

English Teachers' Attitude towards Professional Development in Kuwait

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ABSTRACT

Teacher professional development is a life-long and continuous process in which teachers are expected to upgrade their knowledge, master new skills, and change their practices since advancement in their teaching career is finally for their students and education reform. Besides, teachers and their professional development must be seen as an investment. This study is designed to investigate the English teachers' attitude towards professional development in Kuwait and the problems encountered by those teachers, and their need for professional development programs. It intends to devise innovative approaches for English teacher's development in Kuwait based on teachers' requirements to provide those teachers with all they need to overcome the obstacles they face in their professional lives. It will also assess teachers' preferences of the pedagogical tools that enable them to convey the instructional material. The participants in this study were 20 experienced in-service English teachers who were chosen randomly from three different institutes at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) in Kuwait. Data were gathered from two main sources: Interviews with in-service teachers of English, and questionnaires. Specifically, the study aimed to address questions related to the teachers' future development and the possible problems facing them or expects that might face them in the future, and their feedback about the challenges and difficulties of teaching English in Kuwait. The findings revealed a lack of teachers' development in some particular areas that need more skill development of English teachers. Intensive training courses should be applied for the in-service teachers, and professional development programs should promote and enhance teaching effectiveness and support professional growth. Teachers' professional development should permit the transition to higher status and responsibility roles within the teaching profession. Therefore, teachers need access to new research and acknowledgment in teaching literacy, language development, and an integrated curriculum. Moreover, they need appropriate up-to-date qualifications in both the content area of the subject and teaching methodology. They also need opportunities to share expertise with other experienced teachers and educators, leading to reflection on practice. Furthermore, high-quality teaching should be focused on developing a strong, well informed, and well supported professional body to respond to community and educational concerns. Also, access to professional development is of paramount importance as it enables teachers to improve students' learning outcomes. Finally, English teachers can actively participate in evaluating teaching practices and programs; and actively participate in the implementation of local state and national curriculum initiatives.

Key words: Professional Development, In-service Teachers, Training Courses, Skills, Curriculum, Evaluation, Teacher Development, Experience

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The professional development of teachers is one of the major reforms introduced into the education systems. Since the start of the modern era in the 21st century, these reforms have been more vigorous and continued. Professional development mainly refers to the numerous forms of educational experiences related to an individual's work. Engineers, accountants, educators, lawyers, doctors, and countless

other professions engage in professional development to learn and apply new skills and knowledge to improve their performance on the job. In education, research has shown that the quality of teaching and school leadership serve as the most crucial factors in raising the learners' academic achievement (Guskey, 2000a). The continual expansion of the skills and knowledge of educators is essential for implementing the best educational practices. The professional development programs serve as an important way of acknowledging that education is a never-ending process. Thus,

continual education is crucial for career-minded individuals to constantly improve their skills to become more proficient at their jobs.

Progressive nations have recognized the importance of educational reforms and the teachers' professional development (Villegas-Reimers, Eleonora, 2003). The dual role of teachers in the process of reform as the objects and the subjects of change makes this field a fast-growing but more challenging area, which has received considerable attention in the past few years. Most teachers & educators have endorsed this approach as they consider it an advantage & appreciation in promoting the teaching process. However, there is a particular reservation among a few educators who regarded it as a sign of deficiency of teachers' performance due to inadequate teaching standards.

However, it has been generally accepted that professional development programs help the teachers to maintain high-quality performance and supporting their professional development. Therefore, enhancing teachers' teaching career is considered the most important and strategic investment of time, money, and efforts that human resource managers make in education (Holland, 2005).

This paper elaborates on teachers' dual role as agents of change and the role of professional development in the teaching career. Somehow, it also aims to delineate the pivotal role of teachers in the teaching process.

The Problem of the Study

The present society is more or less an information society, as evident from the constant changes in all areas of human life, including in the education sector. However, Kuwait English tutors in remote areas have rather limited chances for engaging in in-service education. The limitation is attributed to numerous factors that comprise transportation and geographical environments, the number of teaching personnel, small school and class scale, scarce opportunities for interacting with teachers from other institutions. Considering the shortage of opportunities for self-refinement and acquiring new skills and knowledge, these teachers' professionalism might thus be impacted considerably (Villegas-Reimers, Eleonora, 2003). VandenBos (2007) asserts that teachers and learners in remote districts face challenges that comprise lack of stimulation of professional development, shortage of resources, and barriers attributable to distance. The result includes the potential decrease in the teachers' quality and limited efficiency in their learning.

