I need to improve my teaching skills in new approaches & methods	3.88	1.01
I believe I need to improve my teaching skills in teaching integrated skills	2.96	1.08
I believe I need to improve my teaching skills in drama in teaching English	2.96	1.22
I believe I need to improve my teaching skills in giving feedback	2.87	1.20
I believe I need to improve my teaching skills in examination-oriented teaching	2.86	1.10
I believe I need to improve my teaching skills in material development	2.76	1.03
I believe I need to improve my teaching skills in content and language integrated learning (CLIL)	2.72	1.27
I believe I need to improve my teaching skills in increasing learners' motivation	2.36	1.00
I believe I need to improve my teaching skills in English for specific purposes (ESP)	2.22	1.22

Table 4 demonstrates the degree of the participants' professional development needs in descending order. The findings show that "assessment and evaluation" (M=4.46) together with "test development" (M=4.40), "technology use" (M=4.21), "common European framework of reference for languages (CEFR)" (M=4.04), and "new approaches & methods" (M=3.88) have the highest mean scores.

Q.4: Do English instructors' beliefs, obstacles, and needs about professional development programs significantly differ by gender and teaching experience?

With relation to the fourth research question examining whether English instructors' beliefs, obstacles, and needs about professional development programs are statistically different according to gender and teaching experience, inferential data analysis is presented in the following tables.

Table 5. Participants' perceptions of professional development programs by gender

		Group Statistics			t-test		
Variables	**Gender**	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**t**	**df**	**Sig.(two-tailed)**
Professional development beliefs	Female	137	40.54	.456	.386	.279	.700
	Male	144	40.33	.463			
Professional development obstacles	Female	137	36.28	.521	.534	.279	.594
	Male	144	35.97	.463			
Professional development needs	Female	137	30.27	.567	.640	.279	.523
	Male	144	29.85	.530			

*Significant at 0.05 level

As a result of the descriptive analysis, it was found out that there were slight differences in the mean scores of males and females regarding the perceptions of participants about professional development programs in the study. Table 5 displayed that females had higher mean scores for professional development beliefs, obstacles to taking part in professional development and professional development needs dimensions. However, it was revealed that there was statistically no significant difference between female (N=137) and male (N=144) participants in terms of independent-samples t-test.

In order to analyze whether there exist statistical differences between participants in relation to their teaching experience, One-way ANOVA test was run. The results of the test show that there are statically differences among the participants only in terms of teaching experience.

Table 6. Participants' beliefs in professional development programs in respect to teaching experience

		Group Statistics			ANOVA		
Variables	**Teaching Experience**	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**df**		**Sig.**
Professional development beliefs	0-5 years	60	41.50	.434			
	6-10 years	50	38.33	.619			
	11-15 years	95	40.12	.407	4;276	5.575	**.000**
	16-20 years	44	40.53	.385			
	21-25 years	32	42.55	.296			
Professional development obstacles	0-5 years	60	36.06	.543			
	6-10 years	50	34.00	.583			
	11-15 years	95	36.56	.457	4;276	3.448	**.009**

	16-20 years	44	36.61	.433		
	21-25 years	32	37.57	.299		
Professional development needs	0-5 years	60	31.30	.518		
	6-10 years	50	29.67	.635		
	11-15 years	95	29.74	.543	4;276	1.007	.404
	16-20 years	44	29.86	.541		
	21-25 years	32	29.51	.471		

*Significant at 0.05 level

According to One-way ANOVA results, in professional development beliefs, F (4,276) = 5.575, p=0.000, p<0.05, and professional development obstacles, F (4,276= 3.448, p=0.009, p< 0.05 dimensions, statistically significant differences were found out in respect to teaching experience. However, as is seen in Table 6, there was no significant difference among the participants concerning their teaching experience in the needs of professional development need dimension, F (4,276= 1.007, p=0.404, p> 0.05.

