

# Professional Development Needs of Junior Faculty: A Survey Study in a Public University in Turkey

Genç öğretim üyelerinin mesleki gelişim ihtiyaçları: Türkiye’deki bir devlet üniversitesinde tarama çalışması

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## Özet

Bu çalışmanın amacı bir devlet üniversitesindeki genç öğretim elemanlarının mesleki gelişim ihtiyaçlarını ve üniversiteleri tarafından kendilerine sunulacak olan etkinliklerin zamanına, sunum formatına ve duyurulmasına ilişkin tercihlerini araştırmaktır. Bir tarama çalışması olan bu çalışmaya katılan toplam 73 öğretim elemanı, “öğretim ve öğrenme”, “öğrenci ile iletişim”, “ders izlencesi ve müfredat tasarımı”, “ölçme ve değerlendirme”, “öğretim teknolojileri” ve “profesyonel gelişim” olmak üzere altı boyutu olan “Çevrimiçi Öğretim Elemanı İhtiyaç Analizi Anketini” cevaplandırmıştır. Çalışmanın bulguları, genç öğretim elemanlarının proje temelli öğrenme, kalabalık sınıflarda ders verme, öğrenci motivasyonunu artırma, öğrencilerde akademik dürüstlüğü teşvik etme, etkinlikleri ve ödevleri tasarlama, etkili sınav hazırlama, yapıcı geri bildirim verme, ders için web sitesi geliştirme ve atanma-terfi için hazırlanma konularında profesyonel gelişim desteğine ihtiyaç duyduklarını göstermiştir. Öğretim elemanlarının mesleki gelişim konularında sunulacak etkinliklerin akademik dönem başlamadan önce bölüm/fakülte bazında yapılacak 60 dakikalık çalıştaylar şeklinde olmasını tercih ettikleri bulunmuştur. Bu tür ihtiyaç belirleme çalışmalarının, öğretim elemanlarının desteğe ihtiyaç duydukları profesyonel gelişim alanlarının belirlenmesinde ve bu ihtiyaçların karşılanması için ne tür hizmetlerin tasarlanıp, sunulabileceği konularında yükseköğretim kurumlarındaki karar mekanizmalarında bulunan kişilere faydalı bilgiler sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Mesleki gelişim, öğretim elemanı ihtiyaçları, yeni güne başlanan öğretim üyeleri, yükseköğretimi geliştirme.

## Abstract

The aim of the current study was to examine professional development needs of junior faculty and their preferences in relation to time, delivery format, and announcement of any professional development activity to be offered by their institution. The study had a survey design. A total of 73 faculty responded to the “Online Faculty Needs Assessment Survey (FNAS)”. FNAS included six professional development areas as, “teaching and learning”, “relations with students”, “syllabus and curriculum design”, “assessment”, “instructional technology” and “professional development”. The results of the current study showed that the junior faculty expressed strong need for training on project-based learning, teaching large classes, motivating students, encouraging students about academic integrity, designing activities, assignments, and projects, preparing effective exams, giving constructive feedback, developing course website, integrating instructional technology into courses, and preparing for tenure and promotion. Regarding the duration, time and delivery format of professional development activities, 60-minute seminars specific to departments or college held just before the academic semester was the most preferred one. It is believed that such needs assessment studies would provide valuable information to decision makers at higher education institutions about the professional development areas that faculty members may need support and different kinds of services that could be designed and offered to meet those needs.

**Keywords:** Faculty needs, improving higher education, junior/new faculty, professional development.

In today’s world, dramatic changes and developments have been experienced in different areas of life and these, of course, affect higher education institutions. For instance, as the research findings highlight, university students’ academic, professional, personal, and social needs change qualitatively

and quantitatively (Kitzrow, 2003). Rapid and radical alterations in relation to student characteristics, concepts of teaching and learning also cause variations in faculty members’ roles. The faculty are increasingly expected to be life-long learners, productive researchers, self-developers, guide for students and

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teachers who encourage students to be independent learners rather than just being experts who convey information. Thus, in this context, it becomes crucial for the today's higher education institutions having high expectations from the faculty to provide services to encourage faculty professional development.