The English students in some of Kuwait's remote parts often have perform dismally than their counterparts in other areas because of numerous other factors that include cultural differences (Galaezi, Nye, Poulter, & Allen, 2018). These students' grades are also affected by their high turnover rates of teachers in remote areas, high amounts of unqualified or substitute teachers, and the lower motivation of the teachers to engage in in-service learning. The recent implemented reforms and changes in different other nations necessitate that teachers exhibit ongoing proficiencies in their responsibilities and adapt to the new job requirements. The teachers are in most instances needed to obtain high outcomes

within their professional activities despite the presence of few resources. The fact that the teacher's decisions in teaching activities is often dependent on their perceptions, experiences, values, and beliefs concerning their responsibilities, activities, and roles in schools necessitate further studies on the attitudes of the teachers concerning professional development. Therefore, understanding Kuwait English teachers' attitudes towards professional development provides insight into teachers' role as agents of change in the learning process.

Therefore, the problem of the study lies in the practical implementation of the educational reforms in Kuwait. Professional development of the teachers needs more attention to execute and harvest optimized research. A similar problem was indicated in the educational system of Yemen. There was a lack of clear assertions of curriculum theory in several academic and administrative departments. The analysis revealed that school officials did not pay much attention to improving programs and executing their policies. These results show that the theory and practice need to be revised. While the participants expressed concerns about the different challenges, they stressed Yemeni universities' urgent need for a good ELTE program (Muthanna & Karaman, 2011).

Aims of the Study

Based on the experience of the researcher, the review of the literature, and the survey prepared by the researcher, the study attempted to answer the following questions:

- 1- What are the most encountered problems faced by the teachers of English in Kuwait?
- 2- Are the in-service training professionals enough for the teachers of English in Kuwait?

Study Goals

- To explore English teachers' attitude towards professional development training
- To analyze the reasons for the English teachers' lack of interest in professional development training
- To investigate the impact of English teachers' training on professional development in Kuwait

LITERATURE REVIEW

Recently, there has been a significant increase in the level of interest and support that teachers throughout the world are receiving in their professional development. For all teachers, "Profession" is defined as a characterized career that requires specialized expertise in academic training, job standards, fees, and general practice for developing an ethical relationship between professional members, colleagues and the clients (VandenBos, 2007). Besides, the teaching cannot be distinguished from the context of professionalism framework. Rhodes, Stokes and Hampton (2004) defined teachers' professional development as a series of activities intended to "increase the skills, knowledge or understanding of teachers, and their effectiveness in schools". Sarsar (2008) claims that teachers need to upgrade their skills and maintain a specific level of professionalism through additional professional

development inputs. In addition, Diaz-Maggioli (2004) states that professional development “has yielded little or no positive effects on student learning” (p.1). This goes in line with Sarsar (2008) who claims that teachers lack the basic knowledge and require efficient academic skills.

According to Santrock (2011), teachers are required to extend either perspective or technique in teaching practice. They might include, but are not limited to the implementation of the teaching techniques assisted by multiple strategies, lesson plans, and classroom management. An ideal teacher understands how to inspire students, interact with them effectively by incorporating sophisticated techniques in the classroom environment.

The learning of teaching skills has always been the most important aspect. It helps teachers to teach and prepare them for more functional orientation activities that are beneficial to teaching. For the assessment of the teaching competencies, there lies a strong relationship among organizational factors, teacher development and teaching practices. In these competencies, Teachers’ development is the most important for the implementation of educational reforms (Zaidi, Khan & Khan, 2018). Therefore, professional development of teachers is a continual cycle in which teachers are expected to improve their knowledge, learn new skills and adjust practical skills because the creation of their employment is primarily for their pupils and to bring the reforms in education. In addition, teachers and their professional development must also be regarded as an investment. Thus, schools must not only extend appropriate professional development strategies to teachers and to the development of human resources, they must also ensure the means through effective management and leadership. Naturally, only trained and professional teachers with high quality students can form a foundation for good schools. The improvement of educational skills among teachers is therefore seen as the major and strategic investments in time, money and efforts made in education by human resource managers (Holland, 2005).