Table 7. Post hoc test for participants' beliefs in professional development programs with regard to teaching experience

Tukey's HSD

Multiple Comparisons

Variables	**(I) Teaching Experience**	**(J) Teaching Experience**	**Mean Difference (I-J)**	**Std. Error**	**Sig.**
Professional development beliefs	1	2	.31	.85	**.002***
		3	.13	.73	.333
		4	.09	.88	.808
		5	-.10	.97	.817
	2	1	-.31	.85	**.002***
		3	-.17	.77	.148
		4	-.21	.92	.122
		5	-.42	.10	**.000***
	3	1	-.13	.73	.333
		2	.17	.77	.148
		4	-.04	.81	.987
		5	-.24	.91	.061
	4	1	-.96	.88	.808
		2	.21	.92	.122
		3	.40	.81	.987
		5	-.20	.10	.291
	5	1	.10	.97	.817
		2	.42	.10	**.000***

		3	.24	.91	.061
		4	.20	.10	.291
Professional development obstacles	1	2	.20	.92	.173
		3	-.50	.79	.970
		4	-.55	.96	.978
		5	-.15	.10	.608
	2	1	-.20	.92	.173
		3	-.25	.84	**.022***
		4	-.26	.10	.070
		5	-.35	.10	**.011**
	3	1	.50	.79	.970
		2	.25	.84	**.022***
		4	-.005	.88	1.00
		5	-.10	.98	.844
	4	1	.50	.96	.978
		2	.26	.10	.070
		3	.005	.88	1.00
		5	-.95	.11	.914
	5	1	.15	.10	.608
		2	.35	.10	**.011***
		3	.10	.98	.084
Professional development needs	1	2	.16	.10	.529
		3	.15	.09	.421
		4	.14	.10	.672
		5	.17	.12	.570
	2	1	-.16	.10	.529
		3	-.007	.09	1.00
		4	-.01	.11	1.00
		5	.01	.12	1.00
	3	1	-.15	.09	.421
		2	.007	.09	1.00
		4	-.01	.09	1.00
		5	.02	.11	1.00
	4	1	-.14	.10	.672
		2	.01	.11	1.00
		3	.01	.09	1.00
		5	.03	.12	.999
	5	1	-.17	.12	.570
		2	-.01	.12	1.00
		3	-.02	.11	1.00
		4	-.03	.12	.999

*Significant at 0.05 level

By the same token, after the assumption of homogeneity of variance was tested through Levene's Test, Tukey's post-hoc test was run to determine exactly where the significant differences exist. It was revealed that the differences existed between '0-5 years' group and '6-10 years' group in the dimension of professional development beliefs while '21-25 years' and '6-10 years' groups differed significantly in the dimension of obstacles to professional development. This means that English instructors with less years of teaching experience reported more positive and favorable perceptions and beliefs about professional development programs than more experienced English teachers. Additionally, it is understood that English instructors having more teaching experienced expressed more obstacles to partaking in professional development programs than English instructors with less years of teaching experience because of the fact that the more English instructors are experienced, the more they become aware of obstacles in front of their professional development process. There is no significant difference among the groups according to teaching experience in the dimensions of professional development needs.

Whether there exist statistically significant differences with regards to English instructors' beliefs, obstacles, and needs about professional development programs according to their gender and years of teaching experience is discussed in a detailed manner below. As a consequence of the independent-samples t-test, no statistically significant difference between female (N=137) and male (N=144) English instructors was found because of the fact that the p-value belonging to the variables was greater. Nevertheless, the consequences of the analysis of group statistics showed that there was a slight difference between males and females in terms of three dimensions displayed in Table 5.

Female teachers had higher mean scores for the dimensions of professional development beliefs, obstacles to taking part in professional development and professional development needs dimensions. The percentage and mean scores revealed that English instructors generally hold positive perceptions and beliefs about professional development programs. Nevertheless, according to t-test and One-way ANOVA test results it was revealed that there was no significant difference among the participants in the dimensions of professional development needs in relation to their gender and years of experience, which may be referred to the fact that all of the English instructors agree that they all are in need of professional activities regardless of gender and years of experience.

Qualitative Findings

Q.1: What beliefs do English instructors hold about professional development programs?

