

Quality assurance in Teacher Professional Development Programs: A Case Study of EFL Teachers in Moroccan Public High Schools

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ضمان الجودة في برامج التطوير المهني للأساتذة: دراسة حالة لأساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الثانويات العامة المغربية

المخلص - هناك إجماع كبير بين الباحثين والأساتذة، حول أهمية التطوير المهني للأساتذة، من أجل الرفع من جودة التعليم. يهدف هذا البحث إلى تسليط الضوء على العوامل، التي تؤثر على مشاركة أساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية لمستويات الثانوي العام بالمؤسسات العمومية بالمغرب في برامج التطوير المهني. و من أجل تحقيق الأهداف المنشودة من هذا البحث، تم توزيع استمارات على حوالي ثلاثين أستاذاً ممارساً داخل الثانويات العامة، بغية تحديد العقبات التي تحول دون مشاركتهم في البرامج المذكورة، وكذا العوامل التي تحفزهم للمشاركة في فرص التطوير المهني. وقد بينت النتائج المحصل عليها، على أن تقديم الدعم المادي، و جودة البرامج المقترحة تؤثر إيجاباً على رغبة الأساتذة في المشاركة في هذه الفرص المتوفرة، و استناداً على نتائج هذا البحث؛ تمت صياغة مجموعة من التوصيات من أهمها: ضمان الجودة في برامج تكوين الأساتذة، و توفير الدعم المادي، الذي من شأنه تيسير استفادتهم، و مشاركتهم الفعالة و المثمرة في هذه البرامج.

الكلمات المفتاحية: النمو المهني، تطوير الأساتذة، العوامل التحفيزية

Abstract: There is a great consensus among researchers and educators that teachers must be well-prepared, especially for the sake of boosting the quality of education. This paper aimed at investigating the factors that affect EFL teacher's participation in teacher professional programs in Moroccan public high schools. To this end, the survey was administered to high public school teachers to identify the obstacles that hinder their participation in TPD programs and factors that foster their willingness to take part in Professional opportunities. The sample of the study comprised (30) EFL teachers in Moroccan public high schools. The findings demonstrated that financial support and effectiveness of the TPD programs strongly correlate with teachers' willingness to participate in TPD opportunities. Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations were suggested, from which are the need to ensure quality in devised programs and to support teachers financially to facilitate their access to fruitful professional opportunities.(151)

Key words: Professional growth, Teacher development, Motivational factors.

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I. INTRODUCTION

There is increasing belief that failure in achieving educational effectiveness is due to teachers' reluctance to change. As the latter's resistance to professional development and implementation of new educational trends is explained by their irrational fear of technology. However, this is not the case according to teachers who regard failure as a result of the top down approach adopted by educational authorities.

This approach involves an exclusion of teachers and creates a wide gap between the status quo of education and the desired goals to be achieved. A survey was administered to teachers to investigate the degree of their participation of teacher in TPD and the incentives that foster or hinder their willingness to take part in TPD opportunities.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Teacher professional development is the basis for any educational improvement. Therefore, it is essential to ensure quality in all devised programs. To this end, it is a prerequisite to analyze the needs and wants of teachers and to provide the means that may facilitate successful participation in the given programs

because educators learn best from professional development opportunities that address their needs (Meissel et al., 2016). [1]

In fact, EFL Moroccan teachers demonstrated reluctance to take part in TPD programs and this has a negative effect on governmental efforts aiming at raising the quality of teaching. This study will try to trigger to main factors that hinder successful participation from the part of teachers in TPD programs and to identify the main elements that foster fruitful participation of teachers in professional development opportunities.

Research Objectives

This study was carried out with the following objectives:

- To assess the level of participation in TPD programs among Moroccan EFL teachers in public high schools.
- To identify major challenges that hinder successful participation of teachers in TPD programs.
- To find out the main factors that foster teachers' participation in TPD programs
- To suggest recommendations by which TPD programs would be effectively implemented as fruitful opportunities for teachers' professional development

Research Questions

This empirical research seeks out to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the level of EFL teachers' participation in TPD programs?
2. Does motivation hinder or foster teachers' participation in TPD?
3. Do opportunities offered hinder or foster teachers' participation in TPD?
4. Does financial support hinder or foster teachers' participation in TPD?
5. Does TPD program effectiveness hinder or foster teachers' participation in TPD?
6. Does TPD program effectiveness hinder or foster teachers' participation in TPD?

In an attempt to answer the former research questions six hypotheses were formulated then a correlational study was carried out to test the statistical significance of the given hypotheses.