Speck and Knipe (2005, p. 4) define professional development as “a sustained collaborative learning process that systematically nourishes the growth of the educator.” This systematic development is mainly focused upon the educator acquiring essential skills, abilities and attributes for improving their students' learning. In this way, it affects the classroom practice and thoughts of instructors, and hence student learning (Guskey, 2002). In higher education, the concept of “professional development” is used interchangeably with the term “faculty development,” which refers to a process through which faculty members carry out organized and planned work using services which are provided by their institution and designed to enhance their professional skills. Some of these skills are doing research, teaching in large or small classes, designing instruction, developing curricula, and sustaining career advancement (Davis, Kirkland, & Sheehan, 2010). In order to identify the professional needs of the faculty in any of these areas, higher education institutions need to conduct studies and ask faculty members about the issues on which they would like to have systematic training. Understanding the professional needs of faculty members and offering essential training and services are two ways of encouraging effective teaching and learning. In this way, the faculty could be motivated to become more productive researchers and better educators; and then they would help students become more successful learners to cope with the fast-changing facets of the new century.

The literature comprises an increasing body of publications and studies on professional development. These studies mostly focus on teacher educators in colleges or departments of education (Hadar & Brody, 2010; Smith, 2003; Swennen, Jones, & Volman, 2010), teachers (Avalos, 2011; Guskey, 2002; OECD, 2009) and the faculty (Opre, Zaharie, & Opre, 2008; Siddiqui, 2006; Vajoczki & Knorr, 2010; Wallin & Smith, 2005). In one of these studies, Opre, Zaharie, and Opre (2008) found that faculty from various ages, backgrounds, and departments have different needs although young faculty preferred to improve their teaching skills more when compared to the experienced ones. The researchers suggested appealing to these needs when designing professional development activities. Furthermore, the faculty preferred seminars about student motivation, teaching methods, communication skills, and effective teaching. Khan and Sarwar (2011) explored the training needs of the faculty members of ten selected universities in

Pakistan. They found that the surveyed university teachers needed support on several areas such as classroom management, counseling, communication skills, learning theories, and educational psychology. Hahn and Lester (2012) identified that the faculty reported assessment, instructional design, online learning and active learning as the most important professional development topics. They preferred workshops and seminars as faculty development activities in their own institutions. Moreover, the main reason for not being able to attend such activities was also expressed as time. This finding was consistent with the findings of the previous study conducted by Taylor and McQuiggan (2008), in which the faculty pointed out the limited time as the major barrier for participating faculty development activities. Therefore, they preferred short training sessions for such activities. Lastly, in one of the recent studies, Van Schalkwyk, Leibowitz, Herman, and Farmer (2015) examined the professional learning for academics on teaching. They discovered that individual endeavour of the faculty was important for the successful professional development in terms of improving teaching. Also, the atmosphere of the workgroup affected their choices and participation for professional development activities. Lastly, the faculty had different views on the type of support needed on teaching –some preferred a structured programs, workshops and some preferred a short guide for teaching (Van Schalkwyk et al., 2015).

On the other hand, there is still a dearth of research about faculty development and the professional development of faculty members in Turkey. Koç, Demirbilek, and İnce (2015) conducted one of the most recent studies in Turkey on faculty professional development. This study identified some of the faculty needs as centering on teaching, research, use of technology, organizational competencies, and self-improvement. The respondents in this study expressed a preference for face-to-face trainings during weekdays. Likewise, Elçi and Yaratın (2012) assessed the needs of faculty for professional development regarding teaching and learning in an international university in Turkey. The faculty needs identified in this study mostly focused upon teaching for higher order skills, using technology, and motivating students. Ekşi (2010) identified professional development needs of English language instructors at one of the state universities and the findings indicated that instructors preferred sharing experiences with colleagues as one of the professional development activities. The most frequently stated need was for information about new theories and practices of teaching. Optional workshops were determined as the preferred way of training. Another study aimed to explore the views of faculty on faculty development (Odabaşı, 2003). The findings of this study showed that faculty viewed effective teaching skills and the



use of instructional technology as the major dimensions of faculty development. Moreover, they stated their preferences for subject experts offering courses through workshops organized by a faculty development center.

