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## Türkiye'deki İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Mesleki Gelişiminin Geleceği: SWOT Analizi

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### ÖZ

Öğretmenlerin sürekli mesleki gelişim (SMG) ihtiyaçlarının net bir şekilde anlaşılması, uygun hizmet içi eğitim faaliyetlerinin planlanması için çok önemlidir. Çalışma, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğretmenlerinin SMG ihtiyaçlarının kapsamlı bir analizi için bir SWOT matrisini entegre eden yuvarlak masa tartışmalarına odaklanan bir metodoloji kullanarak niteliksel bir yaklaşım benimsemiştir. Verilere tümevarımsal içerik analizi yaklaşımı (Strauss ve Corbin, 1990), özellikle dört geniş SWOT bileşeni kategorisinin tümdengelimli yapısı içinde uygulanmış, ardından tematik bir yaklaşım uygulanmıştır (Merriam ve Tisdell, 2016). Hem avantajlı hem de zorlayıcı iç ve dış faktörleri araştırmak ve çözümler önermek için art arda üç yuvarlak masa oturumunda beş deneyimli K-12 EFL öğretmenini bir araya getiren bu çalışma, SWOT analizinin ihtiyaç değerlendirmesinde etkili bir araç olarak faydasını vurgulamaktadır. Birleşik önerilerden ortaya çıkan çerçeve, uygulama toplulukları ve öğretmen hareketliliği fırsatları gibi informal SMG yollarının teşvik edilmesini önermektedir. Çalışma, politika yapıcıları Türkiye'deki devlet okullarındaki İngilizce öğretmenleri için özel olarak hazırlanmış uyumlu SMG programları geliştirmeye çağırarak ileriye dönük öneriler sunmaktadır. Bu öneriler genelleştirilebilir ve yerel ve ulusal eğitim kurumlarının ve kuruluşlarının yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğretmenleri için etkili SMG yolları sağlamasını sağlayabilir.

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## The future of EFL teachers' professional development in Türkiye: A Swot Analysis

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### ABSTRACT

A clear understanding of teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) needs is crucial for planning appropriate in-service training activities. The study adopts a qualitative approach, utilizing a methodology centered around roundtable discussions that integrate a SWOT matrix for a comprehensive analysis of English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' CPD needs. The inductive content analysis approach to the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990), specifically within the deductive structure of the four broad categories of SWOT component was applied, followed by a thematic approach (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Engaging five experienced K-12 EFL teachers across three consecutive roundtable sessions to explore both advantageous and challenging internal and external factors and propose solutions, this study highlights the utility of the SWOT analysis as an effective tool in needs assessment. The framework emerging from unified recommendations suggests fostering informal CPD avenues, such as communities of practice and opportunities for teacher mobility. The study concludes with forward-looking recommendations urging policymakers to develop cohesive CPD programs tailored for EFL teachers in public schools in Türkiye. These recommendations could potentially be generalized, enabling local and national educational institutions and organizations to provide effective CPD avenues for EFL teachers.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Recognizing the evolving nature of teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) needs in diverse contexts is essential for designing effective solutions tailored to their specific requirements. Teachers exhibit a tendency for embracing CPD when they witness its positive impact on instructional approaches within their classrooms (Guskey, 2002). This inclination became especially evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, where Turkish teachers actively engaged in CPD programs facilitated by the Ministry of National Education Türkiye (MoNE) in collaboration with UNESCO (Özer, 2020). The primary objective was to integrate instructional approaches conducive to successful remote teaching and learning. Confronted with the complexities of remote education, Turkish teachers, in response, embraced self-directed learning, networking, and collaborative efforts with peers. This marked a departure from conventional practices, aligning with Guskey's (2002) proposition of initiatives aimed at enhancing student learning through adjustments in teachers' pedagogical approaches.

Drawing insights from the OECD report (OECD, 2020), the MoNE swiftly implemented measures, including the design of numerous online training courses, to address the immediate challenges of the pandemic. Göçen's (2021) case study emphasized the importance of technologically competent leadership, addressing challenges for disadvantaged groups, and strategic preparation for post-pandemic scenarios to transform teachers' pedagogical and technological leadership competences. As the educational landscape shifted from remote to face-to-face learning post-pandemic, the CPD needs of teachers evolved. Day's (1999) concept of CPD, encompassing spontaneous and deliberate learning experiences, highlights its continuous nature, intertwined with the broader context of educational transformation.