Importance of the Study

Quality insurance in TPD programs is essential in terms of raising the quality of teacher training programs, teachers' performance, and student learning. This study is vital to help decision makers develop richer and more effective programs. More specifically, the findings of the study would be significant in:

- Raising awareness of TPD programs' developers.
- Supporting teachers with effective TPD opportunities.
- Facilitating teachers' access to TPD programs by providing the necessary support.

Limitations of the Study

Qualitative and quantitative research designs are important in all research fields. Adopting one research method may lead to limited results of a study. We opted for quantitative research method in this study and that could be the reason for some limitations in terms of inferential statistics. The analysis of the collected data represents a small number of respondents therefore no generalizations to wider population can be made. However, the significance of our study lies in providing small scale findings that can be tested and applied in qualitative studies which may include attitudes and personal factors.

III. PRELIMINARY STUDIES

Previous studies provide a basis for the understanding of professional development. For instance, Sedat Gumus's study was conducted to examine the relationship between internal and external factors and teachers' participation in PD programs in Turkey. In this study five external factors including: time, funding, principal influence, colleague influence, and school culture were examined in relation to whether they affect teachers' participation in professional development activities.

The findings of this study demonstrated that crucial role that school principles can play in teachers' growth by having teachers participate in more PDA. While the researcher found that age, teachers' attitudes towards professional development activities, time, funding, and colleague influence affect teachers' participation in professional development activities in statistically significant ways; gender, teaching experience, grade level of teaching, education level, teachers' self efficacy, principal, and school culture do not affect their participation in these activities. [2]

Another study that was carried out by Rosita Endang Kusmaryani et al assessed the main factors that play crucial role in TPD. This research employed a descriptive quantitative design. The finding of this study showed that teachers' personal factors such as motivation and occupational commitment have played an essential role in self-adjustment for PD, especially to cope with high and demanding workload conditions. In

another case, this study found that school is an environmental factor which has a great impact on professional development, especially by providing opportunity and facility for professional development programs. [3]

Based on the results, the researcher confirmed that internal (motivation and occupational commitment) and external factors (environment) have a great impact in providing support to professional development.

In their study, Maureen Kanchebele Sinyangwe et al investigated secondary school mathematics teachers' perspectives of factors influencing their participation in Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

Their research made use of findings from multiple data collection methods including questionnaire, face-to-face in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The study was conducted in a selected district of Central Zambia. The factors affecting the teachers' participation in CPD are discussed, along with the implications for CPD provision. Based on the results, Zambian secondary school mathematics teachers' participation in CPD is influenced by a combination of many factors including: heavy workload, perception of CPD, relevance of CPD to needs and lack of motivation. Understanding their insight of CPD and factors that affect their participation in CPD in their context is crucial in affecting short term or long term adjustments concerning CPD provision. [4]

IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Nowadays, professional development is regarded as a lifelong process which involves a wide range of practices aiming at fostering knowledge, performance and professional awareness related to the field of teaching. In this regard, an ample of definitions has been formulated by well-known authors:

“The professional development of teachers goes beyond a merely informative stage; it implies adaptation to change with a view to changing teaching and learning activities, altering teacher attitudes and improving the academic results of students. The professional development of teachers is concerned with individual, professional and organisational needs” (Heideman, 1990, p. 4); [5]

“Work opportunities that encourage creative and reflective skills in the teachers, thus, enabling them to improve their practices” (Bredeson, 2002, p. 663); [6]

Day (1999) argues that a teaching qualification is no longer sufficient in providing teachers with knowledge and skills they require if there is no regular updating of these assets through professional development activities. Studies show that effective Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities can help to improve teacher quality [7]

A myriad of studies have been carried out in attempt to understand the relation between teacher education and learner performance. In this regard, major models have been devised to account for what TPD involves. Guskey and Sparks (2002) developed the Implicit Model of TPD. [8]

The following diagram illustrates their model:

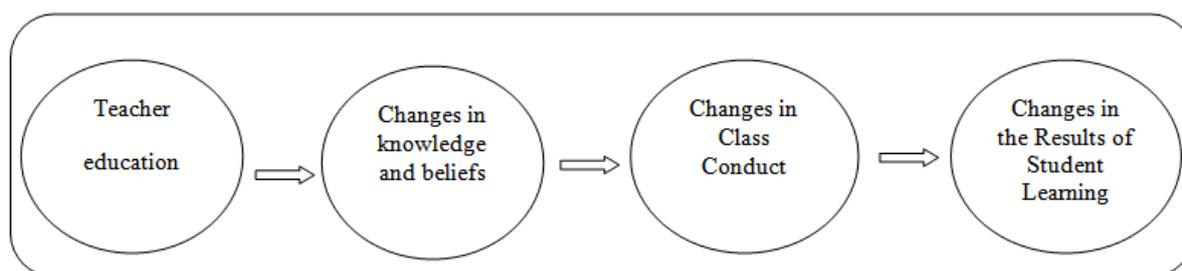


Figure 1: The Implicit Model in the Professional Development of Teachers

While the fulfillment of basic needs is important to lay the foundation for teachers to foster their professional behavior and academic achievement, other theories indicate that satisfaction of basic needs functions as a mere extrinsic, or external, incentive. According to Benabou and Tirole (2002), extrinsic incentives are only weak enhancers of motivation in the short run and negative enhancers in the long run. [9]

In terms of work motivation, Herzberg (1966) finds that achievement; recognition, the work itself, responsibility and advancement are more effective long-run motivators than interpersonal relations, working conditions, and pay. [10]

For teachers, Chapman et. al. (1993) noted that incentives are related to teacher job satisfaction, but not to teacher classroom practices. Thus, it appears that while teachers need housing, food, safety, belonging, etc. in order to be professionally motivated.

Instead, teachers need supports that encourage their intrinsic, or internal, motivation; such as achievement, recognition, and career development. The relationship between extrinsic and intrinsic incentives is an important issue for teacher motivation in the developing world. [11]

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Data Collection

According to this study, the primary data is used. The primary data for this research study was collected through a self administered questionnaire; the data of questionnaire was collected from 30 respondents. In addition, this collected data led this research study to the exploration of the factors that impact teacher participation in TPD. At the same time, the literature review of this research study consisted the source of secondary data, which was gathered from published research articles.

5.2 Instrument

For the validity and reliability of this research, a close ended questionnaire (test item) was distributed to gather data about factors that foster and hinder teacher participation in TPD. Therefore, to answer our research questions. All the instructions were written in English since our target population was EFL teachers. The instrument took only five minutes to be answered. It is worthwhile to mention that the subjects participated under their willingness.

5.3 Sample Size

Data was gathered from 30 EFL teachers, who filled the questionnaire. The data collected were carefully assessed to the statistical software i.e. SPSS and the results were taken, as they were required for the analysis of this research study.

VI. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The results obtained from the correlational study yielded the following tables. The latters address each research question separately.

Research question1: What is the level of EFL teachers' participation in TPD programs?

1- H0: There is a weak participation in TPD programs among EFL teachers. H1: There is a high level of participation among EFL teachers in TPD programs.

Table 1 :Teachers' level of participation in TPD programs

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	3	10,0	10,0	10,0
Valid Yes	27	90,0	90,0	100,0
Total	30	100,0	100,0	

As illustrated in the above table, 90% of participants have participated in TPD programs, while 10% have not yet taken part and this was explained by their being novice teachers.

Research question 2: Does motivation hinder or foster teachers' participation in TPD?

2- Motivation and teacher participation in TPD Ho: There is no significant correlation between motivation and teacher participation in TPD. H1: There is a significant impact of motivation on teacher participation.

Table 2 : Correlation between motivation and teachers' participation in TPD programs

		HinderingFactor LM	Enhancing Factor Motiv
HinderingFactor LM	Pearson Correlation	1	,312
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,094
	N	30	30
EnhancinfFcatorMotiv	Pearson Correlation	,312	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,094	
	N	30	30

A Pearson correlation was performed to identify the relationship between motivation and teacher participation in TPD. The results obtained revealed that there is no significant correlation between the two variables: $r = ,312$ at a P value of $,094$. This r value is less than the value expected at $.05$. Subsequently, we can conclude that there is no statistically significant correlation between the results obtained from the factor of motivation as a hindering factor and a fostering factor of teachers' participation in TPD programs.

Research question 3: Do opportunities offered hinder or foster teachers' participation in TPD?

- 3- TPD Opportunities and teacher participation in TPD Ho: There is no significant correlation between TPD opportunities and teacher participation in TPD. H1: There is a significant impact of TPD opportunities on teacher participation.

Table 3: Correlation between TPD opportunities and EFL teachers' participation in TPD programs

		HinderingFactor LO	Enhancing Factor Appealing Opport
Hindering Factor LO	Pearson Correlation	1	-,167
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,379
	N	30	30
Enhancing Factor Appealing Opport	Pearson Correlation	-,167	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,379	
	N	30	30

The Pearson's r for the correlation between availability and absence of opportunities variables in our test is $r = -,167$ at a P level of $,379$. This value is smaller than $.05$. We can conclude that there is a statistically significant correlation between the results obtained from the factor of opportunities as a hindering factor and a fostering factor of teachers' participation in TPD programs. Yet, the negative R value reflects a negative correlation; which can be interpreted in our correlation by no relation between teachers' participation in TPD and availability or absence of opportunities. Most teachers tend to create their own environments for continuing professional development.

