Abstract

This study aims to determine the perceptions of the English language teachers in Turkey towards self-initiated professional development, professional development activities and some possible factors that can hinder professional development of them as well as comparing the perceptions of novice and experienced teachers towards these three issues. With this aim, a survey research which is a quantitative research method was employed. A questionnaire was adopted and administered to 70 English language instructors. Among them, 34 teachers are experienced and 36 are novice teachers having experience of teaching less than 3 years. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and independent samples t-test. The findings of this study revealed that most of the teachers agreed on the aspects of self-initiated professional development. However, there are few differences between the perceptions of novice and experienced teachers towards this issue like teachers’ taking the action for their own professional development and keeping themselves updated with changes in ELT. As for the professional activities, most of them nearly agreed on the importance of these activities except for some differences between the novice and experienced teachers in terms of observation of classroom events by heads and administrators and following research literature on own field and peer observation. Lastly, as to the possible factors which may hinder their professional development, these teachers were found mostly agree on these factors’ importance. However, the perceptions of novice and experienced teachers in this issue differed in some factors like personal financial problems, excessive work load. It is suggested that another study could be conducted through interviews to get a wider picture of the issue.

Introduction

Teaching becomes an extremely complex and demanding job on the part of teachers in an environment in which almost everything like technology, philosophies, knowledge and concepts rapidly changes. Trying to keep up with these changes and to be up-to-date is regarded as crucial and necessary for teachers. Hence, continuing professional development is a vital component of teachers’ professional lives. Besides, it cannot be ignored that teachers should develop since they are the models for their students as life-
long learners. As one of their goals is to encourage life-long learning of students, they should demonstrate their enthusiasms towards continuous learning. Also, the nature of teaching requires them to engage in career-long professional growth (Day, 1999). The perceptions of teachers towards self-initiated professional development, professional development activities and some possible factors that may prevent English language teachers from developing professionally as well as the comparison between novice and experienced teachers on these issues will be analyzed in this paper.

**Literature Review**

**Professional Development**

Professional development has been understood and defined in different ways in the literature. Gall and Renchler (1985), for instance, defined professional development as “efforts to improve teachers’ capacity to function as effective professionals by having them learn new knowledge, attitudes, and skills” (p. 6). Fullan (1995) described professional development as “the sum total of formal and informal learning pursued and experienced by the teacher in a compelling learning environment under conditions of complexity and dynamic change” (p.265). On the other hand, Craft (1996) and Johnson and Golombek (2011) interpreted professional development as an effort to enhance one’s professional knowledge not only in preparation stage but also after this preparation stage. However, other researchers like Shaver (2010) and Richards and Ferrell (2011) argue that professional development refers to engaging in career-building activities after completing teacher training. According to Day (1999) who gives a broader definition of professional development,

Professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school, which constitute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues throughout each phase of their teaching lives (p. 18). Professional development has been categorized into two, which are top-down and bottom-up processes. While top-down professional development is presented for educational leaders and principles (Glickman, 2002; Sparks, 2002), Cheng &Wang (as cited in Mann, 2005) states that bottom-up professional development is presented mainly for individuals and groups.

**Teacher Professional Development**

Teachers have many responsibilities like teaching the subject matter, delivering the curriculum, being in contact with parents, meeting students’ and the society’s needs, understanding educational policies and social practices as well as norms. Although the expectations and responsibilities of teachers are various, there is one point that should be taken into consideration by teachers, which is to update themselves in a rapidly changing world (Tan &Teng,2015). Teacher professional development is a crucial part of life cycle of teachers. Hassel (1999) defines it as the improvement of teaching skills and competences with the purpose of getting outstanding outcomes for students. On the other hand, Richards and Farrell (2005) states that it serves for longer term goals and it is related to the growing understanding of teachers of teaching and themselves as teachers. They propose many developmental goals for teachers such as understanding their own roles, revising their theories, developing understanding of different ways of teaching and understanding students’ perceptions of classroom facilities. Teacher professional
development include many aspects in terms of teacher practices such as beliefs of teachers and identity of them and other aspects like professional practice of teaching and teachers (Hewson, 2007). Also, Aminudin (2012) states that professional development for teachers is claimed to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to adapt the changes.