Since the introduction of structural and curricular reforms in 2004 (Akşit, 2007) with a focus on modifying content, teaching methodologies, and core competencies, Türkiye has been committed to enhancing English language education. Despite positive trends, for example Education First Proficiency Index EF EPI 2014 reports Türkiye at the forefront of the "trending up" category (Education First, 2021), the rankings indicate a need for continued investments in language teaching developments. In this context, allocating resources to understand the actual needs of teacher development is crucial for fostering their growth and making a

meaningful impact on student learning.

This study contributes to the exploration of CPD by presenting a segment of results from a collaborative project between a university and local MoNE authorities in a city in Western Türkiye. Aligned with the National Council's decisions (Ministry of National Education Türkiye, 2021), the project seeks to understand English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' perspectives in K-12 public schools regarding foreign language education. It aims to assess and address challenges through roundtable discussions, focusing on themes such as English language teaching, curriculum, teacher roles, and CPD needs. This study specifically addresses the latter theme by bridging the gap between CPD challenges and the needs of English teachers at the MoNE, presenting growth strategies for policymakers.

The current study unfolds with an exploration of existing literature on CPD and situational analysis, followed by a detailed methodology description of roundtable discussions. Subsequently, the SWOT strategy matrix is presented, emphasizing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The findings and discussion of the main themes follow, concluding with reflections on current challenges and prospective solutions for the CPD of English teachers within the MoNE as well as in a broader context.

### **1.1. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

CPD is described in academic literature as an intentional, ongoing, and lifelong undertaking in which educators strive to enhance both their personal and professional attributes, aiming to enhance their knowledge, skills, and performance (Padwad and Dixit, 2011). In education, CPD carries connotations of teacher quality and reflecting on the quality of learning received by students (Borg, 2015). UNESCO (2014:9) proclaims that 'an education system is only as good as its teachers, stressing the need for CPD in order to improve teaching and learning. In the call for 'new social contract' in the UNESCO report (UNESCO, 2021: 81), it is emphasized that 'the individual talents and abilities of teachers need to be bolstered by collaboration and support.'

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic brought about substantial changes in the field of education, particularly through an abrupt shift to online teaching. This transition witnessed a surge in the use of various digital platforms, such as Education Information Network EBA in Türkiye, developed by the Ministry of National Education, Eduthek in Austria, "My Class at Home" in France, and "Distance Education" in the Czech Republic (World Bank, 2020). This period prompted educators to reassess their

teaching practices, underscoring the dual role of teachers as both subjects and objects of change (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Teachers found themselves as subjects of change, tasked with enhancing their digital skills and teaching approaches through CPD to stay empowered. Simultaneously, they served as objects of change, playing a central role in the transition within their newly configured learning environments. As the CPD needs of teachers evolve, this remains a crucial research area garnering more attention than ever before.

There are many forms of CPD mentioned in the literature, such as seminars and conferences as more formal examples of structured in-service activities and lesson observations and other forms of sharing and collaboration including observations among teachers as more informal examples of CPD (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Yeh (2007) investigates elementary school teachers' CPD avenues and their effectiveness in Taiwan and concludes that the majority of teacher development activities were characterized as 'one-shot and sit-and-get models' (p. 16). She further suggests that long-term activities, such as teacher study groups and autonomous learning, should be encouraged by their Ministry of Education by building a support system for teachers to engage in them. Similarly, in Türkiye, the MoNE has adopted regulations that suggest alternative CPD activities other than courses and seminars that include CPD communities, and teacher mobility programs (Ministry of National Education Türkiye, 2022).