Recently, the professional development of teachers is getting popular throughout the world, and the teachers of multiple backgrounds, ethnicities, colors and races are exchanging ideas and skills by various online resources. Such type of training includes the documents, essays and research reports on models and practices of professional development. Domestic & international donor agencies have supported this cause with great significance Asian-Pacific Economic Co-operative (APEC) is an excellent example that identified the problems of the teaching community is a problem in the economic development (Villegas-Reimers, Eleonora, 2003). The programs of educational reforms all over the world include a component of teacher’ professional development as one of the critical elements in the change process.

Recently, ministers and leaders from almost 20 countries in the Middle East and Africa expressed their opinions and experiences about education challenges and changes in a World Bank meet. The need and the challenges in the education was summarized as below:

- Need for continuous, rapid action to improve learning results and that each nation must find its own path to change, as it is well positioned to learn from each other.

- The poor literacy rate is also a problem of schooling. There are too many teachers who are not trained, motivated and assisted. Teachers and leaders in schools should be an essential part of a reforming policy and processes.
- Early childhood education (ECE) requires to induct the experiences of young people, which impede further growth, recognizing the difficulty of interventions and the need for ECE teachers to be well educated and qualified.
- The advanced technology must be used to address students’ and teachers’ needs and can be used to enhance training, teacher development and access to the teaching and learning services (The World Bank, 2020).

Qatar has implemented several educational reforms and the results were promising. Reform-related teaching and efficacy behaviors were quantitatively measured for treatment and control groups before and after professional development. Regression methods were employed for evaluating the impact on the relationship between teaching behavior and teacher efficacy in professional development. The results showed an important effect on the behavior and the efficacy of teachers who received the training (Zimmerman, Knight, Favre & Ikhlef, 2017). But a Post-reform assessment showed that the system is still not what it ought to be. The new initiatives for teacher development have stressed the enhancement of teacher professional development through training and enhancement of professional development programs. The current education is significantly different from the reform introduced (Nasser, 2017).

Oman ‘s education system has developed significantly quickly with regard to the increases in educational entry rates and the level of teacher qualifications. At almost 100% of students have had access to basic education. However, the current situation in Omani schooling has offered various challenges for the professional development of teachers (Sulaiman Al Shabibi & Silvennoinen, 2018).

In a study by Galaczi, Nye, Poulter, and Allen (2018), teachers’ development is associated with raising English standards because most of the learning technologies could not be incorporated into classrooms due to inadequate knowledge of the English language.

According to Richard and Farrell (2005), teacher education is based on achieving specific goals in the training and development process. The training aims to achieve short-term objectives. However, it requires a grasp of the basic principles of the discipline and its application. Nevertheless, long term progress requires growth that is not necessarily aimed at a specific task. Rather, it includes reflective analysis, discussion of critical concerns with peers, exploration of values, beliefs and principles. The researchers also noted that there is tremendous pressure on teachers to develop their knowledge in the use of technology improve.

Teacher learning is essential because it provides long-term learning experiences that enable teachers to improve how they teach. A study conducted by Shammari, Testerman, & Halimi (2020) explored the attitudes of teachers towards learning in Kuwait’s government schools. The results indicated that teachers have a positive attitude towards teacher’s

learning community (TLC). Furthermore, the study found out that teachers felt positive when they were given an opportunity to present material to their peers. Through presentations, it is possible for the teachers to know whether they have competence. In addition, they understood their weaknesses and noticed some of the areas that needed improvements. The study also indicated that teachers did not have the willingness to work in settings involving collaborative learning.

In another study, Alyah (2018) examined the perceptions of teachers on professional development in Kuwait compared to the professional learning standards. The comparison of the perceptions was done with regards to the criteria underpinning professional development standards. Both qualitative and quantitative data were used and separate analysis done after which the researcher merged the findings. The results of the study indicated that the perceptions of professional development programs is low in Kuwait since teachers did not have access to professional learning programs. The other important finding is that teaching practices might not be noticeable because professional development programs are inappropriate or teachers can be unable to apply what they learn in the classroom setting.