Nowadays the identification of professional development needs has become much more important and apparent, since the higher education is facing tremendous changes and developments and it is expected to respond to these through certain trainings, revisions, and novelties. Especially with the advances in technology and growing demands for higher education, traditional forms of education might not respond to the needs of learners adequately in the following decades. Therefore, it is not optional but inevitable that institutions need to assess faculty needs and meet them by means of professional training. Thus, determining the professional development needs of faculty comprehensively and systematically has become a necessity to save time, resources, and labor (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996). With this regard, the main purposes of this study were to identify the professional development needs of the junior faculty and investigate their preferences for the type, duration, timing, and announcement of the professional development activities to be provided by the institution. It is believed that determining professional development needs and preferences in relation to professional development programs or activities to be offered by the institution might provide valuable data to design effective professional development programs in the institution. Moreover, the study of this specific case might suggest an example to other institutions which plan to conduct faculty needs assessment studies for the purpose of designing or improving professional development training programs.

## Method

### Participants

The study had a survey design and the data were collected from a large state university in Ankara with approximately 27,000 students and 800 faculty. The population of this study was 249 junior faculty members, who had been appointed to their faculty positions within the last 5 years. The online survey was sent to the e-mail addresses of all junior faculty members. A total of 73 faculty members participated in the survey and the return rate was 29.31%.

Of the participants, 50.70% were female while 49.30% were male. The age of the participants ranged between 29 and 38 ( $M=32.83$ ,  $SD=2.90$ ). The faculties of the participants are presented in ■ Table 1.

Among all participants, only two did not have Turkish nationality. While 72.6% of the participants had obtained their doctorate degree from the universities abroad, 15.1%

were from the university where the study was conducted and 6.8% were from other universities in Turkey. Participants held associate professor (11%), assistant professor (57.5%), instructor (27.4%), and lecturer (2.7%) positions at their institution. The majority of participants preferred teach face-to-face (89%) courses. On average, they did teach four undergraduate classes and one graduate class in one academic year. The student number in their undergraduate courses ranged between 25 and 100, while in their graduate courses this number varied between 10 and 20.

### Data Collection Tool

The Faculty Needs Assessment Survey (FNAS) used in the current study was developed by the researchers. An initial item pool was developed in Turkish, taking into consideration related literature and existing questionnaires (Abebe et al., 2010; Ekşi, 2010; Kabakçı & Odabaşı, 2008; Koç, Demirbilek, & İnce, 2015; Latchem, Odabaşı, & Kabakçı, 2006; Moeini, 2003; Önkol, 2011; Van Schalkwyk et al., 2015; Wallin & Smith, 2005). About half of the items (35 items) in the FNAS were adapted with permission from the Faculty Needs Assessment Survey of Office of Faculty and Organizational Development in Michigan State University (Matsubayaski, Drake, Shaw, & DeZure, 2009). The initial version of FNAS was sent to 10 experts in the field of education to receive feedback about the item content, clarity, accuracy, and relevance. The experts had minor suggestions about the survey items. For example, one expert suggested that in the one item related to instructional technology, next to Turkish word “çevrimiçi” English word “online” could be stated in parenthesis. The final version of the FNAS included four sections, with 81 items. In the first section “demographic information,” there were 12 questions related to participants’ gender, nationality, department, title, the number of courses offered in each semester, and the most frequently used format of teaching. The second section “professional development” included 62 items covering six areas: teaching and learning, students, syllabus and curriculum design, assessment, instructional technology, and professional issues.

■ Table 1. The faculties of the participants.

Faculty	f	%
Education	14	19.2
Arts and Science	24	32.9
Economic and Administrative Sciences	9	12.3
Architecture	3	4.1
Engineering	17	23.3
Other	6	8.2



In the third section “suggestions” there were two open-ended questions asking for opinions and suggestions on professional development activities. In the last section “preferences for delivery methods and format,” there were five items concerning preferred format of professional development activities.

