

Professional Development Activities of Lecturers: An Action Research

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ABSTRACT

This action research was designed to examine the professional development program (PDP) of lecturers and the effects of the program's processes on educational administrators and lecturers. The study involved 2 administrators and 10 lecturers from an English preparatory school at a private university in Istanbul. During the program, to gather insights into the achievements, challenges, and suggestions related to the program, semi-structured one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with administrators and lecturers, alongside the use of reflective journals and observation forms. Content analysis was employed to analyze the data. Education administrators believe that the PDP enhanced internal communication within the organization, provided insights into organizational functioning, fostered the adoption of student-centered teaching methods, and contributed to the personal development of lecturers through self-criticism and increased self-confidence. Lecturers highlighted benefits such as experience sharing, critical thinking enhancement, student-centered teaching integration, and improved teaching skills. Time management is a common challenge for both administrators and lecturers, with the added concern among lecturers about being perceived as ineffective by students during teaching observations. In light of the findings, it is recommended to tailor activities to lecturers' needs, offer a flexible program structure, and provide support mechanisms to help lecturers cope. Future research might involve larger samples and explore emotional states and challenges independently.



Öğretim Görevlilerinin Mesleki Gelişim Faaliyetleri: Bir Eylem Araştırması

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ÖZET

Bu araştırma, öğretim görevlilerinin mesleki gelişim süreçlerini ve bu süreçlerin eğitim yöneticileri ile öğretim görevlileri üzerindeki etkilerini incelemek amacıyla tasarlanmış bir eylem araştırmasıdır. Araştırmaya İstanbul'da bir vakıf üniversitenin İngilizce hazırlık okulunda görev yapan 2 yönetici ve 10 öğretim görevlisi katılmıştır. Program süresince kazanımları, karşılaşılan zorlukları ve programla ilgili önerileri toplamak amacıyla yönetici ve öğretim görevlileriyle yarı yapılandırılmış bire bir görüşmelerin yanı sıra odak grup görüşmeleri, yansıtıcı günlükler ve gözlem formları da kullanılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde içerik analizi kullanılmıştır. Eğitim yöneticileri, mesleki gelişim programının örgüt içindeki iletişimi güçlendirdiğine, örgütsel işleyiş konusunda bilgilendirici olduğuna, öğrenci merkezli öğretim yönteminin benimsenmesini teşvik ettiğine ve öğretim elemanlarının özeleştirici ve artan özgüven sayesinde kişisel gelişimlerine de katkıda bulunduğu inanmaktadır. Öğretim görevlileri deneyim paylaşımı, eleştirel düşüncenin geliştirilmesi, öğrenci merkezli öğretimin uygulanması ve gelişmiş öğretim becerileri gibi faydaların altını çizmiştir. Zaman yönetimi hem yöneticiler hem de öğretim görevlileri için karşılaşılan zorluklar arasında yer alırken, öğretim görevlileri için bir başka zorluk ders gözlemleri esnasında öğrencilerin gözünde değersiz görülme endişesi olmuştur. Bulgular doğrultusunda, etkinliklerin öğretim görevlilerinin ihtiyaçlarına göre uyarlanması, esnek bir program yapısı sunulması ve öğretim görevlilerinin karşılaşacakları zorluklarla başa çıkmalarına yardımcı olacak destek mekanizmalarının sağlanması önerilmektedir. Bu nedenle gelecekteki araştırmalar daha fazla katılımcı içererek duygusal durumları ve zorlukları bağımsız olarak inceleyebilir.

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INTRODUCTION

The progress of nations significantly relies on the teaching profession, primarily because teachers are the pivotal factor influencing student success. Thus, prioritizing teacher professional development is essential for improving student learning outcomes (Buchanan, 2012). Professional development involves continuous learning experiences tailored to individual goals and needs (Darling-Hammond, 1993; Guskey, 2000; Hoque et al., 2011; Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Professional development for teachers involves expanding knowledge, identifying learning opportunities, and acquiring competencies. During this process, teachers adjust teaching methods to improve student learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Professional development also requires teachers to adapt to the changing environment and maintain teaching standards. Teachers ensure their professional development by improving their own learning and practices (Day, 1999; Hişmanoglu, 2010).

Through various educational and training activities, a teacher gradually gains new perspectives and confidence, expands his knowledge, learns new techniques, and takes on new roles. This comprehensive, planned process of professional development spans the teacher's entire career (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Fullan, 1991; Komba & Mwakabenga, 2019; Walling & Lewis, 2000). It is also claimed to have positive effects on the content and pedagogy of the teaching profession (Garet et al., 2001; Guskey, 2000; Ling & Mackenzie, 2001; Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989). Given its significant influence on the educational system's quality, teachers naturally accumulate requisite knowledge and expertise beyond their initial training as they engage in their profession. Professional development encompasses both formal experiences (such as attending seminars, workshops, meetings, or events) and informal experiences (such as reading publications related to one's career, watching TV programs related to the field, etc.) (Ganser, 2002). When compared to continuing education activities like orientation, workshops, seminars, and short courses, professional development requires a comprehensive, systematic, planned, dedicated, experiential, and longer-term process design (Walling & Lewis, 2000).

Although various definitions and models exist, the primary objective of professional development is to provide educators with the chance to refine their skills and methodologies, thereby fostering enhanced academic achievements among their students. Consequently, experiential learning within the school environment becomes indispensable for professional growth, fostering not only teachers' personal and professional development but also enhancing overall school performance (Blandford, 2003; Özdemir, 2013).