A study by Almusawi, BinAli, and Alqallaf (2019) sought to explore the knowledge of prospective teachers in Kuwait in linguistic constructs relating to English literacy. An online questionnaire was used to assess 150 prospective teachers. The results indicated that prospective teachers have low levels of professional preparation and linguistic awareness to make them ready for English instruction in the future. Moreover, the results showed that that was a qualitative deficit in the ability of the education system to prepare teachers adequately. The instruction skills of the prospective teachers were also found not to be anchored in a strong foundation with regards to their linguistic awareness. The results support the findings by Sarsar (2008) who states that teachers ought to upgrade their skills, and also ensure they maintain a certain level of professionalism through professional development.

Alrabah et al (2016) conducted a study to investigate the use of L1 (Arabic) by teachers in classrooms in Kuwait. The participants in the study comprised of 60 EFL teachers based at the Language Center in a Kuwait college. The method used to collect data included interviews after which the researchers came up with a grounded survey. Ethnograph 6.0 and Microsoft Excel were used for data analysis. Based on the results, teachers in Kuwait used L1 in L2 classrooms as a tool for classroom management. Moreover, majority of the teachers who participated in the study had negative attitudes towards the use of L1 in L2 teaching. In another similar study, Zimmerman, Knight, Favre, & Ikhlef (2017), which conclude that training enhances professional development and efficacy of teachers

The professional development of teachers is an issue of concern for scholars and educators because it enhances student achievement. A study by Alhouti (2018) sought to compare teacher professional development in Singapore and Kuwait and highlight the extent to which this practice

lacks in Kuwait and lessons that the country can learn from Singapore. The study conducted a review of literature to compare professional development (PD) of teachers in the two countries. The results indicate that majority of the teachers in Kuwait are not trained adequately for their job. The lack of adequate training emanates from the fact that there are insufficient funds. Based on the results, teacher professional development in Kuwait is an issue of concern that should be given urgent attention.

Variables that Contribute to the Success of Teachers' Professional Development

Professional development among teachers is assessed by several performance indicators. They include professional knowledge and practice, professional engagement and the self - management in students. Moreover, professional knowledge impacts teaching practice and educational participation strongly and positively. The ability to perform didactic transposition is the most important component in terms of professional knowledge. The most important vectors of the professional development are the capability to develop effective assessment instruments and interpret learning outcomes. Research has also shown shortcomings in teacher education: the ability to manage destructive behaviors of students, customize learning and self-regulated emotions of teaching (Manasia, Ianos & Chicioeanu, 2019).

Fullan (1987) presented four crucial factors for the development of good teachers, such as:

- Redefinition of staff development as a learning process;
- The active role of leadership at the school level;
- The organizational culture at the school level; and
- The role of external organizations, especially at the local and regional level.

Guskey and Huberman (1995) stated some success guidelines to be followed when planning and implementing teachers' opportunities for professional development. They are as follows:

- Recognizing change at an individual and organizational level;
- Thinking big, but starting small;
- Teamwork;
- Implementation of the procedures for feedback and results;
- Continuous supervision, assistance;
- Innovative programs.

In later research, Guskey (2000a) refined his advice on professional development to the following:

- An emphasis on learners' education;
- Illustrating individual and organizational changes;
- The vision guiding minor modifications;
- Continuous development in daily work.

Corcoran 1995 has proposed the following guiding principles for experts and organizations that are designing and implementing professional development programs, which must:

- Stimulating and promoting site-based programs by colleges, districts and teachers;
- Be grounded in teaching knowledge;

- Constructive model of teaching;
- Providing a scientific, social and emotional contribution to concepts, resources, and collaborators;
- Demonstrating respect and appreciation as educators and adult learners as well;
- Providing adequate time and follow-up;
- Be accessible and inclusive.

Tomlinson (2005) provides another perspective that stresses the importance of distinction and utilizing what educators know about successful pedagogy and learning in professional development design. It was further emphasized over the continued encouragement and ongoing reflection & cooperation on concrete issues and problems. Key features identified in learner's understanding are the use of diagnostic evaluation data and process differentiation in consideration of the specific professional needs.

Besides, Feiman-Nemser (2001) suggests that assets and consideration be given to technical and structural elements of educators' planning to cooperate in a school day, financing of summer organizations and courses.

From the review of the different methods, the main points to conclude as the variables of professional development are; the redefinition of staff development, the active role of leadership, development of the organizational culture, input of external organizations, a constructive model of teaching, provision of scientific, social and emotional contribution to concepts, resources, and the collaborators and demonstrating respect & appreciation.

