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Abstract

Teacher professional development is universally acknowledged as crucial for academic success and educational progress. However, the efficacy of conventional continuous professional development (CPD) programs has been frequently questioned, with reports suggesting their ineffectiveness in fostering substantial teacher growth. The shortcomings of these programs range from overlooking school characteristics such as constitutions and politics to employing fixed goals and top-down approaches. The quality of professional development opportunities for instructors can be improved by promoting expansive learning environments as it is not possible to develop educators without considering their interaction with school environment and culture. Combining survey quantitative data and semi-structured interview results, this mixed-method study analyzed EFL instructors' values and professional learning practices by comparing the schools of languages of state schools and foundation schools, as two different workplace settings. The study encompassed 300 EFL instructors in the quantitative phase, drawn from state and foundation universities in Istanbul and Ankara, Türkiye. In a subsequent qualitative phase, 14 volunteers from this cohort participated in one-on-one interviews. It was observed that workplace environment influences instructors' orientations to learning in terms of (i) which CPD activities instructors value and practice, and (ii) which factors they perceive as either influencing, supporting, or hindering their learning. The findings suggest that EFL instructors in state universities predominantly rely on external experts and exhibit external focuses in their professional learning. In contrast, instructors in foundation universities are more inclined to operate as a community of practice, utilizing internal resources, and engaging in collaborative efforts with their colleagues.

Keywords: Workplace learning, Expansive learning environments, Continuous professional development, Turkish Higher Education, EFL Instructors

Introduction

Scholars have asserted their concerns regarding the ineffectiveness of traditional professional development (PD) activities (Rousseau, 2004; Warfield, Wood & Lehman, 2005) as numerous educational reform movements have not yielded changes in teachers' habits and routines. Altering the day-to-day practices of teachers was reported to be an ongoing challenge (Webel & Platt, 2015) and most PD for teachers is criticized and defined as *one-size-fits-all* and *disjointed* (Borko, 2004), ignoring teachers' previous knowledge and needs (Wei et al., 2010).

This is why a major step in reframing teacher PD is now considered to be highlighting learning in teachers' immediate environment rather than disjoint development (Webster-Wright, 2009). In this, PD has mostly been holistic and "shaped through a combination of reciprocity between the context of the particular school setting, and an individual teacher's interest and disposition to learn about practice" (Wilson & Demetriou 2007, p. 214). Therefore, teachers' workplace learning is seen as a substantial factor in their professional growth (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2005), and professional learning

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opportunities need to be contextualized in teachers' classrooms or schools, embodying their classroom environment to promote active and collegial involvement (Garet et al., 2001).

Within this understanding, this study analyzes "teachers' orientation to learning" – defined as "beliefs, practices and experiences about learning and its relationship to teacher learning and change" by Opfer, Pedder, & Lavicza (2011, p. 444)- in relation to contextual factors and conditions which affect how teachers participate in learning via five research questions:

1. *Is there a relationship between instructors' attributed-values to and perceived-practices of professional learning activities?*
2. *How well do the school type and instructors' attributed-values predict their practice score of professional learning activities? How much variance in total practice scores can be explained by these two variables?*
3. *Which variable is the best predictor of total practice of professional learning activities: instructors' attributed-values or school type?*
4. *Does the school type moderate the relationship between instructors' attributed-values to and practice of professional learning activities?*
5. *What are the emerging contextual factors that influence the instructors' understanding and actual practice of PD activities?*

Significance of the Study

Given the limited success of previous professional development efforts in changing teachers' instructional practices (OECD, 2009), research aiming to improve this process is crucial. Opfer et al. (2011) conducted a significant study on teacher learning orientation and change, finding that teachers' orientation to professional learning significantly influences whether they adopt new practices. Feeney (2016) further explored this concept, confirming its importance in a different context. However, this research has not been applied to studies conducted in Türkiye within the last decade, particularly regarding the continuous professional development of English instructors in Turkish state and foundation universities. This gap is significant considering English's prominence in language teaching and Türkiye's educational reforms (Kirkgoz, 2007). Incorporating teachers' learning orientation into training programs could enhance their effectiveness, aligning with their daily activities and workplace practices.

Literature Review

Situated learning theory

Lave and Wenger (1991) introduced a situated view of learning as a response to criticisms of conventional learning theory's neglect of nonformal and informal training events in educational institutions (Fuller & Unwin, 2004). This perspective emphasizes learning through daily experiences and social interaction, where learning outcomes are socially constructed (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In communities of practice, members develop shared identity and mutual enterprise (Lave & Wenger, 1991), collaborating to develop new knowledge and resources (Hildreth & Kimble, 2008). Co-participation fosters mutual learning processes, allowing teachers to engage actively and construct their identities within their communities (Kearney, 2015). An expansive learning environment offers diverse learning opportunities both within and outside the workplace (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2005), influencing teachers' workplace learning and situational learning processes (Fuller et al., 2007). Understanding teachers' interactions and collaborations in expansive learning settings is crucial for identifying factors that affect workplace learning.