Professional Development in Higher Education

Recent progress in education and technology has led to changes in the traditional faculty PDPs. These programs now encompass self-directed learning supported by institutions, peer mentoring, collaborative course design, workshops, online training, and quality assurance evaluation activities (Herman, 2012). By recognizing the professional needs of faculty and providing essential training and support, institutions can promote more effective teaching and learning. This, in turn, can motivate faculty to become more productive researchers and educators, ultimately helping students achieve greater success in their learning (Güneri et al., 2017). Thus, addressing faculty needs through professional development activities is not optional but a necessary step for institutions.

Many studies have been conducted on the professional development needs of academic staff, and it has been determined that they require professional development in many areas, primarily in teaching skills (Kabakçı & Odabaşı, 2008; Koç et al., 2015). Various studies indicate that professional development positively impacts lecturers and faculties by offering solutions, diverse perspectives, enhanced motivation, improved teaching methods and classroom management, and increasing the insights of its participants (Baker et al., 2018; Hahn & Lester, 2012; Harwell, 2003; Khan & Sarwar,

2011; Yücedağ & Sevik, 2021). While Richards and Farrell (2005) stated that professional development offers social benefits by providing solidarity and cooperation among colleagues, Villegas-Reimers (2003) and Kuzu (2009) emphasized that educators' participation in PDPs increases student success.

Education administrators have an important place in the timing, content, implementation, and presentation of PDPs (Karacabey, 2020; Paul, 2020). Administrators' beliefs and the value they attach to PDPs are another element that makes PDPs effective. Therefore, the support of administrators is of great importance for success and professional development cannot be separated from school development (Fullan, 1991; Harwell, 2003). Such support should align with organizational policies and objectives to enable educators to enhance their professional skills and expertise effectively (Blandford, 2003). However, PDPs have limitations, such as content not meeting educators' needs (Villegas-Reimers, 2003), high costs, and insufficient support and evaluation (Borg, 2014). To be effective, PDPs must be carefully planned, well-supported, and properly evaluated to benefit teachers, schools, and student achievement (Blandford, 2003). This will positively contribute to the development of teachers, schools and ultimately increase student achievement.

Many studies have been conducted on professional development, and they examine educators' approach to professional development (Alpsoy et al., 2016; Ayvaci et al., 2014; Baker et al., 2018; Kabilan & Veratharaju, 2013; Muyan, 2013; Omar, 2017; Saleem et al., 2021; Taylor & McQuiggan, 2008; Van Schalkwyk et al., 2015; Yücedağ & Şevik, 2021), administrators' views on professional development (Boudreaux, 2015; Brown & Militello, 2016; Karacabey, 2020) and the views of both administrators and lecturers (Arici, 2019). As a result, to understand profoundly what kind of PDP is adopted in a school and the positive and negative aspects of this program, the opinions of education administrators and PDP participants should be taken and their impressions about the program should be examined. In this context, the general purpose of this study is to examine PDP of lecturers and the effects of PDP's processes on educational administrators and lecturers in the 2022-2023 academic year at the English preparatory school of a private university in Istanbul. In line with this purpose, answers to the research questions aligned with the following subgoals were sought:

1. To identify how educational administrators assess the expectations and predictions of lecturers before participating in PD activities.
2. To deeply examine the views of educational administrators regarding the outcomes obtained from PD activities.
3. To identify the challenges faced by educational administrators and lecturers during the planning and implementation process of PD activities.
4. To reveal the changes in the emotional and professional states of lecturers before and after participating in PD activities.
5. To determine how lecturers evaluate the skills, knowledge, and attitudes they have gained after PD activities.
6. To identify the strategies and improvement suggestions proposed by lecturers to enhance the effectiveness of PD activities.

METHOD

Research Design

This study is an action research, designed to examine the professional development processes of lecturers and the impact of these processes on educational administrators and lecturers. Action

research is a research approach in which educators systematically collect and analyze data with the aim of improving and enhancing their own practices (Creswell, 2017; Merriam, 2018). In this study, a collaborative action research design has been specifically chosen. Collaborative action research is a research design in which researchers and participants (educational administrators and lecturers) come together to manage the process collaboratively toward a common goal (Saban & Ersoy, 2020; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018).

Participants

The participants of this study consist of lecturers working at a university and the educational administrators responsible for their professional development processes. The participants were selected using a purposive sampling method, and both experienced and newly appointed lecturers, as well as educational administrators who have participated in PD activities, were identified for this process (Merriam, 2018). The information about the participant lecturers of this study is presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Information About the Participant Lecturers

		Distribution of Lecturers	
Gender	Female	8	
	Male	2	
Age	25 years or younger	3	
	Between 26-29	5	
	Between 30- 35	2	
Education Level		Graduated	Continuing
Bachelor’s Degree	English Language Teaching	5	-
	English Language and Literature	3	-
	Translation and Interpretation	2	-
Master’s Degree	English Language Teaching	2	6
	English Language and Literature	1	1
	Linguistics	-	1
PhD Degree	English Language Teaching	-	1
		Distribution of Lecturers	
Years of Experience	1-3 years	3	
	4- 5 years	6	
	8 years	1	
Institutional Experience	1 year	10	
Title	Lecturer	10	
Load of Lessons per week	14 -18 hours	2	
	22- 24 hours	8	

This table provides detailed information about the participant lecturers in this study. Most lecturers are between the ages of 26 and 35, and the majority have 4-5 years of teaching experience. Additionally, eight lecturers handle a weekly teaching load of 22-24 hours, and many are continuing their studies at the master's level.