Comparative Background of Foreign Language Teacher' Education

Foreign language (FL) teacher education is a prevalent area of importance and research interest because the need for qualified personnel is constantly increasing in this field (Ullman & Hainsworth, 1991). In the mid-seventies, a competency-based teacher education program was initiated to replace the conventional teaching practice program that was solely based on students' observation and practical teaching. This program proved to be advantageous based upon several specific competencies suitable for group or individual teacher preparation (Issa & Al-Khayat, 1987). Today, the institutions are paying attention to teaching quality. The major aim of the FL teacher education programs is to assist student-teachers' coordination by practicing different teaching competencies, also required for their teaching career (Al-Khatheery, 1987).

A recent study that aimed to examine the English as a foreign Language Teacher Education Programme (EFLTEP), included a systematic analysis of a group of 8 respondents involving 4 beginners and 4 professors as a case study. The data showed that inexperienced teachers thought that pedagogical-related instruction required more realistic aspects than teaching abstract aspects. Additionally, many classes have been overlapping and need to be restructured, instruction and preparation continues to be essential to the successful execution of the school curriculum, and EFLTEP is substantially longer in length than most teacher education pre-service systems. Several recommendations were made on the basis of the study results. Teachers, managerial

stakeholders and other appropriate parties must discuss and improve the curriculum together to take into account other courses or to help prevent competing subjects, to evoke them and to incorporate related topics into one will be the best way to maximize the benefits of teacher education programmer; teachers and others should dedicate a lot of energy to teaching English as international stakeholders The training will ideally be in accordance with the needs of pre-service teachers to help train them for their future teaching career with expertise and knowledge (Sulistiyo et al., 2019).

However, education departments offer several professional courses in Higher education institutions and colleges. Thus, the central part is the teaching practice, as student-teacher has a chance to apply knowledge and skills gained during the theoretical study.

Preparation of pre-service FL teachers has become a central part of the teachers' education program (Murdoch, 1994). The practicum or teaching practice enables the student-teachers to evaluate their command of Foreign Language (FL), and whether it is adequate to sustain instruction in an FL class. Teaching practice plays a pivotal role in this respect since that is where they will learn if they can survive in a classroom and function as FL teachers (Mellgren & Lange 1988).

There are two types of FL pre-service teacher education programs: concurrent and consecutive. The concurrent model is developed in tandem with the FL teacher education program. It has been argued that pre-service teacher education should include an induction period during which a beginner receives a reduced teaching load and is supervised by experienced colleagues (Fullan & Connelly, 1987). This would extend initial teacher education beyond the university setting, hence creating a continuum between pre-service and in-service teachers in FL education.

The Need for Professional Development for English Teachers in Kuwait

Teachers' professional development in Kuwait can be traced back to the year 1966 (Deeb, 1966). Since that year, tremendous improvements in education have been achieved in Kuwait. The UNESCO consultant states that the Ministry of Education in Kuwait is very keen about upgrading the standards of education. They have been cooperative and understanding the changes suggested by the UNESCO consultant. Teachers are at the core of any teaching and learning process, and their professionalism must be increased to improve the overall professional development. This competency is highly required in Kuwait. It should be based upon the notion of teacher as learner and reflective practitioner (Schon, 1987).

The professional development of English teachers should mainly focus on the needs of students in a particular community. However, it could be taken as a collaborative as well as an individual activity. The particular needs of English teachers may be met by professional development; however, this should take place in the context of team building, collaborative planning at the school level and interactive action research. The more skilled, motivated and effective are the

English teachers, the most effective learning outcomes will be there in the classrooms (Schon 1987).

Improving the quality of English teaching requires the provision of continuing opportunities for professional development. Teachers need access to new research and knowledge in teaching literacy, language development and an integrated curriculum. Moreover, they need appropriate up-to-date qualifications into the subject contents and teaching methodology. They also need opportunities to share expertise with other experienced teachers and educators, leading to reflection on practice.

High-quality teaching should be focused on the development of a strong, well informed and well supported professional body to respond to community & educational concerns. Access to professional development is of paramount importance as it enables teachers to improve the learning outcomes of students. Furthermore, they can actively take part in curriculum planning, building and refining the existing practices. It also enables them to develop excellent teaching practices constantly. English teachers can actively participate in the evaluation of teaching practices and programs; and actively participate in the implementation of local, state and national curriculum initiatives.