Workplace learning

It is argued that when individuals take part in goal-directed activities, which are social in nature, their learning is facilitated through reinforcement or refinement of what they already know (Billet, 2002) since "workplace learning has features which may distinguish it from other forms of professional learning; it is task-focused, it is collaborative, and it often grows out of experience or problem" (Retallick, 1999, p. 34). Kwakman (2003) set the basis for an empirical model for teacher workplace

learning and conceptualized factors affecting teachers' participation in professional learning in the workplace under three main domains: "personal factors, task factors and work environment factors" (p. 158). In other, related studies (e.g., Lohman & Woolf, 2001; Van Eekelen, Boshuizen, & Vermunt, 2005), five general categories of learning activities which support the importance of workplace learning activities for teachers were identified: "1) doing; 2) experimentation; 3) reflection on experiences; 4) learning from others without interaction; and 5) learning from others with interaction" (Meirink et al., 2009, p. 210).

Billett (2002) proposes that "considerations of learning, learning in workplaces and the development of a workplace pedagogy need conceptualizing in terms of participatory practices" (p. 56). That is, learning activities which encourage teachers to cooperate in teams are mostly anticipated to promote a very powerful and expansive learning environment (Fuller et al., 2007). Therefore, it can be proposed that teachers' CPD needs to be situated in the workplace, providing opportunities for varied learning activities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009).

Continuing professional development (CPD) and Teachers' orientation to learning

Several terms, including professional development, lifelong learning, and continuing education, refer to teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) (Bolam & McMahon, 2004). Guskey (2002) frames CPD programs as "systematic efforts to bring about change in the classroom practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and in the learning outcomes of students" (p. 381). CPD is a career-long, job-embedded, and learner-focused process, emphasizing specific content areas like subject matter and pedagogical knowledge (Vries et al., 2013; Park & Oliver, 2008). CPD activities typically involve updating knowledge and skills, reflective thinking, and collaboration with colleagues (Vries et al., 2013). Learner-centered CPD methods, taking individual and contextual differences into account, are often considered more promising (Timperley et al., 2007).

Opfer and his colleagues (2011) defined teachers' orientation to learning as "an integrated set of attitudes, beliefs, and practices as well as the alignment of oneself and one's ideas to circumstances" and proposed that teachers' orientation to learning significantly affects whether they change their professional practices (Figure 1).

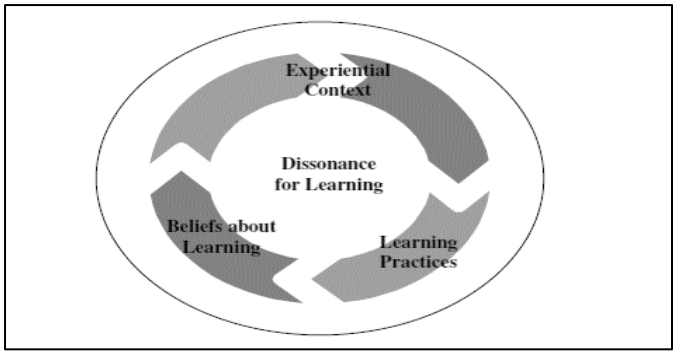


Figure 1. Teacher orientation to learning (Opfer et al., 2011, p. 445).

The process of teacher learning is shaped by a dynamic interaction between the environment of the school and the unique interests and attitudes of individual teachers (Wilson & Demetriou, 2007). Consequently, this study highlights the significance of teachers' approaches to learning, as delineated by Opfer et al. (2011) into categories such as "internal orientation to learning," "external orientation to learning," "research orientation," and "collaborative orientation". These orientations encompass whether teachers prioritize "internal (reflective) or external (seeking) value belief" in their learning endeavors (p. 450). Understanding the interplay between these orientations and the school context is crucial for examining the dynamics of teacher learning.

Methodology

Research Design and Rationale

This study was based on a mixed-method research design to understand teachers' practice and learning orientation in the workplace. The mixed method design "provides understanding and description of people's personal experiences of phenomena (i.e., the "emic" or insider's viewpoint)" as it is "responsive to local situations, conditions, and stakeholders' needs" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 20). The data mixed for "development (i.e., using the findings from one method to inform the other method) and expansion (i.e., seeking to expand the breadth and range of research by using different methods for different inquiry components)" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 22). That is, qualitative data was mainly used to support, clarify, elaborate, and expand on the results obtained from quantitative data.

Context

This study focuses on language schools within state and foundation universities in Türkiye, where English serves as the medium of instruction. These schools, also called English preparatory schools, aim to enhance students' English proficiency before they commence their studies in respective departments or programs.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) in Türkiye comprise state and foundation universities, each with unique characteristics. State universities receive government funding, while foundation universities, established by private foundations, rely on tuition fees and donations. This leads to variations in salary structures and employment status among faculty members.

Faculty at state universities typically hold tenured positions as "civil servants," offering government employment benefits and job security. Conversely, faculty at foundation universities may have diverse employment arrangements, impacting job security and career advancement. State universities adhere to standardized government regulations for promotion, while criteria at foundation universities may vary. Moreover, foundation universities enjoy more autonomy in internal management and external collaboration, potentially providing more professional development opportunities.

Furthermore, student demographics differ between state and foundation universities. State universities admit students based on national placement exams, while foundation universities have their own admission criteria, often offering scholarships. Consequently, students at foundation universities exhibit greater diversity in academic ability and socio-economic background. Understanding these institutional disparities is crucial for assessing their influence on the work environment and teaching methodologies of English instructors in both types of language schools.