The study's participating education administrators undertook responsibility for both planning and execution of this PD activities and actively engaged in all phases of the program. Information about the education administrators is presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Information About the Education Administrators

		Distribution of Administrators
Gender	Female	1
	Male	1
Education Level	PhD Student (English Language and Literature)	1
	Master's Degree Student (English Language Teaching)	1
Graduated Department Bachelor's Degree	English Language Teaching	2
Master's Degree	English Language and Literature	1 (graduated)
Years of Experience	20 years	1
	27 years	1
Institutional Experience	16 years	1
	19 years	1
Title	Director	1
	Deputy Director	1

This table outlines the demographic and professional background of the education administrators involved in the study. Both administrators have extensive teaching experience, with 20 and 27 years, respectively. One holds a PhD in English Language and Literature, while the other is pursuing a master's degree in English Language Teaching. They hold leadership positions as Director and Deputy Director, with significant institutional experience of over 16 years.

Content of the applied PDP

In the first semester of 2022-2023 academic year, the PDP included orientations, lesson observations, professional dialogue meetings, lecturer presentations, and end-of-semester meetings. Orientations provided information on organizational functioning, leadership skills and evaluation practices. Lesson observations aimed to enhance teaching methods and were followed by post observation meetings to share experiences. Professional dialogue meetings were organized to share course progress and experiences. End-of-semester meetings addressed student success, motivation, and professional development needs. In the second semester, presentations of the lecturers expanded, including external participants providing field updates. In Table 3 below, information about the action research cycle and some ctivities implemented within the scope of PD activities is provided.

Table 3

Action Research Cycle and Conducted Actions

Action Research Cycle	Actions Conducted	Description
1. Planning Phase	<p>Orientation Programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing Information on Organizational Functioning - Developing Leadership Skills - Providing Information on Evaluation Practices 	<p>The orientation programs provide participants (educational administrators and lecturers) with information on organizational functioning, leadership skills, and evaluation practices.</p> <p>Helps participants understand the institutional structure, increasing coordination and collaboration during the research process.</p> <p>Educational administrators develop effective leadership strategies that support lecturers' professional development during the process.</p> <p>Training on evaluation practices enhances participants' assessment skills, raising awareness to improve teaching quality.</p>
2. Observation and Action Phase	<p>Lesson Observations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data Collection from Observations <p>Professional Dialogue Meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluating Course Progress - Sharing Teaching Experiences 	<p>Lesson observations are conducted to improve teaching methods. These observations contribute to evaluating classroom practices and enhancing pedagogical strategies.</p> <p>Data collected during lesson observations provide concrete feedback on lecturers' performance and serve as direct input for the research process.</p> <p>Participants share course progress and experiences in professional dialogue meetings. These meetings foster professional development and collaboration.</p> <p>Assessments are made on the current status of the courses, and discussions are held on common challenges or achievements.</p> <p>Experience sharing among lecturers provides solutions to encountered problems and promotes the dissemination of innovative teaching methods.</p>
3. Reflection Phase	<p>Post-Observation Meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collecting Feedback - Reflective Discussions 	<p>These meetings, held after lesson observations, offer a platform for analyzing the data obtained from observations and sharing experiences.</p> <p>Lecturers receive feedback from observers, helping them refine their pedagogical methods and develop new strategies to enhance student achievement.</p> <p>Reflective discussions focus on analyzing issues or successes identified during observations and determining how these experiences can be integrated into teaching methods.</p>
4. Revising the Plan Phase	<p>End-of-Semester Meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluating Student Performance - Identifying Professional Development Needs 	<p>End-of-semester meetings comprehensively address student success, motivation, and professional development needs and help define future teaching strategies.</p> <p>At the end of the semester, student performance is analyzed, and strategies to enhance success are developed.</p> <p>Participants identify their professional development needs and develop strategies for addressing these needs in future semesters.</p>

5. Observation and Action for the Second Semester	Lecturer Presentations: - Presentations with Field Updates	In the second semester, lecturers' presentations are expanded, with external participants contributing field updates. External participants provide field-related updates, allowing lecturers to stay informed about new trends and methods.
6. Reflection Phase (Second Semester)	Feedback on Presentations: - Analyzing Feedback Results	Feedback and evaluation processes are organized for lecturer presentations. This feedback helps refine the research process. The results obtained from feedback contribute to improving teaching methods and forming new strategies for professional development.

This table provides a comprehensive summary of the actions taken during the collaborative action research process, detailing each step and outlining how data and feedback are used to refine and enhance teaching practices and professional development.

Instruments and Processes

Instrument

Qualitative data collection methods were used in the research. The data collection tools included semi-structured interview forms, observation notes, and participant diaries. The interview forms were prepared to gather in-depth views from the participants regarding their professional development processes. The observation notes include observations made during the implementation of PD activities. The participant diaries were used for lecturers and educational administrators to express their personal experiences and emotions during this process in written form (Creswell, 2017; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018).

Progress

While observation notes and participant diaries were used for data collection, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 4 lecturers and 2 administrators within the scope of the interview questions, and a focus group interview was conducted with 6 lecturers. Before the interviews, a pilot interview was conducted, and afterward, the questions were simplified to enhance their clarity. After this stage, meeting times were arranged through one-on-one discussions with participants. All one-on-one interviews lasted approximately 35 to 50 minutes. After determining a suitable day and time for the 6 lecturers to hold the focus group meeting, they were informed via email with a short letter about the purpose of the meeting and information about the day, time, and place of the focus group meeting. The focus group interview lasted approximately 2 hours and was held in the meeting room. The interviews with educational administrators were held in their offices and lasted between 40 and 45 minutes. All one-on-one and focus group interviews were recorded with permission. All interviews were conducted by the sole author. The audio files from the interviews were later transcribed, and the transcript texts amounted to 74 pages.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative data analysis methods. Content analysis was employed during the data analysis process. Content analysis allows for the interpretation of data by organizing it into meaningful themes and categories (Saban & Ersoy, 2020). To ensure the reliability and validity of the study, methods such as member checking, data triangulation, and researcher reflexivity were applied (Creswell, 2017). Validity in action research is defined as the