To develop deeper understanding with regard to English instructors' beliefs, obstacles, and needs concerning professional development programs, the researcher performed interviews with the participants of this study. In line with the responses of interviewees, the themes and subthemes constructed by the researcher are discussed below. Based on the qualitative data analysis, a main theme (academic and personal growth) with the following sub-themes were emerged as (a) teaching skills and competence, (b) teaching practices, (c) methodological tactics and strategies.

Academic and Personal Growth

The general consensus among interviewees was that professional development activities are a must to be able to carry out teaching deeds as well as mastering some teaching skills and competence. From their point of views, professional development activities enable them to develop

personally and professionally. For example, one of the interviewees vocalized some ideas by highlighting the necessity and vitality of professional development activities in the following statements:

"I certainly have the idea that professional development programs help me to improve and advance my teaching skills and competences, that's why they are a part of the academic and personal growth of all instructors intending to educate students well and properly" (P1, P3, P14, P30…).

One of the other interviewees also emphasized the importance and necessity of professional development activities:

"A few years ago, I participated in some of these activities, which actually enabled me to endorse my teaching competence in writing and speaking skills. After that, I thought that I should follow these kinds of activities and programs regularly, which would help me to grow academically and personally" (P30, P12, P1, P15, P17…).

Teaching Practices

Most of the interviewees held the belief that professional development activities help them to reconsider their teaching practices and approaches. They thought that professional development activities play a crucial role in revising and questioning their own teaching pedagogies. For instance, one of the interviewees said: "What I learned from these activities was the belief that they really widen my viewpoint concerning teaching foreign language skills thoroughly, and I got the impression that these programs could assist me in updating and rethinking my teaching process in the classroom when I was with students" (P4, P5, P9, P21, P25, P10…).

Another interviewee also mentioned: "After taking part in some of these professional development programs, I began to question firstly what I had been doing in the classroom in the process of teaching, then I started to ponder over how much I was capable of teaching" (P6, P14, 18, P29, P28, P21, P22…).

Additionally, some of the interviewees assumed that professional development activities open an invaluable door to postgraduate education. For example, one of the other interviewees said: "I believe that professional development programs are all really necessary and vital activities helping all of us to have a look at our practices in classroom and open doors into the academic world. In other words, these are the initial steps of MA and PhD educations, I think" (P18, P11, P2, P3, P4, P16…).

Methodological Tactics and Strategies

Most of the interviewees asserted that professional development programs enable them to obtain some beneficial and applicable strategies. One of the interviewees told: "I think that as long as I take part in professional development programs, they meet my professional needs by providing me with useful and practical tactics and strategies along with the knowledge I need in reshaping my academic life" (P13, P6, P8, P9, P21, P22, P23…).

Moreover, a large group of interviewees in the study claimed that taking part in professional development programs makes them feel comfortable when they are in the classroom with students. For example, a participant expressed: "After professional development activities, I really feel highly motivated to do my best for my students. Also, I feel that they make me very relaxed about performing my profession in the classroom because of the fact that gains such as tactics

and strategies from activities help me feel secured in my academic life" (P17, P4, P11, P12, P22, P21, P14…).

Another interviewee in the study pointed out: "Thanks to the professional development programs, I could obtain very simple but important strategies and tactics in order for me to employ while teaching skills to the students in the lesson, so in my opinion they are an indispensable part of our, English instructors, professional life" (P29, P28, P22, P20, P25, P26…).

Q.2: What are the obstacles for English instructors to participating in professional development programs?

Based on the analysis of qualitative data, three main themes emerged: the obstacles caused (1) by workload and duties, (2) by the cost of PDPs, (3) lack of institutional support, (4) inconvenience of PDPs.

Workload and Duties

The majority of the interviewees in the study reproached their institutions with the burdens they put their shoulders by stating "Apart from the lectures we have to give, our other responsibilities and some work we are expected to do in the units of our institutions, all these things, prevent us from following professional development programs and taking part in those activities regularly" (P30, P21, P12, P11, P10…).