The strategy of professional development for English teachers in Kuwait should promote and enhance teaching effectiveness and support professional growth. In other words, teachers' professional development should permit the transition to roles of higher status and responsibility within the teaching profession.

METHODOLOGY

The current study followed a mixed methods design to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. The data were collected through questionnaire, and interviews.

Data Collection Tools

The researcher used the following tools:

- Interviews / informal discussion with in-service teachers of the English language from different institutes at PAAET in Kuwait. This method (of oral interview) has been widely used as a research tool in applied-linguistics. In addition to its use in survey research, the interview is a flexible data collection tool, enabling verbal, nonverbal, oral, auditory, and other multisensory channels (Cohen et al., 2007).
- A questionnaire was addressed to the teachers of the English language at some Training Institutes of PAAET in Kuwait, to provide evidence and support for the research questions. Questionnaires are cheap and relatively easy to conduct and administer (Bryman, 2004). In addition, this instrument enables the researcher to collect data in field settings where the data can be quantified to produce the responses required for analysis (Petric & Czár, 2003). The aim of using the questionnaire was to gain some insight regarding English teachers' attitude towards professional development in Kuwait, as well as the problems encountered by those teachers and their

need for programs of professional development in their career.

Sample of the Study

The sample of the questionnaire participants consisted of randomly selected 20 males and female teachers of the English language at some Training Institutes of PAAET in Kuwait.

The Research Design

This study is designed to investigate the English teachers' attitudes towards professional development in Kuwait, as well as the problems encountered during their professional development. The current study followed the mixed methods design.

The questionnaire was randomly distributed among 20 English teachers, randomly chosen from three different institutes related to the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training in Kuwait. All the participants were representing different age groups.

The questionnaire included close-ended questions about teachers' attitude towards professional development, and whether they are with or against this approach. Teachers' pursuits for professional development and their most encountered problems in the teaching process were uncovered through this survey. The researcher believes that this study would help in devising a strategy of professional development that is based on the needs and requirements of local English teachers in Kuwait. Besides, interviews were conducted with those English teachers, as this was a very useful way to ask them some questions that were not included in the questionnaire.

The data collected through this survey, as well as the interviews, revealed some clues about the difficulties encountered by teachers and their need for a strategy of professional development.

This study intends to devise innovative approaches to English teacher development in Kuwait that are based on teachers' requirements. The strategy of professional development for English teachers will show respect for teachers as both professionals and learners. Moreover, they will provide them with all what they need to overcome the obstacles they face in their professional life. They will also provide sufficient time and follow-up.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected through the questionnaire was interpreted using percentages. Furthermore, the results were shown in graphics and tables for more explanation. This helps in a clear presentation and understanding of data.

Data was gathered from two main sources: Interviews and questionnaires with in-service teachers of English language in Kuwait. The findings of the study revealed that there was lack of teachers' professional development in some particular areas that need more skill development of English teachers.

The sample of the questionnaire consisted of 20 male and female in-service teachers of English Language who were chosen randomly from three different Institutes of PAAET. Their responses indicated that:

- The teachers' ages were between 30 to 59 years old. 35% of them were between the age 30 to 39, 50% of them were between the age 40 to 49 and 15% of them were between the age 50 to 59. Their educational level was between Bachelor and Master degree, as 90% of them were Bachelor degree holders, while 10% of them were Master degree holders. In addition, the percentage of the male teachers was 70%, while the percentage of the female teachers was 30%.
- 30% of those teachers were having experience in the teaching process between 6 to 10 years, whereas 10% of them were having experience between 11 to 15 years. Moreover, 60% of them were having experience over 15 years in the teaching process, as illustrated in Figure 1 below.
- The teachers' responses were slightly different concerning the professional development of English Language. In addition, 85% of the teachers' responses indicated that they have participated in courses, workshops, education conferences or seminars related to professional development activities, while 15% of their responses showed that they haven't participated in any of those activities. Moreover, 40% of them only have participated in qualification programs, while 60% of them haven't. Also, 50% of them have participated in observation visits to other Institutes. In addition, 65% of them have attended courses to improve their own English, as illustrated in Table 1 below.
- Most of the teachers agreed that they are satisfied with their job. On the other hand, only 20% of them disagreed on making a significant educational difference in the lives of their students, as indicated in Table 2 below.
- Moreover, most of those teachers agreed on their ability to make progress with even the most difficult and unmotivated students, and also how to get through them. Furthermore, they have emphasized that the teachers in their local community (their Institute) are well respected and as a result, teachers and students usually get well with each other, as illustrated in Table 3 below.
- Teachers' responses were slightly different concerning students work in small groups. 35% of them stated that they rarely involve students to work in small groups. On the other hand, 65% of those teachers assured that they often involve students to work in small groups, as illustrated in Figure 2 below.
- 25% of those teachers did not deny that they do not check their students' exercise books, while 75% of them assured that they often do. In addition, 25% of those teachers do not work with individual students, but 75% of them stated that they often do.