degree to which the collected evidence supports the results of the study (Mertler & Charles, 2008). The researcher's active role in the institution and the existence of trust-based relationships contributed to ensuring validity. Additionally, the honesty and academic credentials of the participants contributed to the validity of the study (Yin, 2011). Audio recordings were taken, and participant identities were kept confidential to ensure validity of this study (Maxwell, 2012). To ensure reliability, two researchers developed the codes and themes, which were then reviewed by an educational administration expert. Multiple evaluators and contributions enhance consistency in the content analysis (Merriam, 2018). The research process and participants are explained in a clear and understandable language to ensure transferability (Stringer, 2014). To ensure credibility, all steps of the study taken to achieve this are reported in detail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). All stages of the study process are reported in accordance with the literature to ensure confirmability (Mills, 2003). Trustworthiness in action research means that the data obtained is compatible with change and is balanced (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Consulting multiple experts and using varied data collection techniques ensures the study's trustworthiness. Interviews, conducted and transcribed in Turkish, were analyzed in the same language for accuracy. Lecturers were labeled as 'L' and administrators as 'A' in citations.

Process of the Study

In this action research, researchers have paid attention to various aspects within the scope of the collaborative process and have taken the following actions:

1. Planning Phase:

Organizing Orientation Programs: Researchers organized orientation programs to identify the professional development needs of educational administrators and lecturers working in collaboration. These programs focused on organizational functioning, leadership skills, and evaluation practices.

Setting Clear Objectives: Clearly defining the goals and objectives of the research is essential to determine what outcomes are intended to be achieved.

2. Observation & Action Phase:

Conducting Lesson Observations: Researchers created opportunities to improve teaching methods by observing the lessons of lecturers. These observations provided data for analysis based on concrete classroom practices.

Organizing Professional Dialogue Meetings: Researchers facilitated professional dialogue meetings among lecturers to share progress and experiences gained in their courses.

Collecting Data: The data collected during observations were organized along with feedback from educational administrators and lecturers.

3. Reflection Phase:

Conducting Post-Observation Meetings: After lesson observations, meetings were held with the participation of lecturers and administrators to share experiences. Researchers discussed suggestions for improvement based on the observations in these meetings.

Analyzing Data: The data obtained from observations and feedback were analyzed in-depth and reported.

4. Revising the Plan Phase:

Organizing End-of-Semester Meetings: End-of-semester evaluation meetings were held with lecturers to discuss student success, motivation, and professional development needs. In these meetings, researchers evaluated the process and planned future steps.

Collecting Feedback: Feedback collected at the end of the semester was used to prepare new action plans for future practices.

5. Observation & Action for the Second Semester:

Organizing Lecturer Presentations: In the second semester, the presentations of lecturers were expanded, with external participants providing field updates.

Monitoring Progress: Developments were assessed through new semester presentations and meetings held with external participants.

Reflection Phase (Second Semester):

Providing Feedback on Presentations: Feedback and evaluation processes were organized for lecturer presentations.

FINDINGS / RESULTS

In this section, the findings of the study are presented according to the main theme, sub-themes, and codes, considering the sub-problems of the study.

1. Pre-Participation Expectations and Predictions

The main and sub-themes related to the first research question, along with the codes that constitute these themes, are presented in Table 4, which details the positive and negative approaches of educational administrators to the expectations and predictions regarding lecturers' participation in PD activities.

Table 4

Sub-themes and codes pertaining to pre-participation expectations and predictions main theme

Main Theme	Sub-Themes	Codes
Pre-Participation Expectations and Predictions	Positive Approaches	Enjoyment Excitement High motivation
	Negative Approaches	Resistance Deem unnecessary Low motivation Reservations

As positive approaches, education administrators noted that lecturers would find the PDP “appealing” and “be enthusiastic” about participating. A-2 stated “...we received positive feedback from lecturers who expressed excitement about engaging in professional dialogues on these topics.” Education administrators indicated that they perceived the lecturers to be “highly motivated” prior to the PDP. They emphasized that the desire to learn and gain new experiences was the driving force behind this motivation by stating “... Individuals in the group who express enthusiasm with statements like

'Let's learn something, let's explore something new' consistently exhibit greater motivation." (A-2).

As negative approaches of lecturers to the PDP, education administrators stated that they expected "resistance" during periods of increased workload. However, they noted that the actual resistance encountered was less than expected. Besides, administrators expressed the belief that some lecturers might perceive the program as unnecessary. A-1 noted *"...I initially thought it might seem unnecessary to them because they may have reasoned, 'We've been attending classes for years, so what could be different? We'll see them in class.'"* Another concern expressed was that lecturers may demonstrate "low motivation" towards PDP. They emphasized that the level of motivation tends to correlate with the length of professional experience. One administrator noted, *"Individuals with extensive experience and participation in professional activities may not readily embrace these initiatives."* (A-2).

2. Outcomes of PD Activities

The main and sub-themes related to the second research question, along with the codes that constitute these themes, are presented in Table 5, which details educational administrators' views on the outcomes of lecturers' PD activities.

Table 5

Sub-themes and codes pertaining to outcomes of PD activities main theme

Main Theme	Sub-Themes	Codes
Outcomes of PD Activities	Personal Development	Increased learning motivation Gained self-confidence Increased self-awareness Increased professional self-efficacy
	Professional Knowledge and Skills	Learning new teaching strategies Development in Technology Usage Updating professional knowledge Improvement in student relations
	Institutional Benefit	Increased collaboration and teamwork Improvement in internal communication Adaptation to institutional culture Contribution to institutional goals
	Implementation Challenges	Time management issues Technological deficiencies Insufficient sources Resistance encountered during implementation

Education administrators highlighted how PDP significantly "improved communication within the institution". For instance, one administrator remarked, *"It was a great contribution, frankly, both for our professors and for them to get to know each other in terms of establishing communication within the institution."* (A-2). Administrators emphasized the importance of lecturers "being well-informed about the organization's operations". Administrators stressed how "understanding organizational culture" helps employees adapt to the working environment and stay updated. This fosters excellence

within the school. As A-1 stated, "They were helped to adapt to the corporate culture a little bit. In this way, they tried to keep themselves more knowledgeable, more equipped, more up-to-date and active."