### Data Collection Procedures

The data were collected from the participants through an online survey considering its practicality and feasibility. Prior to study, researchers applied to the university’s Human Subjects and Ethics Committee for ethical approval. Upon getting the permission, the e-mail addresses of the faculty members meeting the criteria for the study were obtained from the Computer Center at the university. Then, the Internet address link of the survey was sent to the e-mail addresses of the target population. In the invitation letter, the purpose and significance of the study was explained and voluntary participation was noted.

### Data Analysis

The descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages were used for the data analysis. The answers given to the open-ended questions at the end of the survey were analyzed through content analysis, in which main codes were identified by the researchers.

### Findings

#### Professional Development Areas

The areas of professional development were grouped under the following topics: teaching and learning, students, syllabus and curriculum design, assessment, instructional technology, and professional issues. The participants had the chance to select more than one option for the each heading in related part of the survey. Despite changes in the frequencies for each item, the percentages (%) were calculated based on the overall response (73), to enable comparisons across different topics.

#### Teaching and learning

The frequencies and percentages for each professional development item in relation to teaching and learning are given in ■ Table 2. According to the results, top three teaching and learning needs reported by faculty were guidance for project-based learning ( $n=29$ , 39.7%), teaching large classes ( $n=29$ , 39.7%), and problem-based learning ( $n=27$ , 37%). The three items that faculty expressed the least need were as follows, discovery learning ( $n=6$ , 8.20%), teaching in studio setting ( $n=1$ , 1.40%) and critical approach ( $n=1$ , 1.40%).

#### Students

The frequencies and percentages for each professional development item in relation to students were presented in ■ Table 3. The findings showed that more than half of the faculty members needed support for motivating students ( $n=44$ , 60.3%). The other top two topics they need support were encouraging students about academic integrity ( $n=32$ , 43.8%) and dealing with difficult students ( $n=27$ , 37%). On the other hand, the three items participants expressed the least need were, social personal and cognitive developmental needs of students ( $n=18$ , 24.70%), working with international or exchange students ( $n=14$ , 19.20%) and teaching students with disabilities ( $n=7$ , 9.60%).

#### Syllabus and curriculum design

The frequencies and percentages for each professional development item in relation to syllabus and curriculum design are given in ■ Table 4. There were 5 items in this subscale of the survey. The top three items that participants expressed need were, designing activities, assignments and projects ( $n=27$ , 37%), designing online courses ( $n=22$ , 30.10%) and designing a course ( $n=21$ , 28.80%).

■ Table 2. Frequencies and percentages of items on teaching and learning.

Items	f	%
Project-based learning	29	39.70
Teaching large classes	29	39.70
Problem-based learning	27	37.00
Cooperative learning (e.g. group work)	26	35.60
Experiential learning (learning through practice and experience)	26	32.91
Challenging students' misconceptions	24	32.90
Interdisciplinary teaching and learning	24	32.90
Facilitating discussions	24	32.90
Effective classroom management	23	31.50
Effective lecturing/presentation techniques	23	31.50
Teaching with cases (real and unreal cases)	21	28.80
Award winner faculty's sharing their best practices	17	23.30
Using games and simulations during instruction	17	23.30
Teaching in laboratory settings	11	15.10
Integrating community service learning into your teaching	10	13.70
Constructivist approaches to teaching (learning-centered instruction)	10	13.70
Team teaching	8	11.00
Discovery-based learning	6	8.20
Teaching in studio settings	1	1.40
Other (Critical approach)	1	1.40

**Table 3.** Frequencies and percentages of items on students.

Items	f	%
Motivating students (e.g., motivating students to attend classes, to participate)	44	60.30
Encouraging students about academic integrity (plagiarism, fidelity, cheating)	32	43.80
Dealing with difficult students	27	37.00
Student learning styles	27	37.00
Profile of students, their needs, and implications for teaching	26	35.60
Teaching first year students	24	32.90
Supervising graduate student research	21	28.80
Building good relationships with your students	20	27.40
Mentoring doctoral students	18	24.70
Effective faculty advising	19	26.00
Social, personal and cognitive developmental characteristics of students	18	24.70
Working with international/exchange students	14	19.20
Teaching students with disabilities	7	9.60

### Assessment

The frequencies and percentages for each professional development item in relation to assessment are given in Table 5. The findings indicate that faculty members reported strong need for professional development support in following items, preparing effective exams ( $n=28$ , 38.4%) and giving constructive feedback/evaluations ( $n=28$ , 38.4%) and effective grading ( $n=26$ , 35.60%). The items the participants expressed less need were: Using peer feedback with students' drafts ( $n=10$ , 13.70%), use and evaluation of student e-portfolios ( $n=7$ , 9.60%) and use and evaluation of student portfolios ( $n=5$ , 6.80%).