Participants

Quantitative data was collected from a total of 300 English language instructors who were employed at language schools within both state universities and foundation universities in Istanbul and Ankara, Türkiye, with 23% male and 76% female representation. The average age was 38, and their experience ranged from 2 to 42 years, with most holding graduate degrees—58.33% with master's and 16% with doctoral degrees.

In the qualitative phase, fourteen instructors participated in one-on-one interviews, selected through convenience sampling (Patton, 1990) to represent both state and foundation universities. Seven interviewees each came from state and foundation universities, categorized by establishment dates: "pre-1992," "1992-2005," and "post-2005," following the framework suggested by Uslu (2016). The instructors, approximately half of whom were female, ranged in age from 28 to 55 years. Their educational backgrounds closely mirrored the broader survey sample, with a mix of bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. An overview of the demographic background of these 14 research participants is presented in Table 1 below.

Data collection

Data collection commenced following research ethics approval. Two distinct methods were employed. Quantitative data was gathered through an online questionnaire, while qualitative data was obtained via semi-structured interviews. Pilot studies, conducted separately for both quantitative and qualitative

instruments (Porta, 2008), preceded their implementation to identify potential issues and deficiencies in the instruments and research protocol.

Table 1.
Interviewee Demographics

Participant No	Gender	Age	Years of Experience	Level of Education	Type of Institution	Establishment Dates of University
1	Female	28	5	MA	State	Pre-1992
2	Female	39	15	MA	Foundation	Pre-1992
3	Female	36	14	PhD	Foundation	Pre-1992
4	Male	37	15	PhD	State	Pre-1992
5	Female	38	13	PhD	State	Pre-1992
6	Male	31	12	BA	State	Pre-1992
7	Female	55	30	BA	Foundation	Pre-1992
8	Female	38	14	MA	Foundation	1992-2005
9	Male	33	9	MA	Foundation	1992-2005
10	Gay Male	33	10	MA	Foundation	1992-2005
11	Male	33	10	MA	Foundation	1992-2005
12	Male	31	7	MA	State	Pre-1992
13	Female	42	20	PhD	State	Pre-1992
14	Female	34	6	MA	State	Post-2005

Quantitative measures

The questionnaire of this study consisted of various parts. Part A collected demographic details, while Part B analyzed teachers' values and practices in professional learning, assessing their orientation to learning. Part C allowed participants to identify primary influences, critical factors, and significant barriers to their professional development. This survey was conducted comprehensively online using Google Forms.

Part B of the questionnaire included a teacher learning self-evaluation survey, comprising twenty-nine items, which was previously utilized in Feeney's PhD study (2011). It originated from research within the Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP), a major educational inquiry initiative in the UK (James et al., 2006). It delved into various learning activities across five sections (A-E) and categorized them into four types of teachers' orientation to learning: internal, external, research, and collaborative orientations (Opfer et al., 2011). Participants rated both the importance and occurrence of each activity using a scale ranging from "1 = Unimportant" to "5 = Very Important." Prior to the study, a pilot study was conducted to provide evidence about the reliability and validity of the scores measured (Stern, 2010, p. 353) from the teachers' value and practice of professional learning scale and to verify the study's appropriateness with participants. One hundred and thirteen instructors completed the questionnaire. However, due to missing data, we were able to utilize responses from one hundred (75 female, 25 male) instructors for analysis.

Factor analysis was used to test the internal structure of the teacher learning self-evaluation survey and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for internal consistency (hereafter, Cronbach's α) (Cronbach, 1951) was used to evaluate the internal consistency of the scale scores. Since the sample size is limited, one factor structure was tested separately for each factor in the scale. The results of KMO and Barlett's Sphericty tests showed that the measured characteristics were multivariate in the universe parameter and that the sample size was sufficient for factorability analysis (Stern, 2010, p. 365). Principle Component Analysis confirmed five pre-determined factors of the survey for our participants, as given below in Table 2.

Qualitative measures

In the second step of the data collection process, one-on-one interviewing was conducted to "ask questions and record answers from only one participant in the study at a time" (Creswell, 2012, p. 218). Seidman suggested that "at the heart of interviewing research is an interest in other individuals' stories" (2013, p. 9). While interview questions should help participants gradually unfold their stories, they should serve the purpose of the research. For this reason, to develop a qualitative research instrument aligning with research questions and appropriate for the participants (Jones, Torres & Arminio, 2014), it is critical to "get feedback from others on how they think the questions (and the interview guide as a whole) will work" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 101). In this study, to complete the piloting of interview questions, three main steps were taken: (1) consulting subject matter experts, (2) getting feedback on the wording of the questions, and (3) conducting pilot interviews, all of which provided valuable feedback to refine and finalize the interview questions prior to the use of the instrument as given below.

1. Can you describe your professional learning this year?
2. What did you learn in terms of practical knowledge and theoretical aspects?
3. What factors influenced your professional learning?

Table 2.
Summary of factor analysis

Factor name	KMO	$\chi 2$ Bartlett test	*p*	Cronbach's α
Learning in relation to instructional practice	.84	327.480	0.00*	.88
Sharing collaborative activity	.86	312.453	0.00*	.89
Talking about and valuing learning	.90	352.801	0.00*	.91
Exploring teacher's role in the learning process	.84	208.399	0.00*	.86
Consulting different sources of knowledge	.83	166.895	0.00*	.80

The semi-structured interviews lasted approximately half an hour and were recorded via a digital recording device and saved electronically. The credibility of the data was ensured with member checking; more precisely, interview transcripts were sent to interviewees for final approval and/or possible revisions.