According to education administrators, the PDP encouraged educators to "shift towards student-centered methods". A-2 noted "I think before these trainings, lecturers were looking at education from their own perspective, they cared about their own comfort.". Professional development equipped lecturers with "effective conflict management skills", resulting in fewer teacher-student conflicts. An administrator observed, "Frankly, after this program, I realized that we did not resolve many teacher-student conflicts compared to previous years." (A-2). The PDP provided educators with insights into "critical self-reflection" and the experience of working in a professional setting. As an administrator explained, "In addition to being self-critical and self-reflective, they also experienced what it is like to work in a professional environment, and I think this was their biggest benefit." (A-1).

3. Challenges and Strategies in Planning and Implementing PD Activities

The main and sub-themes related to the third research question, along with the codes that constitute these themes, are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Sub-themes and codes pertaining to challenges and strategies in planning and implementing PD activities main theme

Main Theme	Sub-Themes	Codes
Challenges and Strategies in Planning and Implementing PD Activities	Time Management	Inability to fit activities into busy schedules Difficulty in efficient time use by participants
	Lack of Resources	Lack of financial support Inadequate Training Materials
	Technological Barriers	Lack of technological infrastructure Issues with using digital tools
	Lack of Motivation	Low motivation to participate in the program Doubts about the benefits of the activities
	Strategic Solutions	Improving time management with flexible planning More efficient use of resources Additional trainings on technological tools Providing feedback and rewards to increase motivation

An administrator noted that the primary challenge encountered in executing PDP is the difficulty in planning them, particularly in "finding suitable timing for scheduling", due to teachers' heavy course loads. However, despite these time constraints, the outcomes were positive. The administrators also faced "personal challenges" such as family issues and ongoing graduate education commitments of lecturers, which further complicated scheduling and time management for PD activities. An administrator noted "Unfortunately, there was a time problem because the teachers' course load was quite high, so we had a little difficulty in making plans, but the result was good." (A-2)

Lecturers expressed concerns about being perceived as inadequate by students during observations conducted by administrators. They worried that students might question the purpose of the observation, leading to doubts about their teaching abilities. Lecturers' opinions are as follows:

"...but sometimes this can be perceived differently by the student. They can take the other teacher to a place they don't know, like "Why are they observing him? Is he at a lower level? Did he do something? Is our lesson being questioned right now?" (L-6)

"Communication difficulties" emerged as another challenge, particularly in providing and receiving feedback after lesson observations. Some lecturers struggled with articulating their thoughts effectively and navigating sensitive conversations with colleagues. As L-3 stated *"... I wanted to offer constructive criticism, but I felt a bit nervous while expressing my thoughts, so I found myself using phrases like 'Well, sir, I believe...' and 'In my humble opinion...' , it was difficult for me."*

4. Pre- and Post-Participation Expectations and Emotions

The main and sub-themes related to the fourth research question, along with the codes that constitute these themes, are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Sub-themes and codes pertaining to pre- and post-participation expectations and emotions main theme

Main Theme	Sub-Themes	Codes before participation	Codes after participation
Pre- and Post-Participation Expectations and Emotions	Positive Approaches	Enjoyment	Enjoyment
		Excitement	Being influenced
		High motivation	Admiration
		Deem necessary	Deem necessary
			Feeling happy
			Relief
			Organization based needs
	Negative Approaches	Resistance	Lack of interest
		Deem unnecessary	Dissatisfaction
		Low motivation	
Reservation			

Lecturers were asked how they felt when they first learned that they would participate in PDP. The answers given by the participants included both positive and negative opinions. As positive opinions, many lecturers expressed their "excitement" about the opportunity for professional growth *" I felt a rush of excitement when I found out... the thought of stepping into something new and challenging was thrilling, and I was eager to see what the program would entail."* (L-5). When they first learned about participating in PDP, lecturers expressed "curiosity about the institution's operations". In addition, lecturers expressed "the necessity" of PDP for their growth as follows: *" I realized it was absolutely crucial for my development—not just professionally, but also for broadening my perspective."* (L-1). One of the lecturers expressed "self-confidence" due to past experiences with PD activities. L-5 noted *"I wasn't surprised by the observation process... I knew I could handle it."* In addition to the positive viewpoints mentioned earlier, several lecturers also expressed negative opinions upon learning about their involvement in PDP. Some lecturers initially "deemed the activities unnecessary". For instance, L-6 expressed *"When I first heard about observation, I personally deliberated on its necessity. Everyone has their own methods, so why do we need observation?"* Lecturers expressed "tension," largely stemming from lesson observations, and "anxiety about evaluations," particularly among newcomers

feeling pressure to prove themselves. L-5 stated, "We've just started to work here, and there's an effort to prove ourselves."