In response to educational reforms and the transition to remote teaching, the MoNE has organized in-service activities, employing various online courses delivered through digital platforms. While some studies emphasize the MoNE's efforts to promote communicative language practices, research findings reveal that teachers still adhere to traditional language teaching methods (Gürsoy et al., 2013; Kırkgöz, 2008; Mirici, 2006; Özşevik, 2010). The conventional approach to CPD activities, often characterized by a top-down structure and conducted as one-shot interventions, has proven less satisfactory for teachers. In contrast, alternative methods for sharing ideas and best practices, such as small professional learning communities enabling teachers to participate at their own pace and convenience, have gained popularity. Consequently, there is a pressing need for an examination of teachers' perspectives on CPD.

## **1.2. SWOT Analysis in Education**

SWOT, an acronym encompassing strengths, weaknesses (internal factors), opportunities, and threats or challenges (external factors), serves as a comprehensive analytical tool. Originally applied in business contexts, this technique facilitates the examination of an institution's internal strengths and weaknesses, along with external opportunities and threats (Leigh, 2009). Over time, SWOT analysis has found applications in performance analysis, appreciative inquiry, situation analysis, and similar domains, garnering popularity due to its practical utility. This method proves effective in capturing and defining the current state, providing insights into constraints and making it particularly suitable for situational analysis. Positioned "at the intersection between research and practice" (Novicevic et al., 2004: 85), SWOT analysis significantly influences the success of plan implementation, establishing itself as a prerequisite for sound planning. Successful planning commences with a clear understanding of the present, paving the way for a more robust future.

SWOT analysis proves highly practical in achieving the objective of situation analysis, which is to discern crucial factors influencing the implementation of a plan (Wilson and Gilligan, 2004). Klinghammer (1997:65) explores the application of SWOT analysis in strategically planning language programs, emphasizing its capacity to scrutinize internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats impacting the language program's viability and success. The widespread use of SWOT analysis in strategic planning across diverse educational domains can be attributed to its simplicity and its ability to offer realistic insights into internal and external factors. For instance, Romero-Gutierrez et al. (2016) employ SWOT analysis to assess a master's program in environmental education, considering student perspectives; Westhues et al. (2001) investigate human resources needs for social workers using a SWOT matrix as a tool; Hashemi et al. (2017) utilize SWOT analysis to strategize for language institutions aiming to create a distinctive identity; and Ustabulut (2021) employs SWOT analysis to examine the process of distance education in teaching Turkish as a foreign language.

This current study attempts to offer a deeper understanding of the situation related to CPD in local educational contexts through the views of several EFL teachers' judgments of CPD in the MoNE context in a highly industrial city in Western Türkiye. The results of this SWOT analysis are decisive in terms of providing suggestions and determining the future of CPD activities. It can be especially useful when trying to decide whether or not to embark on a certain venture by visualizing the pros and

cons. By clearly outlining all the positives and negatives of the situation, SWOT analysis makes it easy to decide how to move forward.

## **2. METHOD**

### **2.1. Ethics and Consent**

On February 22, 2022, ethical approval for this study was granted by the Bursa Technical University Ethics Committee for Research in Science, Engineering, and Social Sciences (approval number E-96108589-044-47126). On the event day, participants were presented with detailed information about the study's aims, ethics, and consent verbally. Subsequently, written consent was obtained from each participant, involving the completion of a signed consent form. While the primary objective of the round-table discussions was to encourage the exchange of experiences among participants, they were informed that their contributions would undergo member-checking before being included in a peer-reviewed, publicly accessible journal.

### **2.2. Research Question**

One of the aims of this qualitative research is to collect detailed information about constraints foreseen from various data sources and, by doing so, provide a 'thick description' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) as a tool to ensure transferability, one of the four trustworthiness criteria. A SWOT matrix was employed for the analysis to identify pertinent issues in the MoNE regarding CPD, focusing on recognizing existing challenges and needs in the professional development of English teachers. There were several stages before, during, and after conducting the SWOT analysis. At the initial stage, four open ended questions were formulated based on four modules of SWOT analysis, which aimed to gather answers on perceived weaknesses, strengths, opportunities, and threats to professional development in the MoNE context. Therefore, the research question addressed in this study is:

What are the future trends for professional development suggested by English teachers working for public schools in order to capitalize on the opportunities and solve current problems?