As for the link between professional development and teacher professionalism, Hargreaves (2000) states that professionalism means the quality of teaching, manners and standards guiding it. Also, he points out that teacher professionalism has evolved with the effect of changes in education systems. Besides, he states that there have been four phases of teacher professional development, which are pre-professional age, the age of autonomous professional, the age of collegial professional and post-professional in other words postmodern. While pre-professional age is related to student-teachers’ becoming a teacher through practicum and developing as a result of individual trial and error, the age of autonomous professional is related to working in isolation and challenging unquestioned traditions applied so far. The age of the collegial professional refers to enhancing professionalism through collaboration, and lastly the post-professional age or postmodern refers to driven by developments in economics and digital revolution in communications.

There are debates about whether teacher professional development should be considered as a process or product based. From product perspective, we should pay attention to what teachers can do after attending teacher professional development activities. Most researchers agree that teacher professional development should end up improvement in teaching practice and enhancement in students’ learning (Tan and Teng, 2015). Another view of teacher professional development belongs to Mann (2005) who proposes that teacher development has more personal and moral aspects while professional development is career orientated and more instrumental.

Another issue is teachers’ perspectives on the idea of professional development in that traditionally teacher professional development has been regarded as a series of short-term workshops and presentations with little regard to practice. Besides, it is perceived as being conducted by an expert who is outside of school environment. Such a narrow view of professional development has been criticized on the ground that teachers’ experiences and opinions have not been taken into consideration (Aminudin, 2012). Besides, Guskey (2000) argues that this narrow view of teacher professional development has the possibility of resulting in teachers’ viewpoint of professional development experience as useless and meaningless. Therefore, it is suggested that to increase professional activities’ effectiveness and many research have been conducted on how to increase professional development activities’ effectiveness (Aminudin, 2012).

**Continuing Professional Development**

In most countries, teachers are expected to continue learning after their teacher education programs with the purpose of adapting to the changing needs of society and students. Mushayikwa & Lubben (2009) define continuing professional development as a permanent cycle of teacher learning, which begins with initial teacher training and lasts as long as teacher is in teaching profession.

Teachers’ continuing professional development can function in different ways such as maintenance, improvement, or change (Day & Sachs, 2004). Other researchers like Cheetham and Chivers (2001) also support this view by arguing that teachers should be able to keep up-to-date with new trends in their fields and learn new techniques and methods to meet students’ changing needs. Also, they need to improve themselves and adapt to the educational change (Fullan, 2007). Although teacher training helps teachers...
to be prepared for teaching, it is not comprehensive enough to prepare them for everything. There can be changes in teaching and learning conditions to which they exposed during their teaching education; therefore, it is necessary for them to enhance their teaching skills (Missoum, 2015). Also, continuing professional development is stated to be essential for teachers to enhance their own pedagogical knowledge and skills, which will also enhance students’ learning (Desimone, 2009). By participating in ongoing professional development activities, they can keep updated with their professional field and with pedagogical changes. Also, the need for continuing professional development stems from the view that teachers have a lot of knowledge and skills, but they are required to continue to build expertise and improve the existing expertness (Main & Pendergast, 2015). Parallel to this, to continue professional development is regarded as crucial since it is believed to enhance schools, teacher effectiveness and students’ learning (Day, 1999; Hargreaves, 2000; Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Verloop, 2003).

Continuing professional development can be achieved through workshops, conferences, mentoring, doing action research, visiting other education institutions and peer coaching (Lieberman, 1996). It can also include formal and informal teacher learning programs as well as being self-directed and initiated by institutions (Conlon, as cited in Yuen, 2012, p. 388). Such activities have been aimed to result in a process, ongoing teacher learning, which eventually result in teachers’ becoming experts (Kelly, 2006).

On the other hand, these continuing professional development activities have been divided into three, which are updating knowledge and skills, reflection on experiences, and collaboration with other teachers (Schraw, 1998; Timperley et al., 2007; Verloop, 2003). For the first category, which is updating knowledge and skills, Vries, Grift, and Jansen (2013) list reading (professional literature and educational sites), and schooling (workshops, training, conferences). For the second category, which is reflecting on experience, they state that reflection is a crucial professional activity and it is crucial to continuing professional development. Schön (1983) also supports this by claiming that reflection makes teachers’ implicit knowledge and beliefs explicit and they can make some changes if it is needed. The last category, which is collaboration with other teachers, it is regarded as reducing stress and increasing confidence (Cheetham & Chivers, 2001), and it offers feedback and new ideas as well as challenges (Kwakman; Putnam & Borko, as cited in Vries, Grift, and Jansen, 2013, p. 80).