Data Analysis and Results

Given the two-phase-sequential-explanatory-research design, analyzing the quantitative data was prioritized, and qualitative data collection only began after the first phase had ended. Later, both types of data were integrated and mixed to enhance the significance of the study by "facilitating thickness and richness of data; augmenting interpretation and usefulness of findings" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 54). The following section details the analysis of quantitative data and its corresponding results, serving as a foundation for the subsequent discussions on qualitative data analysis and results.

Quantitative analysis and results

Quantitative data analysis was conducted using SPSS 20. For Part B survey data, bivariate correlation analysis and simultaneous and hierarchical multiple regression analysis were utilized. These analyses aimed to explore the relationship between instructors' attributed values and perceived practices of professional learning activities and to investigate whether this relationship varied depending on the school environment.

For Part C survey data, each item of the multiple response sets was coded as dichotomies (IBM, 2019). This coding allowed for the creation of separate variables for each item, with frequencies subsequently computed. Results were then sorted from the most frequently cited to the least for influences, supports, and barriers to professional learning. Cross-tabulation tables were employed to compare split responses, categorizing instructors into two groups based on the type of school they worked in.

Before conducting the multiple regression analysis, various assumptions were assessed, including linearity, outliers, normality of residuals, multicollinearity, and singularity (Pallant, 2010, p. 151). The correlation analysis indicated a weak correlation (r = .094) between school type and attributed values, suggesting no high multicollinearity issues (Cohen, 1988). The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value, measuring multicollinearity, was found to be 1.009, well below the commonly accepted threshold of 10 (Hair et al., 1995). Similarly, the tolerance value for each variable was .991, indicating no violation of the multicollinearity assumption.

To further validate the assumptions of normality of residuals and linearity (Field, 2013), we inspected the normal probability plot (P-P) of the regression standardized residual (Chart 1) and the scatterplot (Chart 2).

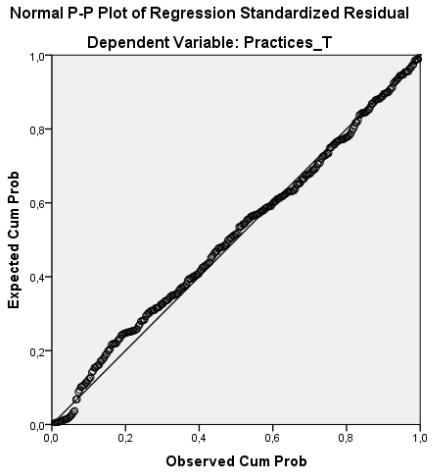


Chart 1: Normal P-P plot.

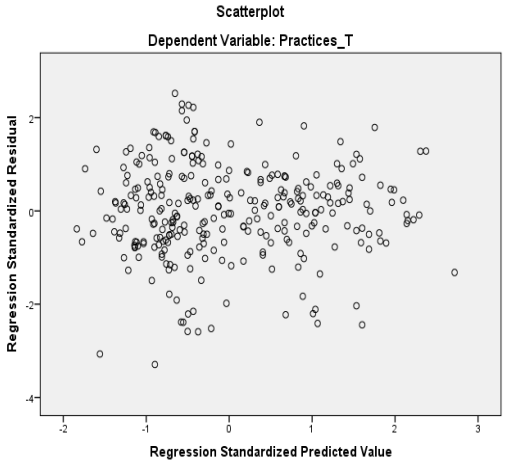


Chart 2: Scatterplot.

The normal P-P Plot showed a straight line from bottom left to top right, indicating no violation of *linearity* assumptions (Pallant, 2010, p. 151). Similarly, the scatterplot displayed most scores clustered within a centralized rectangle, suggesting no significant deviations from *normality*. Outliers were assessed using *Mahalanobis distances* and standardized residuals. According to Tabachnick & Fidell (2007), standardized residual values exceeding ±3.3 are considered outliers. In our data, the maximum *Mahalanobis* distance was 9.269, well below the suggested critical value of 13.82 for two independent variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). None of the standardized values exceeded ±3.3. These results affirmed that no assumptions of multiple regression were violated. Subsequently, the quantitative analysis results are discussed in detail, addressing each research question individually.

Question 1: *Is there a relationship between instructors' attributed-values to and perceived-practices of professional learning activities?*

To determine if there is a relationship between instructors' attributed-values to and perceived-practices of PD learning activities, a bivariate correlation analysis was carried out and Pearson's *r* values (the correlation coefficient) were calculated (Stern, 2010, p. 151). The correlation coefficients were separately calculated for each school type and are presented in Table 3. The results suggested that the predicting power of attributed-values on the perceived-practices of professional learning of instructors was greater in foundation schools (*r* = .53**). That is, compared to the instructors working at state schools (*r* = .19*), in foundation schools, the more instructors value a certain type of orientation to learning, the more they are likely to practice it, or equally, the more they practice a certain type of orientation to learning, the more they are likely to value it.

Question 2: *How well do the school type and instructors' attributed-values predict their practice score of professional learning activities? How much variance in total practice scores can be explained by these two variables?*

To decide how much variance in the total practice score of professional learning activities was explained by school type and instructors' attributed-values, simultaneous multiple regression analysis was run. School type and instructors' attributed-values together explained 25% of the variance in the total practice score of professional learning activities F (2, 297) = 49.75, $p < .001$.