Teachers can improve their teaching experience when they are empowered and given the chance to learn. For example, the findings of the current study contradict those of Diaz Maggioli (2004), who states that professional development

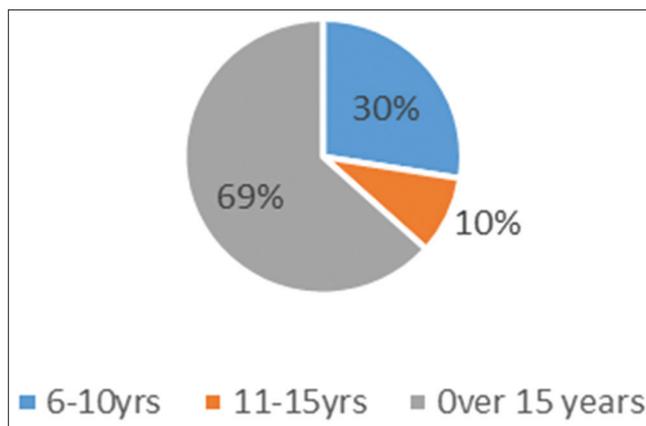


Figure 1. Teaching experience

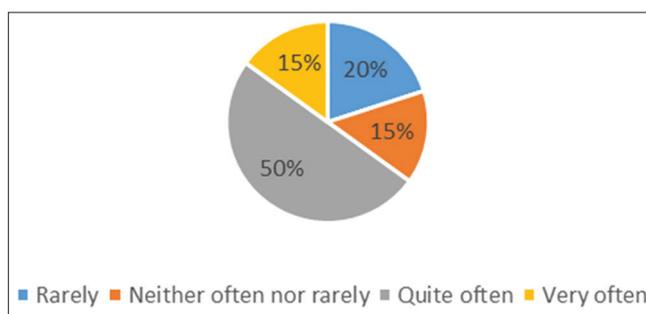


Figure 2. Students work in small groups

Table 1. Participation in courses and workshops to improve their own English

Have you done courses to improve your own English?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	13	65.0	65.0	65.0
	No	7	35.0	35.0	100.0
Total		20	100.0	100.0	

Table 2. Making a significant educational difference in the lives of their students

I feel that I am making a significant educational difference in the lives of my students					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	4	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Agree	13	65.0	65.0	85.0
	Strongly Agree	3	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 3. Making a significant educational difference in the lives of their students

I feel that I am making a significant educational difference in the lives of my students					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	4	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Agree	13	65.0	65.0	85.0
	Strongly Agree	3	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

does not positively affect student learning. The study also supports the findings of another one conducted by Nasser (2017), on the importance of training and professional development programs in enhancing teacher professional development.

Additionally, the study is similar to another one conducted by Zaidi, Khan, & Khan (2018), which highlighted the importance of teacher development in implementing educational reforms. Furthermore, the findings support the arguments in the study by Holland (2005), which classifies the improvement of teacher educational skills as crucial in creating a strong foundation for schools. Galaezi, Nye, Poulter, & Allen (2018), demonstrate the importance of teacher development in raising their English standards. This study found that it was impossible to incorporate most learning technologies since teachers lacked adequate knowledge of English.