### Instructional technology

The frequencies and percentages for each professional development item in relation to instructional technology are given in Table 6. There were 6 items in this subscale of the FNAS. The findings related to instructional technology indicate that the faculty members needed professional development support mostly for developing course website/blog ( $n=33$ , 45.2%) and integrating instructional technology into courses ( $n=33$ , 45.2%), developing and teaching a blended course ( $n=25$ , 34.20%). Online assessment was the item in which participants expressed least need ( $n=13$ , 17.81%).

### Professional issues

The frequencies and percentages for each professional development item in relation to professional issues subscale of FNAS are given in Table 7. About professional issues, the faculty

**Table 4.** Frequencies and percentages of items on syllabus and curriculum design.

Items	f	%
Designing activities, assignments and projects	27	37.00
Designing an online course	22	30.10
Designing a course	21	28.80
Designing undergraduate and graduate curriculum	20	27.40
Syllabus design	15	20.50

**Table 5.** Frequencies and percentages of items on assessment.

Items	f	%
Preparing effective exams (e.g., open ended, short-answer)	28	38.40
Giving constructive feedback/evaluations	28	38.40
Effective grading	26	35.60
Grading group work	25	34.20
Developing rubrics for grading assignments and projects	18	24.70
Performance assessment (service learning, projects, etc.)	17	23.30
Using peer feedback with students' drafts	10	13.70
Use and evaluations of student e-portfolios	7	9.60
Use and evaluation of student portfolios	5	6.80

**Table 6.** Frequencies and percentages of items on instructional technology.

Items	f	%
Developing course website/blog	33	45.20
Integrating instructional technology into your courses	33	45.20
Developing and teaching a blended course	25	34.20
Instructional technology users (or adapters) share best practices	20	27.40
Facilitating online discussion/chat sessions (asynchronous or synchronous)	19	26.00
Online assessment	13	17.81

**Table 7.** Frequencies and percentages of items on professional issues.

Items	f	%
Preparing for tenure and promotion	34	46.60
Time management	30	41.10
Evaluating your teaching (student evaluation of teaching, peer review, self-evaluation)	25	34.20
Sustaining your passion for teaching	24	32.90
Preventing professional burnout	22	30.10
Building a personal website	22	30.10
Mentoring relationship with colleagues	21	28.80
Intellectual property (copyright, fair use, avoiding plagiarism)	19	26.00
Developing a teaching portfolio	14	19.20
Conflict management at work	12	16.40



expressed strong need for the following top three items: Preparing for tenure and promotion ( $n=34$ , 46.60%), time management ( $n=30$ , 41.10%) and evaluating teaching ( $n=25$ , 34.20%). Items that were regarded as least needed by the participants were intellectual property ( $n=19$ , 26%), developing teaching portfolio ( $n=14$ , 19.20%), and conflict management at work ( $n=12$ , 16.40%).

### **Preference for Delivery Methods and Formats**

In this part, the findings concerning the preference for the delivery methods and formats of professional development activities were presented. The participants specified their preferences for format, length, time, and means to receive information in relation to professional development activities. The participants had the chance to select more than one option for each heading in the related part of the survey.

#### ***Preferred format of activities***

The participants were asked about their preferences on the format of group activities on professional development. More than half of the faculty members preferred college/department specific workshops ( $n=40$ , 54.8%) and videos of practices of teaching followed by discussion ( $n=32$ , 43.8%). When they were also asked about their preferences for the format of individual activities, the faculty members mostly preferred classroom observation with feedback ( $n=19$ , 26%).

#### ***Preferred length of activities***

When the frequencies and percentages on the preferred length of activities to be offered in relation to professional development were examined, it was found out that the faculty mostly preferred 60 minutes ( $n=27$ , 37%) as the length for any professional development activity rather than the ones that lasts full day or 2–3 days.