Table 3.
Summary of Intercorrelations, Means and Standard Deviations for Value and Practice Scores: Schools Compared.

		1	2	M	SD
State School	1. Values Total	-		3.95	.47
	2. Practices Total	.19*	-	3.09	.66
Foundation School	1. Values Total	-		4.03	.41
	2. Practices Total	.53**	-	3.60	.55

*p≤ 0.05
** p≤ 0.01

Question 3: *Which variable is the best predictor of total practice of professional learning activities: instructors' attributed-values or school type?*

To observe how much unique variance in the total practice score of professional learning activities each variable explained, *coefficients* were examined. Based on standardized regression coefficients (β), school type (β = .36, $p < .001$) statistically and significantly predicted the instructors' total practice score of professional activities better than their attributed-values (β = .31, $p < .001$).

Question 4: *Does the school type moderate the relationship between instructors' attributed-values to and practice of professional learning activities?*

To determine if the school type moderates the relationship between instructors' attributed-values to and practice of professional learning activities, moderation (hierarchical multiple regression) analysis developed by Hayes (2019) was initiated using SPSS PROCESS Version 3.4. In the first step, two variables were included in the analysis: school type and instructors' attributed-values. In model 1 without the interaction term, school type and instructors' attributed-values explained 25% of the variance in the total practice score of professional learning activities F (2, 297) = 49.75, $p < .001$. The variables were centered to avoid multicollinearity problem (Aiken & West, 1991).

In the second step, the interaction term between school type and instructors' attributed-values was added to the regression model. Model 2, F (3, 296) = 36.90, $p < .001$, with the interaction term between school type and instructors' attributed-values, accounted for 27% of the total practice of professional learning activities, $\Delta R^2 = .02$, ΔF (1, 296) = 9.66, $p = .001$, $b = .436$, t (296) = 2.94, $p < .01$. The ΔF value indicates that school type moderates the relationship between instructors' attributed-values to and perceived-practices of professional learning activities. While the 95% confidence interval for the simple slope for state schools is between [.04, .50], it is between [.53, .88] for foundation schools as given in chart 3 below.

The non-overlapping confidence intervals for the slopes indicate that school type serves as a moderator variable in this relationship. The predictive strength of instructors' attributed values on practices of professional learning was notably stronger in foundation schools. This suggests a relationship between instructors' attributed values and perceived practices of professional learning activities, which varies depending on the school type. In foundation schools, instructors who value a certain orientation to learning are more likely to practice it, and vice versa, compared to those in state schools. This relationship may be influenced by contextual factors described by participants as significant enhancers of their professional development.

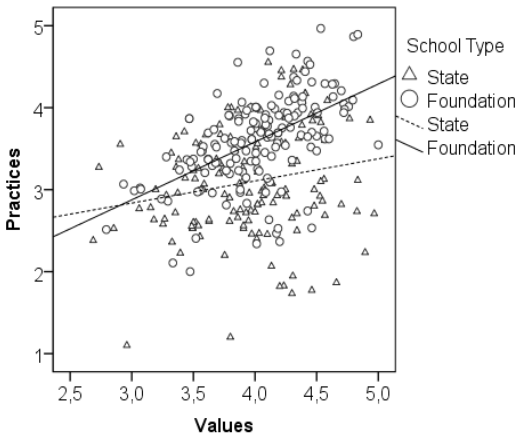
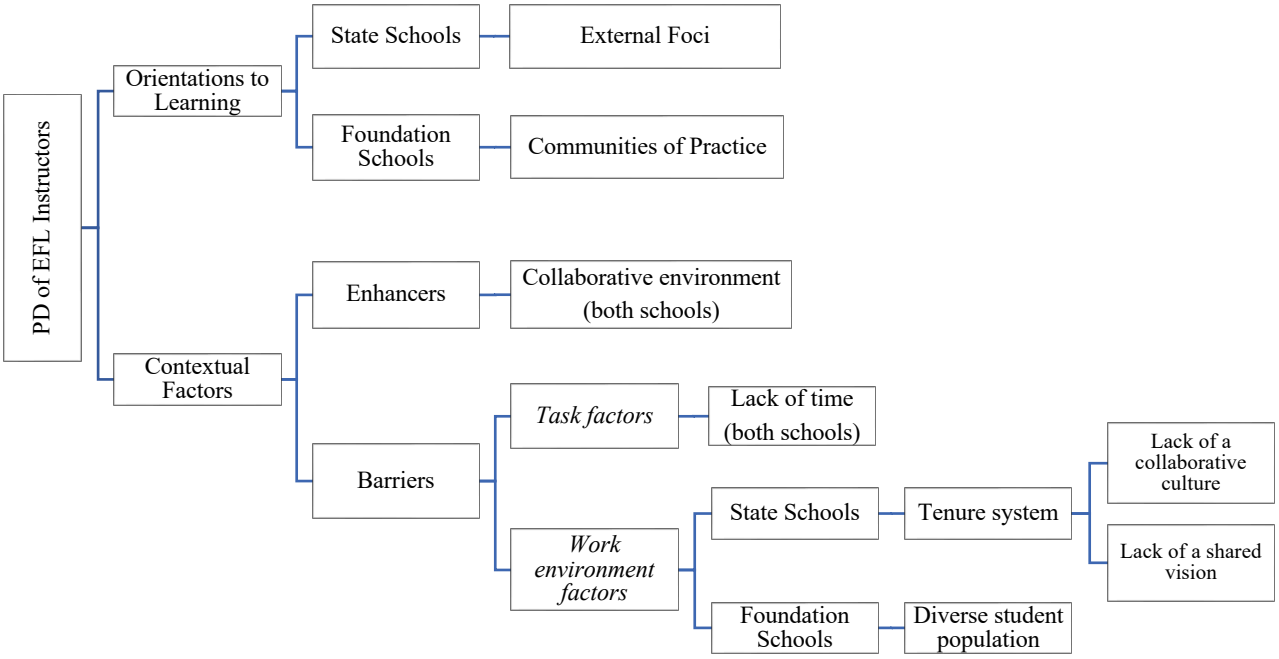