Self-directed Professional Development

It has been defined as teachers’ development in terms of experience, attitudes, and intellectual aspects, which are initiated by themselves (Karaaslan, 2003). Teachers are expected to ask for help from their institutions and colleagues, and plan areas of improvement to develop professionally (Texas Education Agency, 1997). For professional development to be successful, Bailey, Curtis, and Nunan (1998) state that it should be continuing, sustained, and self-directed, which also highlights the importance of continuing and self-directed professional development.

Teachers are expected to take part in their own professional development through designing ways depending on their preferences, beliefs, and perceived needs (Mora, Trejo, & Roux, 2016). If professional development arises from teachers’ own needs and interests, there is a high possibility for them to be committed to these professional development areas and activities, and changes will be more likely to deep and permanent (Kohonen, 2002).

Richards and Farrell (2005) point out that the focus in teacher education has shifted from institutional to individual self-directed process. This reveals that such a shift towards self-directed process is also related to self-directed professional development. Similarly,
Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) state that teacher education should be based on which lifelong learning takes place.

**Previously Conducted Studies**

Many research have been conducted on professional development of teachers, and they have focused on different dimensions of this issue like perceptions of teachers about professional development activities, perceptions of teachers about continuing professional development, professional development models, and possible factors affecting professional development.

Mahmoudi and Özkan (2015) conducted a study about perceptions of experienced and novice teachers about professional development activities. One of the aims of their study is to find out whether there are differences between the perceptions of novice and experienced language teachers in professional development programs and activities. The findings of this study reveal that there are differences in the perceptions of novice and experienced language teachers about professional development programs and activities.

On the other hand, Alibakhshi and Dahvari (2015) explored EFL Teachers’ perceptions of continuing professional development and aim to find out professional development activities of 20 EFL teachers. They have found that EFL teachers regard continuing professional development as crucial to their development as teachers.

Yurtsever (2013)’s study focused on English teachers’ beliefs and preferences about four professional development models, which are training, mentoring, peer-coaching, and self-directed. The study revealed that the most preferred model is self-directed professional development.

Also, Karaaslan (2003) conducted a study about self-initiated professional development model and investigated teachers’ perceptions about this model. 110 ELT teachers at Baskent University were administered a questionnaire which tried to investigate teachers’ perceptions of self-initiated professional development, professional development activities and factors hindering professional development of teachers. The findings revealed that almost all teachers agreed with the ideas about professional development, and most of them regard professional development activities as important. Lastly, it was revealed that factors hindering professional development of teachers were important.

**Methodology**

**The Statement of the Problem**

The main problem of this study is to investigate perceptions of teachers who are working at preparatory schools in Turkey towards self-initiated professional development, their perceptions towards the importance of professional development activities, and to find out their perceptions towards some factors which can hinder their professional development. As well as investigating perceptions of teachers taking part in this study in general, it is also aimed to investigate whether there are differences between novice and experienced teachers’ perceptions towards self-initiated professional development, professional development activities, and possible factors hindering professional development.

A number of studies have been conducted on professional development of teachers including perceptions of teachers about professional development activities, perceptions of teachers about continuing professional development, professional development models, and possible factors affecting professional development. Although there have been a number of research investigating different aspects of professional development separately, there is a need to conduct a study with English teachers working at preparatory schools of universities in Turkey considering the crucial role of professional development for
language teachers. In this regard, this study investigated more than one aspect of professional development like comparing novice and experienced teachers’ perceptions towards self-initiated professional development model, factors hindering professional development, and professional development activities of teachers.

Theoretical Framework

A survey research which is a quantitative research method was employed. As Dörnyei (2010) states, underlying philosophy behind surveys is that opinions, attitudes and intended behaviors of a large community can be described and analyzed on the basis of predetermined questions. For all of the research questions of this study, quantitative research method was applied on the ground that it eliminates and minimizes subjectivity of judgment as Kealey and Protheroe (1996) suggest, and it allows to investigate research questions firmly and arrive at more objective conclusions as Matveev (2002) indicates.