#### ***Preferred time of activities***

When the frequencies and percentages of responses to questions related to the preferred time of activities to be offered in relation to professional development were examined, it was seen that participants mostly preferred one week before semester begins ( $n=36$ , 49%) as the time for offered activities.

#### ***Preferred way to receive announcements about activities***

The faculty members were also asked about their preference on how to receive announcements of the professional development activities. The findings showed that they mostly preferred to receive announcements through e-mail sent to their institutional mail addresses ( $n=55$ , 75.3%). They did not prefer brochures or bulletin board posters prepared by the university.

### **Evaluation of the Open-Ended Questions**

In the survey, there were two open-ended questions asking participants' views and suggestions on professional development activities. In the first question they were asked about the topics for professional development activity they need most urgently. Only 19 of the participants responded to this question. The faculty members mostly mentioned their professional development needs in relation to professional issues ( $n=10$ ) such as preventing professional burnout and time management. Another issue they needed support was on students ( $n=6$ ) such as increasing student motivation towards lessons and dealing with difficult students. In the second question, the participants were asked about other services that they would like to see provided by their institution. Seven participants responded to the question and answers included "providing services not only for the faculty but also for the research/teaching assistants," "offering professional development activities not only for the new faculty but also for all faculty members," "announcing the activities/events outside the university/to the other universities," and "offering individual consultancy for faculty members regarding teaching."

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The current study aimed to investigate the professional development needs of faculty and their preferences in relation to professional development activities to be offered by their institution. The study was conducted in a public university; therefore, the results might not be generalized to other higher education institutions in Turkey. The results of the current study showed that the junior faculty expressed strong need for training on project-based learning, teaching large classes, motivating students, encouraging students for academic integrity, designing activities, assignments, and projects, preparing effective exams, giving constructive feedback, developing course website, integrating instructional technology into courses, and preparing for tenure and promotion.

Project-based learning offers teaching models which make students face real-world issues (Bender, 2012) and aims to collaboratively find solutions for the problems. This study suggests that faculty should be offered information about up-to-date learning methodologies including project-based learning, cooperative learning, problem-based learning, and experiential learning. Parallel with these findings, in other studies, new theories and practices of teaching (Ekşi, 2010) and developing teaching skills (Koç, Demirbilek, & İnce, 2015; Odabaşı, 2003; Opre, Zaharie, & Opre, 2008) were also identified among the faculty professional development needs.



In the current study, another faculty need was teaching large classes (classes with more than forty or fifty students). As stated by Latchem, Odabaşı, and Kabakçı (2006), the need for training in teaching large class could result from the increase in the number of students entering universities and the challenge of learning and using new approaches, methods in large classes. Thus, Vajoczki and Knorr (2010) found that teaching in large classes was also considered as a topic that should be taken into consideration as part of faculty professional development programs. On the contrary, Siddiqui (2006) reported that in Pakistan where teacher-centered lectures are being widely used as a method of instruction, training about how to teach large classes was rated as the least preferred professional development need.

Furthermore, in relation to students, more than half of the faculty in the present survey expressed a need for professional development in the area of motivating students. Student motivation, defined as the level of students' attention and efforts for classroom tasks, is an essential part of student learning in classroom setting; and the faculty are expected to find ways to increase students' willingness for and engagement in learning during their courses (Brophy, 2010). The finding of this study might indicate that the faculty are aware of the importance of student motivation to student success and to increase the effectiveness of learning activities. Similar to this finding, other studies also identified motivating students as a need that the faculty members prioritize (Elçi & Yaratın, 2012; Vajoczki & Knorr, 2010).

The other identified need area, which is thought to be an important result of this study, was encouraging students in relation academic integrity. The vitality of academic integrity, defining moral codes and ethical behaviors in the academia, are becoming more and more important for higher education institutions together with the increasing rates of academic dishonesty (Bretag et al., 2014; Eret & Ok, 2014; Macfarlane, Zhang, & Pun, 2014) and the role of faculty in terms of encouraging integrity is accepted as unquestionable (McCabe & Pavela, 2004). The study also confirmed that faculty members needed support on how to increase academic integrity among students. The training programs could be designed by the university to support faculty about how to deal with this issue.