Chart 3: Simple slopes.

Qualitative analysis and results

Data from interviews is used to elaborate, and explain, the second and fourth research questions and also explore the fifth research question. Qualitative data were analyzed using "a constant comparative approach," which is defined as one "comparing one segment of data with one found in the same or another data set for the purpose of identifying possible patterns and categories that may lead to theory formulation" (Merriam, 2009, p. 142).

The first author conducted all the interviews. These were digitally recorded and then transcribed verbatim. As for the quotations, modest editing such as correction of grammar mistakes was done. The analysis of the qualitative data was done through NVivo 12 software. Initially, the first and second authors detected codes separately and then compared and contrasted them among themselves to ensure inter-coder reliability. Finally, they both agreed to have 12 codes. These codes were then merged into 4 main categories, which were later grouped into 2 central themes: a) instructors' orientations to professional learning activities and b) contextual factors that influenced these orientations, which included two sub-themes: (a) enhancers and (b) barriers as detailed in the data tree below:



The analysis of qualitative data highlights two main themes: how instructors understand and practice professional development activities, and the factors in their environment that either help or hinder their professional growth.

(1) Instructors' orientations towards PD activities

The qualitative interview data corroborated and expanded upon the findings from the quantitative survey results regarding research question 2. Quantitative analysis indicated that school type and instructors' attributed values collectively accounted for 25% of the variance in the total practice score of professional learning activities. This finding was further supported by qualitative insights, revealing specific activities valued and practiced by instructors based on their attributed values and school type. Table 4 highlights the top three professional development activities by school type, showing participants' interest in both internal (e.g., observation) and external resources (e.g., seminars, conferences, literature reading) for their professional development.

Table 4.
Qualitative Results: Top Three Professional Development Activity

Qualitative - Top Three PD Activities	Total	Type of School Employed			
		State		Foundation	
		n	%	*n*	%
Classroom observations of and by colleagues	7	2	29%	5	71%
Attending seminars and conferences	6	4	57%	2	29%
Reading literature	6	4	57%	2	29%
Collaborating with colleagues	5	1	14%	4	57%
Getting internationally recognized certificates/diplomas	4	3	43%	1	14%
Talking about teaching and learning	4	1	14%	3	43%
Personal experience of teaching	4	2	29%	2	29%
Following online courses and-or webinars	3	3	43%	0	0%
Graduate study	3	2	29%	1	14%
Total (unique)	14	7		7	

The qualitative data suggested a potential link, with instructors in foundation school contexts predominantly reporting observation (5/7), while those in state school environments favored attending seminars and conferences (4/7) and reading professional literature (4/7) as primary professional development strategies. State school instructors also mentioned seeking internationally recognized certificates or diplomas (3/7) and engaging in online courses/webinars (3/7). These activities indicate external dependence and reliance on top-down knowledge rather than creating contextual knowledge within the classroom or through collaboration with colleagues.

In state schools, bottom-up and internally developed learning strategies are not preferred by instructors. Participant 6, for example, explains that he values external sources and authorities as a form of support over that of his colleagues:

> Workshops are very interesting because, again, that's a higher authority; somebody coming in from another university or institution who says, "Look! This is what we do for reading—try it out." As a result, I think higher-authority-led workshops would definitely be effective ... I guess, to learn that I should go to a CELTA course [Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages offered by Cambridge Assessment] or something like that.

Participant 4 (state school), also reported that despite valuing her colleagues as a potential source of learning, such interactions are typically hindered by a lack of cooperation:

> My colleagues also play a role in my professional learning. […] Basically, I can say that there is not much close cooperation among the staff members here, so I think this is upsetting for us. Maybe we need to think about how we can increase cooperation among ourselves, among the lecturers who give English classes here.

On the other hand, participants who work in foundation schools preferred bottom-up, constructive, and collaborative development activities, which featured observations (5/7), collaboration with their colleagues, (4/7) and discussion of teaching and learning (3/7). These instructors appear to value and practice internal resources within their schools in collaboration with their colleagues, which participant 3 below clearly expresses:

> I prefer team-teaching or peer observation because I know the person and we are close. I know that they would be very honest with me. They wouldn't be looking for mistakes and react with a "S/he did this mistake. No! This cannot happen" attitude or behavior. You need to have this kind of bonding between two people.

As indicated earlier, congruent with the quantitative bivariate correlation analysis results, instructors in the state schools differed from those in the foundation schools in terms of PD activities they valued and actually practiced.