Lecturers experienced happiness from their involvement in PDP and "enjoyed the activities". The opinions of the lecturers were "the activities were not challenging" (L-5), "they were useful" (L-1) and "the sharing was fun" (L-9). They appreciated the sharing of experiences and "admired" various teaching approaches observed during lesson observations. L-9 exemplified the experience as "...she reflected the lyrics of the song on the board. That grammatical issue was always present in the lyrics of the song. I was amazed.". Another positive opinion of the lecturers after the PD activities was that they "found the activities necessary". Lecturers stated that they had different opinions before participating in the activities, but later their opinions changed, and they found it necessary. L-4 expressed "...it was a very nice interaction, so in that sense, I changed my mind later. I said, "Oh, it's not like that, it's actually necessary...". Lecturers mentioned that these activities were "organization-based needs" by noting "What was said there, that is, the year will be like this, etc., and the information given there was of course very useful, as I am still benefiting from the information provided in PDP." (L-2). However, there was also some negativity observed. One lecturer found an activity uninteresting due to its mismatch with personal interests, while another expressed negativity regarding content repetition. L-1 expressed "...in both presentations, they talked about 2 different studies that reached the same conclusions with both data...I didn't like that there was repetition of content."

5. Evaluation of Gains after PDP

The main and sub-themes related to the fifth research question, along with the codes that constitute these themes, are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Sub-themes and codes pertaining to evaluation of gains after PDP main theme

Main Theme	Sub-Themes	Codes
Evaluation of Gains after PDP	Knowledge Gains	Deepening Field Knowledge Learning New Pedagogical Approaches Use of Current Educational Technologies
	Skill Gains	Effective Classroom Management Improved Communication Skills Problem Solving and Decision-Making Abilities
	Attitude Gains	Shift Towards Student-Centered Approaches Increased Professional Self- Confidence Openness to Continuous Learning

"Sharing experiences" was a common outcome of PDP, with lecturers benefiting from each other's insights. They highlighted the fostering of collegiality. For example, L-1 mentioned, "We had numerous opportunities to exchange experiences with other lecturers... We discussed challenges and solutions." L-4 stated, "My interaction with a colleague... allowed me to share my experiences... It was a fruitful exchange.". Lecturers observed that participating in PDP helped them "develop stronger communication skills" with both students and colleagues. Another lecturer touched on the orientation activity and emphasized its feature of helping "to understand the functioning of the organization" by noting "...during the orientation; I took notes of everything, which helped me a lot to get to know the system better." (L-8) and another lecturer mentioned "the necessity" of PDP by noting "Thanks to these programs, none of us jumped into an empty pool. First of all, we gained awareness of what kind of place

we were working in..." (L-9).

Another frequently exemplified outcome of PDP was the gain of “reflecting on classroom practices”. Lecturers mentioned that they implemented the practices they experienced in their lesson observations in their own classes. For instance, L-10 noted “...*What I saw in the lesson I observed was beneficial for the students, and I applied it in my own classroom and benefited from it...*”. Lecturers also stated that the “acquisition of self-criticism skills” is another outcome. Lecturers had the opportunity to question their own methods and techniques during lesson observations. L-1 emphasized this outcome by saying “*When you observe another colleague’s lesson, you question yourself, “Is this how I teach?” or “Can I attract the attention of students to the subject?” ...*”. The other skill gained after participating PDP was mentioned as “self-correction skills”. For instance, L-10 expressed this outcome as “...*It was better because it gave me the opportunity to improve myself on the things, I did wrong.*”.

6. Suggestions for Enhancing the Effectiveness of PD Activities

The main and sub-themes related to the sixth research question, along with the codes that constitute these themes, are presented in Table 8, which illustrates suggestions for enhancing the effectiveness of the main theme of PD activities.

Table 8

Sub-themes and codes pertaining to suggestions for enhancing the effectiveness of PD activities main theme

Main Theme	Sub-Themes	Codes
Suggestions for Enhancing the Effectiveness of PD Activities	Implementation-Related Suggestions	Activities with Increased Interaction Inclusion of Motivation-Boosting Elements Intensive and Short-Term Training Better Time Planning Activities Including Practical Application Activities Providing Feedback Peer Observations Instead of Manager Observations More Peer Observations More Manager Observations Training by Experts Trainers and Participants from Outside the Organization
	Content-Related Suggestions	Field-Specific Content Effective Time Management Training for Students with Special Needs Management of Negative Student Behaviors Training for Distant Education Training for Effective Use of Technology

Main Theme	Sub-Themes	Codes
		Artificial Intelligence Applications Material Design Testing and Assessment Training to Improve Phonetics Knowledge

One of the suggestions of the lecturers was “including motivation-enhancing elements” into the PDP. Suggestions to increase motivation for participation in events include changing event venues and being rewarded with a certificate after participation. L-7 noted “...of course, everyone will want to do this, especially if it comes with a certificate at the end...”. Lecturers advocated for “practice-based training”, where lecturers and participants engage in applying learned concepts practically. For instance, L-8 noted “...it may be something that we can apply or experience...then they may ask us for something like practice. It could be something like creating an application based on what we've learned about it.”. They also mentioned that “feedback should be provided” in the trainings they attended. The lecturers mentioned that “experts should provide trainings” in their suggestions regarding the PDP. For instance, L-1 said “...it may be someone who has practiced in this field, worked in this field, worked in this profile, and conducted research in his field.”

A frequently mentioned suggestion was to have peer observations instead of manager observations. L-5 expressed this suggestion as “...there should be observations, but I definitely argue that if it is going to happen in the future, it should be at the level of the co-workers.” Some lectures proposed “increasing peer observations” suggesting they would be more effective within courses featuring varied content. L-8 noted “...so the more classes we observed, different teachers, and different lessons, for example, if there was a writing class, a listening class, and a grammar class, I thought it could be different and better.”