Research Questions

With regard to the research gap in Turkey, this study seeks to answer the following six questions:

1) What are the perceptions of EFL Teachers towards self-initiated professional development?

2) Is there a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of novice and experienced teachers towards self-initiated professional development model?

3) What are the perceptions of EFL Teachers towards professional development activities?

4) Is there a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of novice and experienced teachers towards the importance of professional development activities?

5) What are the perceptions of EFL Teachers towards some possible factors which may hinder their professional development?

6) Is there a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of novice and experienced teachers towards the importance of some possible factors which may hinder their professional development?

Setting and Participants

This study has been carried out at preparatory schools of 3 state and 2 private universities in Turkey. The participants have been chosen depending on voluntary base and in total 70 instructors working at preparatory schools in Turkish universities took place in this study. They are all native speakers of Turkish and have learned English as their foreign language. There are 54 female English teachers and 16 males in this study and the age of the participants ranges from 23 to 62. Of all the participants, 36 are novice teachers having less than 3 years of teaching experience while 34 of them experienced teachers.

Data Collection Instrument

The data collection instrument is a questionnaire adapted from “Karaaslan (2003)” by the researcher and it consists of three parts and 35 items. For the first part of the questionnaire, a 5-point Likert scale was used, which include 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (undecided), 4 (agree), and 5 (strongly agree). Likewise, for the second and last part of the questionnaire, a 5-point Likert scale was used which include 1 (not important at all), 2 (of little importance), 3 (somewhat important), 4 (important), and 5 (very important).
The respondents’ answers provided quantitative data. After the preparation of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted to provide inter-rater reliability.

**Procedures and Data Analysis**

Each response of the participants to each item in the questionnaire was coded and computed. The collected data was analyzed and evaluated by the SPSS 22 by calculating percentages, mean scores and applying descriptive statistics, independent samples t-test to compare the means between novice and experienced teachers on the aspects of self-initiated professional development. The findings were also supported and visualized through tables.

**Findings and Discussion**

**Research Question 1:** What are the perceptions of EFL Teachers towards self-initiated professional development?

| Table 1. The perceptions of EFL Teachers towards self-initiated professional development |
|---------------------------------|-----|------|------|
| Q1    | 70  | 3.83 | 1.154 |
| Q2    | 70  | 3.67 | 1.151 |
| Q3    | 70  | 4.10 | 0.871 |
| Q4    | 70  | 3.44 | 1.293 |
| Q5    | 70  | 4.04 | 0.892 |
| Q6    | 70  | 4.11 | 0.877 |
| Q7    | 70  | 4.11 | 1.149 |
| Q8    | 70  | 4.29 | 0.819 |
| Q9    | 70  | 3.93 | 1.012 |
| Q10   | 70  | 3.36 | 1.155 |
| Q11   | 70  | 4.00 | 0.993 |

This table shows that most of the teachers tend to agree on the aspects of self-initiated professional development. Especially, what most teachers agree on is “teachers should be open to new ideas and changes” (M=4.29), and “teachers should help each other to produce solutions to solve problems” (M=4.11) as well as “willingness is an important factor in successful professional development” (M=4.11). However, when the issue is “peer observation should be used to gather information about teacher performance”, teachers have a tendency to neither agree nor disagree on it (M=3.36).

**Research Question 2:** Is there a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of novice and experienced teachers towards self-initiated professional development model?

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the perceptions of novice and experienced teachers towards self-initiated professional development model. In the 2nd item of the questionnaire, there was a significant difference in the scores for novice (M=3.07, SD=1.25) and experienced (M=3.90, SD=1.08) conditions; t (52)= -2.57, p = 0.013. In the 4th item of the questionnaire, there was a significant difference in the scores for novice (M=2.41, SD=1.20) and experienced (M=4.00, SD=0.95) conditions; t (52)= -5.424, p = 0.000. Also, in the 7th item of the questionnaire, there was a significant difference in the scores for novice (M=3.33, SD=1.40) and experienced (M=4.60, SD=0.55) conditions; t (52)= -4.30, p = 0.000. Besides these, in the 11th item of the questionnaire, there was a significant difference in the scores for novice (M=4.22, SD=0.90) and
“Novice and Experienced Teachers’ Perceptions Towards Self-initiated Professional Development, Professional Development Activities and Possible Hindering Factors”

experienced (M=3.60, SD=1.15) conditions; t (52)= 2.20, p= 0.032. These results suggest that the perceptions of novice and experienced teachers towards self-initiated professional development model were generally similar on this issue except for the four aspects in above.