(2) Contextual Factors

Instructors' reflection on interview questions also revealed the factors which facilitated or hindered their professional learning, aligning with the findings of research questions 4 and 5, as detailed in the following discussion.

(a) Enhancers

Regardless of their school type, ten out of fourteen instructors mentioned "collaborative environment" as a key factor in their PD. Four instructors working in state schools believe that working in a school where their co-workers are open to cooperation contributes to their professional learning, as asserted by Participant 2 (state school):

> Collaboration… Hearing their experiences or ideas … intellectual discussions. Here in the office, I have a native-speaker colleague from Canada and her being here really helps me in terms of personal development, professional development, and general knowledge. We share ideas and we talk about different things, so I can look at things from a different perspective as a result of our interaction.

Six instructors in the foundation school group think in the same way as Participant 2. Co-participation plays an important role in their motivation to engage in PD activities, as stated by Participant 8:

> Colleagues maybe … it would be another source of motivation. I am now currently surrounded by a lot of colleagues who are trying to improve themselves because I think it is a common feature of all of us in the school; we always try to change what we have been doing. Even if you are experienced, you want to change. I think colleagues are very important. They should support and inspire you.

These results suggest that a collaborative environment, irrespective of the school type, facilitates instructors' decisions to engage in PD and, therefore, influences their learning. Such factors highlight the importance of social and collegial interactions in a school context for professional learning.

(b) Restrictive barriers

In the overall qualitative data, nine instructors out of fourteen from both school types highlighted "lack of time" as a common barrier to their professional learning. This is an example of *task factors* (Kwakman, 2003, p. 158) affecting teachers' professional learning in the workplace. Five instructors believe that their teaching load in a week limits their participation in PD activities:

> I think the teaching time…if you have a lot of hours of up-front teaching every week— if it is too much, how can you improve yourself? How can you find the time to do some research and discover yourself? Right now, it is around 20-25 hours, and it is too much because you need to prepare before and you need to do a lot of paperwork afterwards: marking, preparing exams, keeping track of everything, too many documents to fill in and follow (attendance, grade sheets, etc). (Participant 9)

Four instructors also think that even if they participated in PD activities and learned about new techniques, they could not implement such techniques in their classes due to time constraints. Participant 14 for example indicated they could not practice such activities in class because they did not have time as the schedule was too loaded. These views are in line with Wei et al (2010, p. vi), who asserts that what might aggravate the difficulties of teachers' workplace learning is that "the current structures (e.g., work schedules) rarely allow for deep engagement in joint efforts to improve instruction and learning". Although "time" emerged as a common barrier to professional learning in both state and foundation schools, the results also showed that different schools imposed different barriers to instructors' professional learning as they reported different *work environment factors* (Kwakman, 2003, p. 158) blocking their PD. Four instructors working in state universities reported "lack of collaborative culture" and "lack of a shared vision and values" as obstacles in their PD, attributing these challenges to the tenure system, as Participant 5 explains:

> Here, it is a state school and people have habits. Every new thing is like an extra burden on them … Being a contract-based instructor and being a "*kadrolu*" [tenured] is really different because here nobody can do anything to me or to another instructor because they are already "*devlet memuru*" [civil servants], and it is really hard to make them do something to improve themselves or the institution. They don't have any concerns about job security, so they don't care about sharing or collaborating.

The comments from this participant suggest that colleagues who have habits set in stone, who show resistance to novelty, and who do not cooperate or help each other are a major barrier to the PD of those working in state schools.

On the other hand, 4 instructors working in foundation universities are confronted by a "diverse challenging student population" regarding their PD and day-to-day practices:

> You are limited in your choice of different strategies and methods because they do not appeal to the students. Even if the institution supports you, sometimes students don't want to do such "stupid" things in the classes because they just want to pass the proficiency exam. In that sense, those professional courses, conferences, and symposiums just stay there. (Participant 7)

Another instructor echoed a similar sentiment:

> Obviously, I learn a lot from my students, but … one sad thing is that I found that Turkish students are so exam oriented. I mean, as they say in Turkish "sınav çözmek," they want to complete the exam and they want to solve these questions and that is very odd from a European point of view. But for Turkish students, that's not the concept. I mean, with all these "dersane" [private teaching institution] and things like this, the focus is you pass the exam. The exam is not a means; it is the end. (Participant 10)

The study found that EFL instructors at both state and foundation universities faced challenges related to "lack of time" for professional learning. However, different workplace settings presented distinct barriers: state school instructors struggled with a "lack of collaborative culture," while foundation school instructors encountered difficulties due to a "diverse student population." This suggests that the school type may have a greater impact on professional activities than instructors' personal values. These findings support the idea that learning orientations can vary depending on the context in which teachers work, as suggested by Opfer and colleagues (2001).

Discussion and Conclusion

This mixed-method study investigated "teachers' orientation to learning" (Opfer, Pedder, & Lavicza, 2011, p. 444) concerning contextual factors affecting instructors' engagement in PD activities. The study revealed various discussion points that resonate with previous research, suggesting that workplace dynamics significantly impact instructors' learning orientations and practices (Wilson & Demetriou, 2007).