Strategies for Improving Learning for ELLs

This section focuses on the strategies that teachers can use to improve learning for English Language Learners (ELLs). Robertson (2020) has identified five specific strategies that could be applied in the classroom setting. One of the strategies that the author identifies is increasing ELL students' production of English language and peer interaction. For instance, teachers can facilitate students to demonstrate their abilities in speaking English language verbally in the classroom. Activities should be structured in such a way that they support group interaction; this can enable students to use English in explaining the concepts learned. Besides, teachers can have the opportunity to evaluate the materials learned by students. The other strategy is explicit teaching of English language structures and vocabulary. Teachers should understand how they can design the language environment in the classroom to enable them optimize literacy and language learning. Moreover, content teachers can review a content area lesson to identify vocabularies that students should know, and other grammar structures the ELL students might not understand.

The third strategy discussed in the article is increasing comprehension by building on the background knowledge of ELLs. As illustrated by Robertson (2020), teachers should be creative in order to stimulate background knowledge on content topics and increase material comprehension. For instance, teachers could ask some questions in relation to the topic, thus giving students an opportunity to share knowledge. Another strategy is increasing the involvement of ELL learners' parents. Parental support significantly determines academic success. It is essential to overcome the cultural and language barriers that hinder parents from supporting their children. The fifth strategy identified in the article is increasing writing opportunities. Accurate and effective writing is an essential skill for college students. Thus, there is a need to engage students in writing to enable them understand their weaknesses and strengths.

Limitations of the Study

The current study is limited to a small size of participants of English language teachers from different institutes of

Kuwait. This was because of the cultural context in Kuwait, where research studies are not common. For this reason, teachers were unwilling to participate in this research in large numbers. In addition, the approach in the qualitative interviews necessitated small numbers of participants.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study emancipated from the global education scenario. To cope with the global and development in the educational domain, there should be suitable curricula that satisfy English teachers' needs and requirements. This research will benefit:

- Teachers of English at The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) institutions in Kuwait as well as the curricula specialists. It will provide a list of significant problems faced by the teachers of English in their teaching process, thus allowing them to take into account on developing the curricula.
- Researchers: It will help future researchers to further explore other obstacles or barriers which teachers in general, and EFL teachers in particular, may encounter, as well as their needs and requirements through the suggestions and recommendations that will be presented.

CONCLUSION

Teacher professional development is a lifelong and continuous process in which teachers are expected to upgrade their knowledge, master new skills and change their practices since the advancement in their teaching career is positively affecting their students and education reforms. Besides, the professional development of teachers must be seen as an investment, so it is necessary that schools not only apply appropriate teacher professional development programmes and human resource development policies, but also ensure the means of their executions through efficient management and leadership.

Only skillful and knowledgeable teachers can form a foundation for good educational atmosphere with highly-qualified student graduates. Therefore, enhancing teachers' teaching career is considered the most important and strategic investments of time, money and efforts that human resource managers make in education (Holland: 2005). These investments must be well prepared and conducted since teacher professional development acts as a key indicator in education human resource management and development. Above all, investments in teacher advancement ultimately result in improving the achievement of all students.

The current study tried to detect and uncover English teachers' problems and aspirations towards teachers' professional development. In this way, the researcher believes that it can enable curricula designers to tailor some strategies of educational professional development that are based on teachers' actual needs and requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Professional development plays a very vital role in the teaching learning process, it inculcates curiosity, motivation, and

new ways of thinking. It becomes most influential when it is adopted on continuous bases with well-planned trainings. It is recommended that proper planning may be done for professional development trainings. Teachers may be motivated and encouraged to participate in the professional development trainings. Incentives and rewards can be offered during trainings for good jobs. Proper framework may also be designed for monitoring of teachers' performance after training.

For the professional development of English teachers in Kuwait, there is a need to improve the teachers' education programs, as educational planners have to design such courses for student teachers which help them to improve their English language skills. For in-service teacher of English, higher educational authorities should plan some educational seminars, conferences where they can meet with professional educators to get more exposure about their subject knowledge. In addition, they can take a more active approach in curriculum planning, including building on and refining existing practices, which will also enable them to constantly develop excellent teaching practices.

It is believed that the content knowledge is the first and foremost important factor in teaching and learning process. Besides the content knowledge, teachers have to be provided with training programmes that are related to classroom management, lesson planning, teaching strategies and methodologies used to teach English. In addition, the ICT training programmes should be provided to English teacher preparations, by using latest technologies which can enhance knowledge and exposure of their students.

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