Similarly, a large group of the interviewees complained about having different responsibilities by saying that "we have to take over some responsibilities about some projects and other language courses going on in my institution, which means sparing much time to these different responsibilities as well as our initial responsibility, delivering a lecture" (P27, P28, P12, P13, P30…)

Most of the interviewees in the study highlighted one of the other important factors that impede them to join in such professional activities by vocalising the following ideas "The syllabus most of us have really keeps us from thinking of participating in such kinds of activities due to the fact that our taking part in an activity is likely to create some institutional problems" (P15, P12, P18, P19, P21…)

Besides, another interviewee stated "What keeps me away from partaking in those professional development activities is the reality that I have a very busy schedule like my other friends. Therefore, without a rearrangement about our busy weekly schedules, unfortunately it is now impossible for us to join those activities" (P10, P12, P13, P14, P17…).

The Cost of PDPs

One of the obstacles encountered by the interviewees in the study is financial dimension of partaking in professional development activities. Some of the participants mentioned that "Generally, the participation in professional development activities could not be very affordable. From our perspective, English instructors' taking part in professional development programs should financially be supported by the institutions so that we can improve ourselves without thinking its financial dimension" (P11, P18, P19, P23, P29…). Similarly, a few of the interviewees expressed that "One of their worries about attending a professional development program is directly related to the fact that participation fee and expenses such as accommodation and travel are always higher than is expected. That's why, we are not able to partake in those activities all the time" (P22, P24, P27, P28, P28, P30…).

Lack of Institutional Support

A large group of interviewees think that they should be endorsed by the institutions they work for. One of the participants articulated that "Actually, I am supposed to be supported by the institutions we work for in order that we can improve ourselves academically and personally" (P5, P6, P7, P9, P11, P12, P14…) Moreover, one of the other interviewees expressed "Frankly speaking, our institutions tend not to allow us to partake in activities held in other cities or countries. They do not give us support about those programs institutionally" (P17, P18, P21, P22, P24…).

Convenience of PDPs

Some of the interviewees of the study criticised inconvenience of professional development activities with respect to location and time. One of the participants signified the situation by saying "In fact, I want to follow most of the professional development programs as a listener, but as we know, the place and time of these activities could coincide with my busy schedule. In the same vein over the same issue, one of the other interviewees stated that "If the time and place of them were suitable, I would be able to partake in them in any circumstances" (P19, P21, P22, P23, P30…). Besides, another interviewee said that "Sometimes the distance between the institution I work and cities where professional development activities are held is the real obstacle along with the improper time and place issues" (P3, P4, P5, P8, P18…).

Q.3: What are the professional development needs of English instructors?

In line with the qualitative data analysis, five main themes as the need for assessment and evaluation procedures, test development procedures, technology use, the CEFR, new approaches and methods were emerged.

The Need for Assessment and Evaluation

Most of the interviewees reported that they really feel themselves very incompetent at doing specifically summative and formative evaluation. One of the interviewees in the study highlighted the situation by expressing "Actually, in our institution we have no adequate specialists or resources such as books for some practical in-classroom activities oriented to assess learners correctly. I want to be more competent and have the adequate knowledge that is needed for the procedures in the process of assessing and evaluating learners" (P7, P8, P9, P17, P19…). Similarly, another interviewee addressed the same issue by uttering "In order to assess students' performance activities, homework, and assignments correctly, I think that I am in need of more academic knowledge on evaluation because I reckon that I am not very knowledgeable about the principles of assessment and evaluation processes" (P7, P8, P11, P14, P15…).

The Need for Test Development

From the interviews with the participants, it is understood that all the instructors taken part in the study should be in need of professional assistance to prepare correct tests and test items. Over this issue one of the interviewees stated that "For years, we have been preparing all sorts of exam questions especially multiple choice one in our testing unit, but I assume that I am in need of professional and academic support about preparing, I mean, writing items for exams" (P15, P18, P19, P30…). Similarly, another interviewee said that "To be able to prepare questions for exams including reading, writing, listening, and speaking is really a difficult and chal-

lenging process for me and my colleagues. That's why, I prefer to use exams and questions prepared by others" (P16, P18, P20, P22, P24…).

Besides one of the interviewees raised the same issue by declaring "I find it really difficult to write grammar and vocabulary questions when it comes to preparing questions for proficiency exams because of the fact that I have no idea which grammar subjects and words I should include for the exam, and how to write questions for the chosen grammar subject and words" (P14, P18, P21, P22, P29…).