By integrating both qualitative and quantitative findings, it can be argued that while EFL instructors working in state schools have some external foci of professional learning and tend to depend mostly on outside experts, EFL instructors working in foundation schools are more likely to function as a community of practice, exploiting internal resources within their schools, collaborating with their coworkers, and engaging in a "set of relationships over time" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 98). Such an outcome supports the findings of previous research in the sense that "teacher learning is shaped through a combination of reciprocity between the context of the particular school setting, and an individual teacher's interest and disposition to learn about practice" (Wilson & Demetriou, 2007, p. 214).

The triangulation of quantitative and qualitative results points to a second salient outcome; there is a relationship between instructors' attributed-values and perceived-practices of professional learning activities, and this relationship changes depending on the school type that teachers work in. Such a finding corresponds with the findings of earlier studies related to teacher learning, individual, and workplace activities as Fuller and Unwin (2004) proposed that organizations, as learning environments, are different in nature in terms of how they create and manage learning. Quantitative analysis showed that compared to the instructors working at state schools, in foundation schools, the more instructors value a certain type of orientation to learning, the more they are likely to practice it, or equally, the more they practice a certain type of orientation to learning, the more they are likely to value it. Similarly, the qualitative data showed that instructors were able to identify specific factors that either supported or hindered their professional learning. While a "collaborative environment" was accepted as the main supportive factor, "lack of time" was regarded as the most common restrictive barrier by most of the instructors working both at state and foundation schools. However, while the first group was challenged by a "lack of collaborative culture" and "lack of a shared vision and values," the latter group reported a "diverse/challenging student population" as the main challenge to their professional learning. Therefore, the results indicated that not only individual but also contextual factors contributed to the expansive nature of the learning environment, as previously stated by Fuller et al. (2007) and Kwakman (2003). The findings of this study confirm that the availability of learning structures (e.g., time in the day, learning groups, or other tools) in the workplace, in addition to a prevailing culture of trust and collegial support, reinforce the expansive nature of learning in the workplace (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009).

Our results also indicated that job security, incidental to being tenured, plays an important role in Turkish EFL instructors' orientation to learning and participation in PD activities. EFL instructors working in state schools reported that the tenure system offered in such schools in Türkiye somewhat removes

incentives for instructors to put in more than the minimum effort in their involvement in PD, including collaboration with their colleagues. This finding is congruent with the findings of earlier research (Knight, Tait & Yorke, 2006; Qualters, 2009), which highlight the role of employment type on supporting teacher learning. To achieve collaborative inquiry among teachers for them to implement change for the betterment of the students or schools, it is crucial for administrators to consider institutional dynamics such as quality assurance standards, fiscal resources, employment type (tenured and others like contracted, substitute, assigned), and reward structures for promotion and tenure.

In Türkiye, instructors at foundation schools face the challenge of teaching a diverse student population, stemming from the country's university admission policies. State universities typically admit students based on a fixed cut-score in the national entrance exam, whereas foundation universities offer varying scholarship opportunities, ranging from partial grants to full coverage of tuition and living expenses. According to 2020 statistics from the Turkish Council of Higher Education (YÖK, 2020), full scholarship students comprised an average of approximately 13% across 72 foundation universities in Türkiye, with percentages ranging from 100% to 10%. Consequently, compared to Turkish state universities, foundation universities generally enroll a more heterogeneous student body. In other words, contextual factors, including the student profile, contributed to the expansive or restrictive nature of the learning environment in terms of instructors' professional learning process.

Our findings indicate that different school types may entail different *enhancers* and *barriers*, such as "workplace hierarchies, group affiliations, personal relations, workplace cliques, and cultural practices" (Billet, 2002, p.2), which determine the opportunities for instructors' professional learning. Based on this premise and the outcomes of this particular study, a general conclusion can be drawn that in addition to teachers' individual needs and orientations towards professional learning, contextual factors should be taken into consideration when designing professional development programs. A related issue would be identifying and eliminating institutional barriers, while reinforcing enhancers, to restructure how instructors engage in their own learning and development process in their immediate work environment. This could be best achieved by fostering expansive features and creating opportunities for learning in the workplace since such environments not only foster learning but also facilitate "the integration of individual and organizational improvement." (Fuller et al., 2007, p. 744)

The results presented in this article are snapshots of the current reality in schools of languages at Turkish state and foundation universities. Even though these findings cannot be generalized to the entire higher education sector in the country, they still highlight important characteristics about the professional learning of instructors in the HEIs not only in Türkiye but also for other international contexts. The important point to note for both national and international policy makers and administrators is that the organizational structures and dynamics that come with these contexts have the potential to influence how instructors engage in professional learning more than instructors' own values and beliefs. From this perspective, policy makers and administrators should work on their organizational structures in such a way that would allow for a supportive environment for instructors, a place where PD activities can be encouraged and taken up in a fruitful and productive way that will better contribute to instructors' professional development and academic careers.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

While insightful, this study on EFL instructors in Turkish higher education has limitations. Firstly, its sample is confined to Istanbul and Ankara, limiting generalizability. Future research should broaden the geographical scope to include diverse regions of Türkiye. Secondly, it lacks insight into instructors' individual values and traits, hindering a comprehensive understanding of their engagement with professional development. Qualitative methods like interviews or surveys could address this gap.

Additionally, the study overlooks how entry conditions affect merit and competence among educators. Future research should explore recruitment processes, institutional policies, and support for new hires to understand their impact on professional development. Addressing these limitations through further research will enhance our understanding of educators' learning practices and aid in the design of more effective support strategies in various educational settings.

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