Research Question 3: What are the perceptions of EFL Teachers towards professional development activities?

Table 2. The perceptions of EFL Teachers towards professional development activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q12</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>0.847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>1.068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q14</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>1.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q15</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>0.983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q16</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>1.150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q17</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>1.245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q18</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>1.164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q19</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>1.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q20</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>1.128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q21</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>0.922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q22</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>0.844</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q23</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>0.956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q24</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>1.084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q25</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>1.187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q26</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>1.010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>70</td>
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</table>

This table shows that most of the teachers tend to be nearly agree on professional development activities’ being critical and important to their professional development. Especially, what most teachers nearly agree on is “sharing experience with colleagues” (M=3.93), and “trying out new ideas or suggestions in practice” (M=3.91). However, when the issue is “peer observation”, they were found to be neutral on this activity’s importance and criticality to their own professional development (M=2.96).

Research Question 4: Is there a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of novice and experienced teachers towards the importance of professional development activities?

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the perceptions of novice and experienced teachers towards professional development activities. In the 17th item of the questionnaire, there was a significant difference in the scores for novice (M=2.19, SD=1.18) and experienced (M=3.41, SD=1.20) conditions; t (52)= -3.91, p= 0.000. In the 18th item of the questionnaire, there was a significant difference in the scores for novice (M=3.93, SD=1.04) and experienced (M=3.26, SD=1.20) conditions; t (52)= 2.157, p= 0.036. Also, in the 19th item of the questionnaire, there was a significant difference in the scores for novice (M=4.15, SD=0.90) and experienced (M=3.56, SD=1.10) conditions; t (52)= 2.176, p= 0.034. Besides these, in the 20th item of the questionnaire, there was a significant difference in the scores for novice (M=3.15, SD=1.32) and experienced (M=3.93, SD=0.90) conditions; t (52)= -2.55, p= 0.014. Lastly, in the 24th item of the questionnaire, there was a significant difference in the scores for novice (M=4.22, SD=0.95) and experienced (M=3.56, SD=1.16) conditions; t (52)= 2.293, p= 0.026. These results suggest that the perceptions of novice and experienced teachers towards the importance of professional development activities to their own professional development were generally similar on this issue except for the five aspects in above.
Research Question 5: What are the perceptions of EFL Teachers towards some possible factors which may hinder their professional development?

Table 3. The perceptions of EFL Teachers towards some possible factors which may hinder their professional development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
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<tr>
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<td>70</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>1.189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q28</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>1.342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q29</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>1.124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q30</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>1.250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q31</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>1.281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q32</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>1.293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q33</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>1.542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q34</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>1.350</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q35</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>1.305</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

This table shows that almost all of the teachers tend to nearly agree on the importance of some possible factors which may hinder their professional development. Especially, what most of the teachers agree on is "excessive work load" (M=3.63), and "lack of self-motivation" (M=3.64). However, the item, which is the least agreed item among some possible hindering factors, is "educational background" (M=2.79).

Research Question 6: Is there a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of novice and experienced teachers towards the importance of some possible factors which may hinder their professional development?