The Need for Technology Use

Based on the interviews with the participants, it is understood that almost all of the participants are not highly capable of integrating technology with their teaching One of the interviewees uttered "As far as I am concerned technology is one of the important component that should be integrated into teaching specifically teaching English; however, as an instructor I do not believe that I can use it effectively in my classroom because of my lack of knowledge about it" (P11, P12, P21, P24…)

Additionally, another interviewee supported the idea of integrating technology with language teaching by underlining "I know that technology integrated classrooms are really more enjoyable as I have observed this situation in my classrooms for a quite long time; nevertheless, my using technology is limited to its very basic features because of the fact that I do not know how to use more comprehensively and effectively" (P15, P16, P17, P18, P19…). Similarly, the same issue was raised by one of the interviewees stating "Integrating technology into teaching English is both necessary for teachers and learners as it really empowers and facilitates the learning-teaching process, but lack of knowledge concerning how to unite them is one of the important issues for all us" (P2, P4, P11, P12, P13…).

The Need for the CEFR

It is thought by some of the interviews that the CEFR is not very easy to figure out. One of the interviewees expressed that "I see the CEFR document as one of the reference book for all of the foreign language teachers around the world. As it is very extensive and theoretical reference source, it is very difficult to grasp it and obtain some practical ideas from it" (P11, P12, P15, P18, P19…). Similarly, another interviewee articulated the similar ideas by discussing "Actually, I have heard that the CEFR contains very useful and important teaching principles about curriculum design, language skills and testing generally; yet, I do not have deep knowledge about how to use it" (P12, P14, P18, P21…).

The Need for New Approaches and Methods

From nearly most of the interviewees' point of view, it is difficult how to apply newly emerged approaches and methods to classroom-settings. For example, one of the interviewees stated that "I am of the opinion that there are lots of new approaches and methods that could contribute greatly to our classrooms such as project-based learning, brain-based learning, scenario-based learning and so on. Yet, I am not competent how to use these new things in my classroom" (P7, P15, P18, P19, P21…). Over the same issue another interviewee expressed that "Day by day, there emerge new approaches and methods concerning language teaching, which is essential key to facilitating teaching and learning process. For me, it is almost impossible to implement these new methods as I am entirely unaware of practical and in-class applications of them" (P11, P15, P21, P25, P30…).

Integration of Mixed Methods

Q.5: How do the qualitative data help to explain quantitative data concerning professional development beliefs, needs, and obstacles of English instructors?

In the light of the sequential explanatory design, subsequent to quantitative data analysis in the first phase of this study, which guides the data collection in the second phase the researcher selected the participants for the qualitative analysis based on the results from the first phase with the aim of connecting the two phases. Thus, by dint of the combination of results from both phases the researcher tried to develop a more robust and meaningful picture of the research problem in Table 8. Table 8 displays the alignment of the quantitative results with the qualitative findings.. Based on the results of the first three research questions, the integrated analysis for the final research question was carried out related to instructors' beliefs, barriers and needs regarding PDPs.

Table 8. Mixing quantitative and qualitative data

Quantitative Results	Qualitative Findings	Mixed Methods Integration
Beliefs about PDPs		
1) Advance teaching skills (*M*=4.13)	PDPs are important to support teaching skills	Mixed methods presented a more accurate and robust picture of research questions in this study
2) Develop teaching competences (*M*=4.09)	PDPs are considered to endorse competences	
3) Review teaching methods (*M*=4.08)	PDPs help to update and rethink teaching process	
4) Meet needs and expectations (*M*=4.04)	PDPs are vital activities and incentives for academic life	
5) Help gain practical and useful information (*M*=4.01)	PDPs provide practical and useful tactics and strategies	
Barriers to Participating in PDPs		
1) Workload (M=4.49)	Workload and institutional duties are one of the most important osbtacles	The use of mixed methods shed clear cut light on bariers that they encounter
2) Cost (M=4.28)	The cost of PDPs could mostly be one of the impeding factors for instructors	
3) Institutional support (M=4.18)	Institutions do not act responsibly to the professional needs of instructors	
4) Inconvenience of PDPs (M=3.48)	Convenience of PDSs in terms of place and time is	