Lecturers stressed the importance of “trainings for the effective use of technology” for enhancing classroom practices, citing changing student profiles as a driving factor. L-1 said “...the profile of students and the generation is changing, so students should now use materials that are more appropriate to their generation and more relevant to their interests, rather than books. I feel that I need to use technology better to achieve this...” They recommended training on AI applications and WEB2 tools for both online and face-to-face education. L-4 remarked “...These applications, suitable for use in both online and face-to-face education, should be in our agenda...”. Additionally, they highlighted the need for training in material design and testing and assessment by noting “...we need to use materials in the classroom. This could be more of an educational activity on material design.” (L-1).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study aims to examine the professional development processes of lecturers and the effects of these processes on educational administrators and lecturers at the English preparatory school of a private university in Istanbul. The findings indicate that education administrators anticipated a positive reception from lecturers, believing the program would address their needs and keep them informed, and they also expected high motivation from newly appointed lecturers. This shows that PD activities have a motivation-enhancing effect, which is consistent with previous research (Kubat, 2017; Saribaş et al., 2012). Education administrators acknowledge that young and inexperienced lecturers are highly motivated for the program, contrasting with potentially lower motivation among experienced lecturers. It seems that education administrators are aware of this issue. The findings of the research are similar to the finding in Koç et al. (2015) study that experienced academicians are reluctant to participate in PDPs.

The education administrators highlighted that the PDP fosters effective communication among lecturers, promoting collaboration and a positive working environment. These activities help lecturers enhance teaching methods, adopt student-centered approaches, and manage classroom conflicts (Baker et al., 2018). Analyzing lecturers' participation in PDP revealed that fostering collaboration significantly enhanced their professional development (Baker et al., 2018; Çalışkan, 2021). These activities enhanced lecturers' understanding of the system, boosted confidence, and improved teaching skills. Acquiring self-criticism and self-correction skills enabled them to identify strengths and weaknesses, guiding their professional development. Classroom observations led to the adoption of diverse and effective teaching methods, facilitating improved student learning (Akyazı & Geylanioglu, 2015; Dikilitaş & Yaylı, 2018; Omar, 2017). Given lecturers' awareness of these outcomes, they obviously benefited from the program. However, unlike the findings of this study, Ayvacı et al. (2014) and Kubat (2017) reported that activities were unproductive and participants did not benefit.

Findings reveal that the implementation of PDP encountered certain challenges. In this study, one significant difficulty was the scheduling of activities, attributed to the high workload of lecturers. However, it was noted that this challenge could be overcome with effective planning, leading to positive outcomes (Arı, 2014). Another challenge was lecturers' personal issues and ongoing graduate studies, which hindered their participation in some activities (Koç et al., 2015). Lecturers' responsibilities, like family matters and graduate studies, limited their participation in some activities. However, administrators noted that resolving these issues wasn't a major problem. Unlike administrators, lecturers faced challenges that affected their participation and motivation in PD activities. Darling-Hammod et al. (2017) emphasized that the challenges of PDPs are generally organization-based and personal. Similarly, findings regarding the challenges encountered by lecturers include concerns about being perceived as inadequate by students during lesson observations, scheduling issues and communication difficulties (Borg, 2014; Ekim et al., 2023; Özen, 2006). Difficulties in time management indicate the need for lecturers to engage in more effective planning by considering their personal situations and responsibilities for their professional and personal development. By planning programs more flexibly, considering lecturers' individual needs and existing time constraints, they may be able to benefit more effectively from PDPs. Additionally, concerns about evaluation and fear of appearing inadequate to students during PD activities have been identified as challenges faced by lecturers.

When lecturers first heard about participating in the PDP, they felt excited and saw it as necessary for gaining new perspectives and information. This aligns with Arıcı (2019), who noted that faculty members are eager to learn about unfamiliar topics and enjoy being in the student role. Their curiosity about teaching methods, grading, materials and organizational functioning of the PDP (Schmidt et al., 2022) influences their expectations for the PDP. Familiarity with past observations boosts confidence, leading to positive attitudes towards the PDP and lecturers expressed self-confidence from past observations. Overall, lecturers found the program enjoyable and beneficial for both personal and professional development.

Some lecturers reported negative feelings about classroom observations, particularly anxiety and tension when observed by an administrator. These emotions likely stem from viewing observations as inspections rather than supportive opportunities for feedback. The negative reactions may also be due to lecturers' lack of prior experience with such practices. This study's findings align with Herranen et al. (2021) study, indicating that teachers with prior experience in certain activities exhibited higher motivation. Another negative perspective emerged when lecturers deemed certain aspects unnecessary. However, over time, perceptions shifted positively as the benefits of these PD activities became clearer. This aligns with studies showing that prior experience increases motivation and understanding of such initiatives (Malik, 2021).

The study revealed that lecturers found PDP activities enjoyable, impactful, and necessary,

describing their experiences as comforting and joyful. These positive findings suggest that PDPs are both motivational and effective (Çalışkan, 2021). However, some lecturers pointed out downsides of the PDP. They felt dissatisfied with activities that didn't align with their interests or seemed repetitive. Unlike the findings of this study, Kabakçı and Odabaşı (2008) and Karacabey (2020) discovered that when professional development content matched participants' interests, it boosted their motivation and satisfaction. Regarding the feelings of lecturers after PDP, the positive experiences could contribute significantly to the personal and professional development. The findings of the study are similar in nature to the studies of Ekim et al. (2023) and Arıcı (2019), which highlight the positive effects of participation in PDPs. However, the findings of the study do not align with Muyan (2013), which suggested that participants may be hesitant to participate due to previous negative experiences despite being aware of the importance of PDPs.

Lecturers stressed the value of practical, hands-on activities in an adult learning environment, which they find more enjoyable and conducive to lasting learning, as supported by Aykal (2018). They also preferred peer observation over administrator observation, advocating for more peer involvement due to the unexpected benefits they gained from it. Similar findings were reported by Çelik et al. (2013) and Çalışkan (2021), highlighting the importance of observing good practices in PD activities. The suggestion for expert-led training aligns with the findings of Kabakçı and Odabaşı (2008) and Koç et al. (2015). As in Arıcı (2019) and Duzan (2016) regarding the content of PDP, lecturers suggested enhancing content in their focusing on areas like assessment, material adaptation, and technology integration for professional growth. The recommendations for enhancing technology usage, AI, and training on WEB2 tools reflect a need identified by Darling-Hammond (2017) as essential for adapting to 21st-century requirements. These findings are consistent with Arıcı (2019), Ekim et al (2023), and Tondeur et al. (2017), emphasizing the importance of effective technology integration in education.