### **2.3. Roundtable Discussion**

A roundtable discussion is an effective method for engaging the public because it incorporates voices from all groups of concerned citizens and provides insight into the essence of the phenomena under investigation (Bridgeman, 2010). It is a setting

where nobody holds authoritative status on a subject, and all participants are treated equally. The inclusion of additional actors, who may not actively participate in the discussion but instead listen, is another characteristic of roundtable discussions. In the British Council's "The Future of English: Global Perspectives" report (Patel et al., 2023) there is reference to roundtable discussions to gather macro-level data from various actors regarding the global perspectives on the future of English. The presence of silent observers—in this case, university-assigned note-taker—provides an additional option for data collection following each roundtable discussion. In addition to leveraging their professional networks, the initiative also utilizes their specialized knowledge and experience.

The roundtable discussion was used to generate detailed and practical data from various perspectives. Two individuals, both the note-taker and facilitator, were responsible for taking notes. The silent observer and the facilitator present at roundtable attended the debrief meetings. There were three rounds of roundtable discussions, each lasting 45 minutes, encompassing 1) brainstorming sessions, 2) analysis and synthesis of prioritized lists, and 3) proposals for solutions. The roundtable discussions occurred in February 2022, and the university secured a location for them. Various individuals played different roles in the roundtable discussions. The facilitator's role was to steer the conversation, prompt participants when necessary, and ensure it stayed on topic. The roundtable discussions were facilitated by the researcher involved in the current study. The hook presenter's task was to provide a brief overview of the evaluation of English language teaching trends in the Ministry of National Education in Türkiye, highlight difficulties observed, and suggest solutions. Participants received a summary before each roundtable to provide context for the discussion. The hook presentation served as a review of content or, for those unfamiliar, as new input, stimulating the discussion.

The roundtable included five teacher participants to allow for a variety of viewpoints while still leaving ample time for everyone to share their ideas. A single note-taker took notes of the discussion since the roundtables were not recorded. Before each roundtable, the note-taker received a debriefing and a note-taking manual and during discussions observed calmly and did not participate in the conversation. The researcher was simultaneously the facilitator of the roundtable discussion. The facilitator began the roundtable by stating its purpose, outlining rules, and clarifying definitions for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. They emphasized that consensus wasn't a priority, outlined the discussion scope, and highlighted the importance of diverse opinions.



## **2.4. Data Collection and Analysis**

Initially, participants were allotted approximately 20 minutes to independently generate SWOT analyses. The facilitator instructed participants to identify and explain both internal and external factors. Guiding the discussion around the four analysis modules, the facilitator and note-taker noted down responses from teacher participants. Since some responses differed from those previously mentioned, at the end of each round, all responses were briefly reviewed to explore potential merging through negotiations and by maintaining consensus among the participants and authors. Following the first brainstorming session, the SWOTs were categorized into four groups, and data were collected on a shared matrix. Participants were then asked to rank the SWOTs within each category based on their perceived importance. The facilitator examined the prioritized lists in each category, identifying major groupings. Since all participants were experienced teachers with a wealth of expertise, the finalized report underwent member checks with participants for feedback and follow-up. These strategies contribute to a comprehensive list of ideas, providing a foundation for evaluating constraints and determining the feasibility of an enhanced CPD model.

The current study seeks to present a comprehensive overview of EFL teachers' lived experiences concerning their CPD practices. The primary objective is to depict the current state within the MoNE context, utilizing the overarching categories of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to structure the data. Employing an inductive content analysis approach (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) author cross-analysed all of the data, based on the given deductive structure of the each of the four broad categories of SWOT components. After the inductive content analysis process then the author undertook a thematic approach (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Finally, member checking with the participants was employed as a method to bolster the credibility of the interpretation. In an effort to ensure realistic data, diverse perspectives from teachers at the local level, as expressed through their representative group of five teachers, were considered during the analysis of various viewpoints.

## **2.5. Participants and Setting**

The current study was conducted at a technical state university located in a highly industrial city in western Türkiye, offering English as the medium of instruction. The facilitator of the roundtable discussion was an experienced English teacher and teacher trainer responsible for managing in-service training activities for the

university's English teaching staff. Following Dörnyei's rationale (2007: 125–6), the primary objective of sampling was to identify participants capable of offering diverse and insightful perspectives on the topic under investigation, aiming to maximize learning outcomes. Qualitative research seeks individuals possessing the needed information and willingness to share it.