crucial for instructors

Professional Development Needs		
1) Assessment and evaluation (M=4.46)	Instructors see themselves unqualified	The use of mixed methods for assessment and evaluation procedures shed invaluable and more accurate light on specifying PDP needs of them
2) Test development (M=4.40)	Instructors are in need of constructing tests and items	
3) Technology use (M=4.21)	Instructors are incompetent at integrating technology with language teaching	
4) Common European framework of reference for languages (M=4.04)	Instructors have no mastery of employing the CEFR properly and effectively	
5) Use of New approaches and methods (M=3.88)	Instructors have no adequate information on how to apply new approaches and methods	

Discussion and Results

The findings obtained from qualitative and quantitative data in this study are discussed here to find answers to the research questions. When it comes to the first research question, the mean scores reveal that English teachers believe that PDPs are sine qua non and an indispensable part of professional growth process. Besides, they hold the views that PDPs help them to foster teaching skills and competence, go through methods, tactics, and strategies. The results of qualitative data also support the findings of quantitative analyses of English teachers' beliefs in PDPs in that they view professional development activities as a way of reaching personal and academic growth and maturity. For example, one of the interviewees voiced some ideas by emphasising the necessity and vitality of professional development activities in the following statements:

"I certainly have the idea that professional development programs help me to improve and advance my teaching skills and competences, that's why they are a part of the academic and personal growth of all instructors intending to educate students well and properly" (P1).

They also regard those activities as a way of rethinking what they have been doing in classroom-settings and initiative for gaining some new tactics and strategies that they are able to get benefitted from in the process of teaching. Most of the interviewees in the study claimed that professional development programs enable them to obtain some helpful and practical strategies. For instance, one of the interviewees told:

"I think that as long as I take part in professional development programs, they meet my professional needs by providing me with useful and practical tactics and strategies along with the knowledge I need in reshaping my academic life" (P13).

These integrated findings of the qualitative and quantitative data are in line with the studies (Daloğlu, 2004; Gültekin, 2007; Hişmanoğlu, 2010; Korkmazgil & Seferoğlu, 2013) underlining the fact that PDP activities are essential, helpful, and crucial for professional development. Similarly, the findings of this study are consistent with the study carried out by Özbilgin et. al (2016). They found out that teachers are hungry for PDPs and keen to progress their practice to serve better to their students. In a study to investigate the perceptions of experienced and novice teachers about professional development activities, it was concluded that professional development activities are necessary and useful (Mahmoudia & Özkan, 2015). In another study questioning the perceptions of teachers concerning professional development activities, the participants considered these activities valuable (Alan, 2003). Furthermore, based on the integrated findings of the current study, it is thought that PDPs answer the needs of English teachers and provide them with practical and useful information in order for them to employ in classroom-settings. This result is consistent with the studies of Lee (2015). According to Lee, professional development activities should be centred on the practicality as a vital issue since the majority of the participants in the study regarded PDP activities as a way of gaining practical and pedagogical knowledge, acquisition of teacher resources and improvement of teaching in general.

According to the qualitative and qualitative research findings of second research question seeking to find answers to the obstacles that impede English instructors to partake in PDPs, English instructors reported the most important obstacles as workload and some other duties, cost of PDPs, lack of institutional support and inconvenience of PDPs in terms of time and place. In a study, Ozen (1997) discussed that some of the teachers could not develop themselves professionally by highlighting some constraints such as cost, workload, and inaccessible relevant programs. In terms of significant barriers to professional development, excessive workload is seen as a deterrent factor, which is supported by the contentions of the following researchers (Çelik et. al, 2012; Nyarigoti, 2013; Özmusul, 2011; Wall, 2008; Wichadee, 2012). According to Wichadee (2012), the most important obstacles to professional development such as heavy teaching loads and some assignments both affect the effectiveness of university teachers and prevent them from undertaking professional development activities. In the same study, 67,3% of the participants regarded heavy teaching load as the most significant obstacles, and 60,8% of them articulated that a great deal of assigned work is a burden for them, which draws thorough parallelism with the findings of the current study.