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the perceptions of novice and experienced teachers towards professional development activities. In the 27th item of the questionnaire, there was a significant difference in the scores for novice (M=2.78, SD=1.20) and experienced (M=3.93, SD=0.90) conditions; t (52)= -3.977, p= 0.000. In the 28th item of the questionnaire, there was a significant difference in the scores for novice (M=2.59, SD=1.30) and experienced (M=4.07, SD=0.90) conditions; t (52)= -4.818, p= 0.000. Also, in the 29th item of the questionnaire, there was a significant difference in the scores for novice (M=2.63, SD=0.90) and experienced (M=3.74, SD=1.00) conditions; t (52)= -4.272, p= 0.000. Besides these, in the 30th item of the questionnaire, there was a significant difference in the scores for novice (M=2.70, SD=1.23) and experienced (M=3.52, SD=1.05) conditions; t (52)= -2.611, p= 0.012. Also, the 32nd item of the questionnaire shows that there was a significant difference in the scores for novice (M=2.89, SD=1.30) and experienced (M=3.74, SD=1.10) conditions; t (52)= -2.591, p= 0.012. Likewise, the 33th item of the questionnaire shows that there was a significant difference in the scores for novice (M=2.48, SD=1.47) and experienced (M=4.37, SD=1.07) conditions; t (52)= -5.364, p= 0.000. Lastly, in the 34th item of the questionnaire, there was a significant difference in the scores for novice (M=2.04, SD=1.15) and experienced (M=3.33, SD=1.25) conditions; t (52)= -3.915, p= 0.000. These results suggest that the perceptions of novice and experienced teachers towards the importance of some possible factors, which may hinder their professional development, were generally different.

Overall, the findings revealed that most of the teachers agreed on the aspects of self-initiated professional development, which corroborates the findings of Karaaslan (2003) to a certain extent. For instance, in both studies most of the teachers expressed the importance of professional development activities. Besides, the factors that hinder professional development of teachers were found to be as crucial in both studies.
It can be also concluded that the findings of the present study are in good agreement with the findings of the study by Mahmoudi and Özkan (2015) to a certain extent in that there are differences in the perceptions of novice and experienced language teachers about professional development programs and activities.

Conclusion

The results of the study revealed that most of the teachers taking part in this study were found to agree on the aspects of self-initiated professional development. However, there are few differences between the perceptions of novice and experienced teachers towards self-initiated professional development like teachers’ taking the action for their own professional development, teachers’ being involved in the evaluation of their teaching skills and knowledge, and willingness being an important in this process, on which experienced teachers were found to agree more than novice teachers. On the other hand, as for the issue of teachers’ trying to keep themselves up-dated with changes and improvements in ELT, novice teachers were found to agree more than experienced teachers.

Besides, this study revealed that most of the teachers tend to be nearly agree on the importance and criticality of professional development activities to their professional development. As for the perceptions of novice and experienced teachers towards the importance and criticality of professional development activities to their own professional development, they were general similar on this issue except for five aspects. While novice teachers agreed on some professional development activities more than experienced teachers like observation of classroom events by heads and administrators, teacher initiated classroom investigation (action research), and following research literature on own field, experienced teachers agreed on others more like peer observation, and in-service training like workshops and seminars.

As for the possible factors which may hinder their professional development, teachers were found mostly agree on these factors’ importance. However, the perceptions of novice and experienced teachers towards the importance of some possible factors, which may hinder their professional development, were generally different except for some aspects. In terms of personal financial problems, excessive work load, lack of communication and collaboration among colleagues, lack of self-motivation and institutional support for professional development, and educational background.

It must be borne in mind that being aware of professional development activities, and some possible factors that can hinder professional development activities of teachers are crucial and they should be taken into consideration while continuing professional development. Also, it should be considered that teachers’ awareness of professional development concept and ways of achieving this can be enhanced through seminars, workshops and other informative events.

Being familiar with professional development phenomena and activities can enable teacher to develop professionally better. In addition, the awareness of some possible factors can give the teachers chance to reflect on these hindering factors and ways of avoiding these problems. Regardless of their being novice and experienced teachers, they should be given chances to reflect upon this process and be provided with ways of achieving this continuing professional development. Therefore, professional development of teachers is so crucial and critical for them that it is one of the last aspects to be neglected both in teacher training and in their practices as well as institutions in which they work and develop as professionals.
Suggestions

Since this study reflects the perceptions of the English language teachers in the issue of professional development, its activities and possible factors to hinder it, another study can be conducted through structured interviews to get more reliable and worthwhile findings.

Limitations

One of the limitations of the study is that, it samples the population of 70 English language Teachers. Hence, it cannot be generalized beyond all English language teachers in Ankara or Turkey. Another limitation is that data were collected at one point in time from the sample through a questionnaire. Therefore, the researcher could not be certain that the results would be the same as those obtained at another time.

References


“Novice and Experienced Teachers’ Perceptions Towards Self-initiated Professional Development, Professional Development Activities and Possible Hindering Factors”