The main purpose of the roundtables was to gather insights from experienced practitioners, aligning with the project's goal of eliciting evidence from K–12 teachers' perspectives. The assumption was that these participants could provide an insider's viewpoint on English teaching across different levels and types of secondary education institutions. The collaboration between the university and the local authorities of the MoNE facilitated participant recruitment, providing a unique opportunity to access voices from five schools across the city and comprehensively address their professional needs.

The English teachers involved in this study (4 female, 1 male) are native Turkish speakers holding a BA degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) or English Language and Literature, with over 10 years of teaching experience. All participants have prior engagement in international projects like eTwinning or Erasmus+ and have been involved in various managerial roles.

### **3. FINDINGS**

Participants provided their written consent before participating in the roundtable discussions. The analysis of data from roundtable discussions, using a SWOT matrix, revealed the effectiveness of this tool in identifying opportunities, threats, strengths, and weaknesses. Drawing on these insights, recommendations for improvement are then put forth. The presentation of findings follows the analytical framework guiding this study, organized into three subsections: strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and proposals for solutions.

#### **3.1. Strengths and Weaknesses**

Two strengths and three weaknesses themes were identified through the analysis. The primary strength pertains to the support mechanisms provided by the MoNE, including the Research and Development unit staffed with numerous experts offering guidance and support, CPD activities facilitated by well-trained and experienced teacher trainers, the option for formal leave to engage in these activities, and the availability of various online CPD courses on the MoNE digital platforms (such as the Education Information Network EBA and Teacher Information Network ÖBA), among others. Another highlighted strength is the motivation

exhibited by teachers in their work, driven by love and passion for the profession, coupled with a continual renewal of energy, particularly through witnessing the success of new generations in language learning. The willingness of teachers to assume new roles is an additional example contributing to their professional development; for instance, two participants took on managerial responsibilities, gaining a broader understanding of the institutions they serve.

The first weakness pertains to teacher-related issues, particularly the perceived low level of English language proficiency among teachers. A participant shared a valuable past experience of a 10-month stay in the UK, during which they reflected on their language skills. This stay provided an opportunity to further practice conversational skills. All teachers concluded that there should be regular opportunities for teachers to go abroad as part of their CPD activities offered by the MoNE. Other examples of teacher-related problems mentioned included a lack of intrinsic motivation for professional growth due to the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, an increased risk of poor well-being, and a lack of involvement in pedagogical decision-making processes.

The second weakness was related to the nature of in-service (INSET) training, as it was scarcely relevant to the TEFL field and was mainly short-term, presenter-led, and characterized by a lack of critical engagement with received knowledge. While online courses were mentioned as a strength, the restricted number of TEFL-related online courses on these platforms is another example that illustrates the nature of the MoNE training available. This situation is quite similar for novice teachers, as the mentorship program is highly structured yet remotely connected to expertise in TEFL pedagogy. The third weakness addressed in the roundtable discussion was the lack of informal opportunities for development, and the underlying cause was described as the lack of attention to the immediate needs of teachers in the MoNE context. Additionally, there was a lack of a culture for teamwork in public schools, which contributed adversely in this sense. More appropriate activities were described as extended opportunities for repeating the newly presented skills through active teacher engagement. Participants also expressed distrust in certain varieties of CPD activities, such as lesson observations, due to a lack of a culture for appreciative and constructive feedback.

### **3.2. Opportunities and Threats**

Three opportunities and three threats emerged from the analysis. Opportunities include the availability of external support through online training, such as workshops on integrating technology into English lessons, specialized courses, MOOCs, and talks offered by international associations and publishing companies. Another noteworthy opportunity seems to be the availability of international project-based models, such as Erasmus+ strategic partnerships or mobility projects, eTwinning, and projects funded by the Scientific and Technological Research

Council of Türkiye (TÜBİTAK), to name a few. The third opportunity is the possibility of cooperation with universities, and teachers recalled an example of cooperation between local MoNE authorities and a university in a long-term CPD project through a mentorship program and various seminars that promoted reflective teaching (Gürsöy et al., 2013).