In line with the findings of the current study, Celik et. al (2013) stressed that excessive workload and lack of monetary incentives are the two factors that hinder English instructors' professional development. Likewise, many studies indicated workload is a common critical factor that teachers encounter in the process of professional development (Carney, 2003). Heavy workload is considered as a common problem that discourages teachers from participating in PDPs in hectic professional life (Day & Gu, 2010). In consistent with the current study in the study of Wall (2008) it was emphasised that time and money are the two barriers that the participants uttered because English teachers should allocate some special time for PD activities, and professional development comes at a high personal cost to English teachers. Additionally, according to Korkmazgil & Seferoglu (2013) the most significant obstacles are heavy teaching loads, a great deal of assigned work, insufficient budget, and lack of institutional support that affect personal and professional development of English instructors. Actually, in the process of enhancing the qualities of instructors educational settings and environments are to be redesigned

through the planning and creation of professional and educational activities and projects in order for instructors to endorse their academic, social and cultural development (Aydın & Kaya, 2017).

The findings of qualitative data are in conformity with the findings of quantitative data analysis concerning the aforementioned obstacles. For instance, regarding one of the most important obstacles namely, heavy workload and duties most of the interviewees criticise their institutions by stating "Apart from the lectures we have to give, our other responsibilities and some work we are expected to do in the units of our institutions, all these things, prevent us from following professional development programs and taking part in those activities regularly" (P30).

Similarly, another interviewee in the study underlined heavy workload by vocalising the following views "The syllabus most of us have really keeps us from thinking of participating in such kinds of activities due to the fact that our taking part in an activity is likely to create some institutional problems" (P15). When it comes to the cost of PDPs, some of the participants mentioned that "Generally, the participation in professional development activities could not be very affordable. From our perspective, English instructors' taking part in professional development programs should financially be supported by the institutions so that we can improve ourselves without thinking its financial dimension" (P23).

Moreover, one of the other interviewees expressed "Frankly speaking, our institutions tend not to allow us to partake in activities held in other cities or countries. They do not give us support about those programs institutionally" (P17). In addition to this, some of the interviewees of the study criticised inconvenience of professional development activities with respect to location and time. One of the participants signified the situation by saying "In fact, I want to follow most of the professional development programs as a listener, but as we know, the place and time of these activities could coincide with my busy schedule. In the same vein over the same issue, one of the other interviewees stated that "If the time and place of them were suitable, I would be able to partake in them in any circumstances" (P19).

In the light of the qualitative and quantitative data, the findings based on the third research question seeking to specify PDP needs of English instructors show that English instructors are mostly in need of personal and professional development within the scope of assessment and evaluation, test development, technology use, the CEFR, and new approaches and methods. These quantitative findings draw a close parallelism with the findings obtained from the interviews carried out with the participants of the study. For example, as regards assessment and evaluation procedures most of the interviewees reported that they really feel themselves very incompetent at doing specifically summative and formative evaluation. One of the interviewees in the study highlighted the situation by expressing "Actually, in our institution we have no adequate specialists or resources such as books for some practical in-classroom activities oriented to assess learners correctly. I want to be more competent and have the adequate knowledge that is needed for the procedures in the process of assessing and evaluating learners" (P19). Similarly, another interviewee addressed the same issue by uttering "In order to assess students' performance activities, homework, and assignments correctly, I think that I am in need of more academic knowledge on evaluation because I reckon that I am not very knowledgeable about the principles of assessment and evaluation processes" (P7).

As for test development procedures based on the analysis of qualitative data, it is understood that all the instructors taken part in the study are in need of professional assistance to prepare correct tests and test items. Over this issue one of the interviewees stated that "For years, we have been preparing all sorts of exam questions especially multiple choice one in our testing unit, but I assume that I am in need of professional and academic support about preparing, I mean, writing items for exams" (P30) Similarly, another interviewee said that "To be able to prepare questions for exams including reading, writing, listening, and speaking is really a difficult and challenging process for me and my colleagues. That's why, I prefer to use exams and questions prepared by others" (P16).