Overall, lecturers recommend incorporating modern teaching methods to improve instruction quality, skills, and adaptability. PDPs enhance teaching, job satisfaction, and confidence. The study shows a positive impact of PDPs on lecturers, highlighting the need for carefully planned programs that address personal needs. Important data has been provided for consideration in planning future PDPs, which is believed to be crucial for developing more effective programs in the future.

SUGGESTIONS

The alignment of PDPs with participants' expectations and interests is essential for their effectiveness. Education administrators can design organization-based PDPs that identify areas for growth and incorporate activities tailored to participants' needs and interests, enhancing motivation and encouraging interaction.

Concerns about evaluation and fear of appearing inadequate to students during PD activities have been identified as challenges faced by lecturers; providing additional training opportunities or support mechanisms to address these challenges can help lecturers cope and lead to a more positive experience with PDPs.

For future PDPs, providing participants with detailed information about the content, objectives, and implementation beforehand can foster a positive attitude and enhance the program's effectiveness, especially when activities are designed to boost collaboration.

Flexibly planning the program can reduce participants' time-related difficulties and offer more opportunities for participation. Additionally, collecting participants' feedback during the program can

help assess its effectiveness and make necessary adjustments.

Researchers can conduct more comprehensive studies to evaluate the views and experiences of different participant groups. Moreover, deeper investigations into the emotional effects of PDPs and the challenges encountered can be undertaken.

LIMITATIONS

This study, like any other, has its limitations, and the findings should be considered within this context. Firstly, the study was conducted in the context of a university, so there is a need for study findings with samples containing different educational levels. On the other hand, although the study findings are largely in line with the literature, the findings may not be generalizable. Therefore, quantitative research can be conducted on the same subject, with a sample of more experienced participants, because a significant portion of the participants of this study are either new to the profession or less experienced.

Ethical Statement

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Ethics Committee Approval

Ethics committee approval of this study was taken from Social Sciences Ethics Commission of Istanbul Aydın University, with the decision dated 15.11.2023 and numbered 102774.

Author Contributions

Research Design (CRediT 1) Author 1 (%50) – Author 2 (%50)

Data Collection (CRediT 2) Author 1 (%100) – Author 2 (%00)

Research - Data analysis - Validation (CRediT 3-4-6-11) Author 1 (%50) – Author 2 (%50)

Writing the Article (CRediT 12-13) Author 1 (%50) – Author 2 (%50)

Revision and Improvement of the Text (CRediT 14) Author 1 (%50) – Author 2 (%50)

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No conflict of interest exists regarding the study presented in this article.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

Sustainable Development Goals: 4 Quality Education

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APPENDICES

Observation Form Sample

Date of Observation:

Location of Observation:

Duration of Observation:

Observer:

A. Description of the Observed Activity

- **Activity Name:**
- **Activity Purpose:**
- **Participants:**
- **Activity Content:**

B. Observation Categories

1. **Participant Engagement**

- How are participants engaging in the activity?
- How is the interaction among participants?
- What are the levels of active or passive participation?

2. **Role of the Educational Administrator**

- How does the educational administrator guide participants during the activity?
- How frequently and in what manner does the educational administrator provide feedback to participants?

3. **Lecturers' Behaviors**

- Are lecturers' reactions to the learning process observed?
- What are the points where lecturers face challenges or find motivation?

4. **Activity Flow and Content**

- How does the activity align with the planned program?
- How is the content perceived by the participants?
- Which content or topics receive more interest or resistance?

5. **Other Observations**

- Are there any other notable situations among participants?
- Were there any unexpected situations during the activity?

C. Observation Results and Notes

- **General Evaluation:**
- **Improvement Suggestions:**

- **Other Notes:**

Reflective Journal Sample

Date:

Journal Writer:

A. Summary of the Day

- What was the professional development activity conducted today?
- What was the purpose of the activity and how was it implemented?

B. Emotional State and Experiences

- What emotions did you feel before, during, and after the activity?
- Did you feel comfortable during the activity? Why?

C. Learning and Development

- What was the most important thing you learned from today's activity?
- How did this activity contribute to your professional knowledge and skills?

D. Challenges and Observations

- What challenges did you encounter during the activity?
- How did you overcome these challenges or were you unable to?

E. Future Thoughts

- How can you make this activity more effective in the future?
- What are your expectations for future professional development activities?

F. Other Notes

- Are there any other observations, ideas, or suggestions you would like to mention?

Interview Questions Sample

Interview Date:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Interview Duration:

A. Introduction Questions

1. What did you think about professional development activities before participating in them?
2. What was your motivation for participating in such activities?

B. Professional Development Process

3. What did you learn during the professional development activities you attended? How did these activities benefit you?

4. What were the biggest challenges you faced during the activities? How did you overcome these challenges?

C. Relationship with Educational Administrators

5. How do you evaluate the role of educational administrators in this process? Did they provide sufficient support?

6. How did collaborating with educational administrators benefit you and the process?

D. Post-Activity Evaluation

7. What changes did you notice in yourself after the professional development activities?

8. Did you experience any increase in your professional knowledge and skills after the activities? In which areas?

E. Improvement and Suggestions

9. What suggestions would you make to improve the effectiveness of future professional development activities?

10. What advice would you give to other lecturers who will participate in such activities?

F. Closing

11. Is there anything else you would like to add?