A significant concern pertains to challenges associated with students, including their low proficiency in English and a lack of motivation for learning the language. These complex challenges cannot be solved solely through individual CPD efforts of teachers; there is a clear need for collaboration among schools, professional organizations, and universities. Teachers also point out students' resistance to participating in communicative activities, such as group work or peer collaboration, and a passive learning style in general.

Another threat is associated with time restrictions brought about by additional teaching hours and other assigned administrative tasks, such as dealing with paperwork in English, handling project proposals, and similar responsibilities. Involvement in numerous projects developed by the MoNE also contributes adversely to teachers' workload. Participants indicated that English teachers face pressure due to high expectations from the management to coordinate international projects such as Erasmus+, eTwinning, and TÜBİTAK projects. This pressure is mainly due to the lack of sufficient knowledge of the English language among teachers of other subjects.

The third threat is related to contextual factors arising from restrictions imposed by COVID-19 pandemic, occasionally leading to the transition to online lessons. There are high expectations to continuously communicate with students and their parents about health issues, which is time-consuming and requires patience. The pandemic triggered a serious economic crisis in Türkiye and a decline in the value of the Turkish currency, resulting in insufficient income in many professions, including teaching. This downturn is also apparent in the lack of maintenance of technical equipment, internet connections, and other physical spaces related to language learning. Public schools are more crowded than ever as private schools become less affordable for a growing number of parents.

### **3.3. Proposals For Solutions**

After analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to CPD activities, participants in this study proposed several solutions to capitalize on opportunities and mitigate threats. The key recommendations aimed at optimizing teacher growth and student learning experiences and are as follows:

- Foster Collaborative Learning Environments: Promote an atmosphere of trust and collegiality, encouraging informal CPD through peer observation modules. This collaborative approach ensures ongoing support and constructive feedback.

- **Enhance TEFL-specific Content:** Advocate for more TEFL-specific content on the Education Information Network and Teacher Information Network platforms. This can be achieved through a thorough needs analysis and close collaboration with national and international associations of English teachers moving away from a "one size fits all" approach; instead, align CPD activities with institutional profiles.
- **Facilitate Participant-led In-service Trainings:** Shift from presenter-led to participant-led in-service trainings, starting from its development phase by gathering their input to align them constructively with their contexts. Ensure that learning objectives of training programs are demonstrated through hands-on activities, encouraging engagement in exploration and reflection on both practices and beliefs.
- **Promote Ongoing University Collaboration and Expert-Led Training:** Prioritize sustained collaboration with universities to ensure long-term teacher development projects, moving away from one-shot programs. Enhance the effectiveness of teacher training by engaging expert trainers from universities who specialize in the field.
- **Facilitate Knowledge Transfer and Assessment:** Establish continuous opportunities for teachers to apply in-service training insights, providing essential follow-up support for effective knowledge transfer into teaching practices. Implement regular teacher self-evaluations as integral components of formal performance assessments, ensuring a comprehensive assessment of in-service training impact.
- **Organize Innovative Social Events and Promote Language Empowerment for Non-English Teachers:** Host innovative social events to encourage teachers' engagement in multiliteracy activities, fostering discussions and the exchange of ideas as well as their well-being. Provide carefully planned English language learning opportunities to teachers of other subjects, aligning with their specific needs for effective participation in international projects, particularly in writing Erasmus+ proposals.

The comprehensive framework that emerges from the unified recommendations is designed to create a holistic and dynamic ecosystem for professional development in the field of English language education. This integrated approach prioritizes collaboration, tailored content, strategic self-reflection, experiential learning, and ongoing support.

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

The current study explored weaknesses and threats affecting the professional development of English teachers in the MoNE that reveal a period of vulnerability for the profession in the post- COVID-19 era, intricately connected to various dimensions

of teachers' lives. Despite the acknowledged support provided by the MoNE through in-service training and online courses within professional networks, the willingness of teachers to engage in CPD appears closely tied to student motivation and achievement (Korkmazgil, 2015) results in a less gratifying professional experience and hinders teachers' dedication to professional growth. Conversely, teachers involved with motivated learners in language-focused classes exhibit a stronger inclination toward professional learning experiences. In alignment with findings from Korkmazgil (2015), teachers express awareness of their teaching practices and a desire to convert professional development into a collaborative venture.