Furthermore, it is clearly seen that almost all of the participants are not highly capable of integrating technology with their teaching One of the interviewees uttered "As far as I am concerned technology is one of the important component that should be integrated into teaching specifically teaching English; however, as an instructor I do not believe that I can use it effectively in my classroom because of my lack of knowledge about it" (P24)

The interviewees in the study underlined the fact that the CEFR is vital but not very easy to figure out. One of the interviewees raised this issue by expressing "I see the CEFR document as one of the reference book for all of the foreign language teachers around the world. As it is very extensive and theoretical reference source, it is very difficult to grasp it and obtain some practical ideas from it" (P19). Also, another interviewee articulated the similar ideas by discussing "Actually, I have heard that the CEFR contains very useful and important teaching principles about curriculum design, language skills and testing generally; yet, I do not have deep knowledge about how to use it" (P21). As a final point the interviewees in the study lay emphasis on the need for competence of new approaches and methods. It is found out that from nearly most of the interviewees' point of view, it is difficult how to apply newly emerged approaches and methods to classroom-settings. For example, one of the interviewees stated that "I am of the opinion that there are lots of new approaches and methods that could contribute greatly to our classrooms such as project-based learning, brain-based learning, scenario-based learning and so on. Yet, I am not competent how to use these new things in my classroom" (P7).

As a result of the investigation of the related national and international literature, of all the studies reached by the researcher many studies regarding the need analysis of English language teachers bear similarities to the both qualitative and quantitative findings of this study. For example, in a study Özen (1997) reveals that materials preparation, assessment, testing, curriculum design and development, classroom management, methodology, and giving feedback are among the preferences of teachers. Similarly, (Khandehroo et al., 2011) seeking to determine professional development needs of English language teachers, it was found out that language skills, awareness of target culture or multi-cultural education, assessing students, classroom management, and lesson planning are considered to be the most important necessities by the English teachers. One of the studies questioning the needs of English teachers about professional development programs is inconsistent with the findings of this study in that it underlines the fact that testing techniques do not receive due credit from teachers (Büyükyavuz & İnal, 2008). Instead, nearly half of the participants regard professional development as the most important issue and the need for them. Another study looking into how EFL teachers perceive professional development and what they need stresses that English teachers are in need of development in teaching methodology, test preparation, material preparation, and the use of technology (Alibakhshi & Dehvari, 2015).

This study aimed to present English instructors' beliefs, obstacles and needs concerning professional development programs. The results of self-report questionnaires showed that English instructors consider PDPs as important, incentive for academic life, practical and useful for new teaching tactics and strategies. Besides, they think professional development programs help them to improve their teaching skills and competence, revise their teaching methods, and obtain some beneficial knowledge for application in the classroom. It is also stated that mainly workload, cost of PDPs, lack of institutional support, and inconvenience of PDPs in terms of time and place are the most crucial obstacles that impede English instructors regarding their participation in professional development programs. As for the needs of English instructors as regards professional development programs, it is reported that they fundamentally desire to gain professional knowledge about assessment and evaluation as they regard themselves not competent and qualified to carry out the procedures of assessment and evaluation. Moreover, they stressed that they need to have a good command of designing and constructing tests and test items. As a result of myriad advances in technology and its integration with language teaching, naturally a growing interest in technology use in language teaching especially in ELT has aroused. In the same vein, English instructors in this study expressed the vitality of integration of technology into language teaching. In addition to this, they also verbalized the importance and necessity of new approaches and methods such as the CEFR by underling the fact that they really have no mastery of employing those approaches properly and effective in the classroom settings.

In this study, the data were collected through a questionnaire and semi-structured interview form developed by the researcher from English instructors at tertiary level. In further studies, different data collection methods and tools could be employed to get very clear-cut responses for the situation. Besides, a longitudinal study based on the collaboration between The Council of Higher Education and The Ministry of Education could possibly shed exhaustive light on identifying English instructors' expectations, perceptions, obstacles, and needs regarding professional development programs.

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