Research question 4: Does financial support hinder or foster teachers' participation in TPD?

- 4- Financial support and teacher participation in TPD Ho: There is no significant correlation between financial support and teacher participation in TPD. H1: There is a significant impact of financial support on teacher participation.

Table 4 : Correlation between financial support and teachers' participation in TPD programs

		Hindering Factor LFS	EnhancingFactorFSupport
Hindering Factor LFS	Pearson Correlation	1	,802**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N	30	30
Enhancing Factor FSupport	Pearson Correlation	,802**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	30	30

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The obtained result of the Pearson's r for the correlation between financial support and teacher participation in TPD in our test is $r = ,802^{**}$ at a P level of $,000$. This demonstrates an almost perfect positive correlation. We can conclude that there is a great statistical significance between the results obtained from the correlation between financial support and teachers' participation in TPD programs. All participants under our study demonstrated a great need of financial support to carry on their continuing professional development.

Research question 5: Does TPD program effectiveness hinder or foster teachers' participation in TPD?

- 5- TPD program effectiveness and teacher participation in TPD Ho: There is no significant correlation between TPD program effectiveness and teacher participation in TPD. H1: There is a significant impact of TPD program effectiveness on teacher participation.

Table 5: Correlation between program effectiveness and teachers' participation in TPD

		Hindering Factor L Ef	Enhancing Factor Q Program
Hindering Factor LEf	Pearson Correlation	1	.a
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.
	N	30	30
Enhancing Factor Quality Program	Pearson Correlation	.a	.a
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.
	N	30	30

a. Cannot be computed because at least one of the variables is constant or the correlation is perfect.

The obtained result of the Pearson's r for the correlation between TPD program effectiveness and teacher participation in TPD in our test is $r = .a$ at any P level. This demonstrates a perfect positive correlation. This reflects a perfect correlation; which in statistical tests is rare, between the results obtained from the correlation between TPD program effectiveness and teachers' participation in TPD programs. All participants under our study showed that TPD program effectiveness is a prerequisite to indulge in any continuing professional development.

Research question 6: Does TPD program effectiveness hinder or foster teachers' participation in TPD?

- 6- PD program effectiveness and teacher participation in TPD Ho: There is no significant correlation between TPD program effectiveness and teacher participation in TPD. H1: There is a significant impact of TPD program effectiveness on teacher participation.

Table 6: Correlation between flexibility and teachers' participation in TPD programs

		Hindering Factor L Flex	Enhancing Factor Flexibility
Hindering Factor LFlex	Pearson Correlation	1	,218
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,247
	N	30	30
Enhancing Factor Flexibility	Pearson Correlation	,218	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,247	
	N	30	30

A Pearson correlation was performed to identify the relationship between flexibility and teacher participation in TPD. The results obtained revealed that there is no significant correlation between the two variables: $r = ,212$ at a P value of ,247. The r value is less than the value expected at .05. We assume that there is no statistically significant correlation between the results obtained from the factor of flexibility as a hindering factor and a fostering factor of teachers' participation in TPD programs.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study was carried out with the objective of determining the level of teachers' participation in TPD programs and the factors that foster and hinder teachers' participation in TPD programs. The results of correlational study as represented by five hypotheses, yielded three non-significant associations and two highly significant relationships.

The weak correlations being present in any of the three hypotheses are explained by teachers' self motivation to participate in TPD programs, their ability to benefit from effective opportunities despite lack of

flexibility in their working schedules and readiness to create opportunities for professional development despite the scarcity of programs being provided by the educational body. Strong correlations though, were explained by educators' desperate need for financial support to take part in effective professional development opportunities. The latter consisted the second high-priority for teachers to engage in PD programs; quality is the essence of any learning experience as explained by most respondents.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, we recommend the following measures would be taken to meet the intended objectives.

- In order to increase the level of teacher's participation in TPD programs it is vital to investigate the needs of teachers before engaging in devising any respective program.
- In order to overcome the barriers that hinder teachers' participation it is prerequisite to raise awareness among EFL teachers about new opportunities and innovations in TPD programs.
- To ensure a fruitful TPD experience it is required to back teachers with necessary support to facilitate their professional growth.
- Finally, we recommend and in depth study in the field of TPD for other subject areas to ensure a sustainable educational growth.

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