The findings exhibit a parallel with Yeh's (2007) study, highlighting that certain forms of formal CPD, such as one-shot seminars, are perceived as less effective, whereas informal CPD activities like teacher study groups are deemed valuable in terms of time and effort. Despite the MoNE regulations introducing activities like professional development communities that are in effect now, teachers lack first-hand experiences demonstrating their practical implementation. For instance, lesson observations within small communities of practice could foster trust, support, and collegiality. Structured peer support or teacher study groups can be strategically planned, adhering to similar principles and addressing issues identified through lesson observations. Additionally, an increased involvement of English teachers in international projects is viewed as more motivating and beneficial as an informal CPD avenue. This participation not only enhances language proficiency but also provides opportunities for reflection on best practices observed in schools worldwide.

Project-based models show promising potential in addressing teachers' professional development needs while enhancing their cultural awareness. Collaborating on innovative themes in international teams contributes to increased self-confidence, personal satisfaction, and professional fulfilment among teachers. These findings align with the results presented by Başaran et al. (2020) and Yılmaz (2019), emphasizing that teachers perceive international projects as valuable professional learning experiences, motivating them to invest time and expertise in these endeavours. The evolving landscape of education, marked by rapid changes and the emergence of digital natives, poses challenges in motivating students in traditional public school classrooms. The growing emphasis on technology integration and the shift to online teaching underscores the importance of clarifying English teachers' unique contributions and embracing a steadfast commitment to experience-based professional learning. This study aspires to reignite teachers'

enthusiasm, inspiring them to contribute to the design of more meaningful professional learning experiences for themselves and their colleagues in the teaching profession.

#### **4.1. Limitations**

The limitations of this study are recognized, particularly the inclusion of a small sample comprising in-service teachers from state schools. To enhance the generalizability and robustness of the findings, future research should consider replicating the study on a broader scale, involving larger samples and incorporating diverse parameters for comparative analysis.

### **5. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

This study embarked on an exploration of EFL teachers' perspectives on the future of their professional development, demonstrating the practicality of employing a SWOT approach to bridge growth and problem-solving paradigms in professional development (Guskey, 2002). The examination of internal and external factors revealed the intricate and contextually influenced nature of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, particularly in the post-COVID-19 landscape. However, the proposed solutions articulated by teachers in the findings offer valuable insights for the preparatory stage, emphasizing connections to contextual factors, a focus on student learning and achievement, relevance to diverse teacher needs, and the promotion of collaborative and communicative methods.

This study contributes empirical evidence on employing a bottom-up approach to identify critical issues for policymakers, highlighting the dialogue between higher education experts and those employed by the Ministry of National Education to enhance the quality of input from in-service teachers regarding their CPD needs. The results, affirming the utility of SWOT analysis in roundtable discussions, suggest its effectiveness as a tool for situational analysis in in-service teacher education programs. Consequently, incorporating this tool as a mediation activity in an overall in-service teacher education situation analysis is recommended.

Building on the study's findings, several questions emerge for future research, such as identifying the most effective in-service training methods and examining the proactive extension of EFL teachers' CPD initiatives to informal avenues. The role of national and international associations of English teachers, the future of in-service training for EFL teachers, and measuring the impact of in-service training more effectively also warrant exploration. These questions form the basis for a strategic framework aimed at adapting CPD in relevant contexts. This strategy should amplify existing strengths, address weaknesses, leverage available perspectives, and safeguard against potential threats. Although implementing strategies to meet the needs of all teachers is challenging due to their individual differences, this study suggests that roundtable discussions utilizing a SWOT matrix offer an equitable

approach to identifying distinct opportunities that may be overlooked amidst teachers' busy schedules.

Ethical approval for this study was obtained on 22 February 2022 from the Bursa Technical University Ethics Committee for Research in Science, Engineering, and Social Sciences, approval number E-96108589-044-47126.

The author reports there are no competing interests to declare.



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