The faculty needs in this study were also centered on other instructional activities such as designing assignments and projects, preparing exams, and giving feedback. In the study of Wallin and Smith (2005), faculty ranked professional development activities based on significance. According to the findings, they ranked designing up-to-date materials for

instructional purposes in the first place. In addition, with respect to instructional technology, nearly half of the faculty members specified a need for developing course websites and integrating technology into courses. In a technological age furnished with all kinds of technological devices, most of the students are even more accustomed to using these devices than their teachers. When this is the case, "...emerging technologies place additional stress on faculty" (Wallin & Smith, 2005, p.88). For that reason, faculty professional development programs could relieve faculty by offering them training in up-to-date technological tools of teaching (Murray, 2002). In the literature, there are other studies reaching similar conclusions about faculty need for training on the use of instructional technology (Odabaşı, 2003; Vajoczki & Knorr, 2010; Wallin & Smith, 2005).

With the aim of taking different views and needs of the faculty into consideration, the study also explored the preferences related to professional development activities or programs to be offered. The study found that the faculty mostly preferred training activities to be presented in 60-minute faculty/department-specific workshops one week before semester starts. Preference for workshops rather than seminars may result from the need of the participants for actively engaging learning environment. It is evident that workshops provide more practical information and experiences for the faculty rather than passively listening to the presenter. It seems also a better idea to conduct such workshops before the semester begins, as the faculty generally gets prepared for the new semester and revitalize their courses at the beginning of each semester.

The mostly preferred way of receiving information about these activities was e-mail announcement. Similarly, in the study of Moeini (2003), the faculty expressed their preference for departmental professional development activities. The researcher identified this type of departmental faculty development as decentralized and suggested considering both centralized (university-wide) and decentralized faculty needs in balance. In that study, too, the preferred length of such activities was 60-minute. Similarly, Taylor and McQuiggan (2008) found that the faculty preferred short training sessions, and in another study instructors expressed their preferences for 60-minute professional development sessions (Ekşi, 2010). From a number of other studies, it can be seen that workshops have repeatedly been identified as one of the mostly preferred formats for professional development activities (Ekşi, 2010; Kabakçı & Odabaşı, 2008; Moeini, 2003; Odabaşı, 2003; Vajoczki & Knorr, 2010), although Önkol (2011) found that informal professional development activities were more preferred than formal activities.



Overall, considering the findings of this study on faculty development needs and the changes occurring in higher education, the junior faculty should be provided with training and activities in relation to their most urgent needs on the aspects of teaching and learning. However, a quick search on the websites of the universities in Turkey or informal talks with the faculty reveal the fact that there are only few number of universities having professional development programs for their faculty members. It should also be noted that the sample of this study only included junior faculty, as suggested by Opre, Zaharie, and Opre (2008) faculty from various ages and various backgrounds have different needs as well. Therefore, in the future the present study might be repeated by including senior faculty members and examining the needs of different groups.

All in all, as one of the major human resources of universities, faculty has a very significant role in the development of higher education institutions, and the development of faculty contributes much to it (Odabaşı, 2003). Universities are thus, whether they acknowledge it or not, responsible for providing professional development opportunities. Through an acknowledged professional development program, faculty could improve their skills and knowledge to become more efficient in their profession and experience career advancement (Elçi & Yaratana, 2012; Hahn & Lester, 2012). Within this regard, the findings of the present study could be beneficial in providing grounds for future professional development activities and services to be offered to junior faculty at the institutional level, besides contributing to the existing literature on faculty professional development. In Turkey, professional development training or activities are not obligatory in most of the universities. Therefore, as also stated by Odabaşı (2005), there is a threat that faculty might not regard such activities as essential and, consequently, resist attending. The universities in Turkey should cope with this threat and make efforts to encourage faculty members to participate in such activities. To provide this, Latchem, Odabaşı, and Kabakçı (2006) suggested using online professional development activities or programs so that all faculty members in Turkey might be reached. Consequently, assessing the views of faculty and considering their needs by means of studies could provide a good starting point for faculty professional development in higher education institutions.

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