ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ABOUT THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN LIBYAN CONTEXT[1]

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Abstract
This study was primarily conducted to explore the nature of current professional development programs implemented for secondary school teachers in the context of Libya. For this purpose, four purposively selected English language teachers were interviewed to explore their views regarding the effectives of the professional development activities and their supervisors. The findings of this investigation indicated that Libyan supervisors are doing well in terms of implementing the professional development programs in their respective schools. However, teachers reported that they receive very minimal support from the government although it has a line up in-service training programs for faculty and staff. This implies that school supervisors should serve as the prime movers or leaders in the design, delivery and evaluation of professional development programs with the support of the local and/or national government of Libya.
Key words: English language teachers, professional development program, in-service training.

Introduction

The evaluation process of professional development programs is considered as one quandary that beleaguers various organizations, companies and educational institutions (Polk, 2011). The minimal level of professional qualities of school teachers continues to be a highly debated issue in educational research that needs immediate attention as a result of unsatisfactory academic performance of students. As a matter of fact, professional quality is a pre-requisite to quality teaching and learning and the overall success of an educational institution. "Teacher professional development has been regarded as one of the most important factors for improving the quality of both teaching and learning" (Kaymakamoğlu & Çağanağa, 2016, p.3). For a long period of time, professional qualities decreased as evidenced in the inefficient work ethics of educators. This incompetence may be attributed to the nonexistence of positive reception to the teaching occupation, ineffective communication skills (Nye, Konstantopoulos & Hedges, 2004), absence of focus, absenteeism, unpleasant attitude towards students, resistance to improvements, mediocre performance coupled with unremarkable work principles and the absence of dedication which affects students' interest and engagement ain school. Professional qualities of teachers are undeniably significant in both students' and school's success. Professional development strategies are argued to be the means upon which school heads and other stakeholders like teachers venture to further one's knowledge attitudes and skills in the delivery of quality education. Several instructors and administrators today in Libyan schools are conscious of the important part they have as organizers of learning. They purpose to support higher education by shaping curriculum programs that challenge the education requirements of the students. Therefore, they discovered it a herculean duty to be in the forefront of any educational activity. They consider that there are several issues to consider for every instructive environment to result changes in its system. More specifically, they are aware that the absence of

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communication, teamwork and collaboration effect the preferences of school leaders' and teachers' professional development systems. Therefore, more consideration and importance should be distributed for more effective professional development to improve the educational quality of the school.

This investigation was aimed primarily at exploring the characteristics of existing professional development programs implemented in some Libyan schools. It also investigated how effective the professional development activities and these programs are for the Libyan professional teachers. For this purpose the following research questions were devised:

1. What is the nature of current Libyan professional development programs?
2. How effective are these programs for the development of Libyan professionals?

It is believed that this study has the potential to provide Libyan institutions with relevant data based on the findings of research which may be essential in the creation and innovation of more effective professional development programs to sustain the quality of education for all its beneficiaries and clients in Libyan educational institutions.

Research Design

This study was conducted qualitatively. The main purpose of this method is to describe or explain the status of a particular condition (Creswell, 2008) such as the extent in the implementation of the professional development programs of selected Libyan schools. Creswell (2003) elaborated that this design intended to present facts about the nature and status of situation as it existed at the time of study. This research study also features the characteristics of an existing phenomenon.

Research Participants

There were four qualified respondents selected based on purposive sampling method. They were considered as qualified respondents as they belonged to the group who met certain criteria for the respondents in the data collection process. The basic criteria were set prior to the sampling such as: classroom teachers of English, with at least one year experience in English language instruction, must be teaching in a Libyan school at the time of the interview and is willing to submit oneself to a one-on-one interview. The researcher sought the consent of the respondents and assured them of the strict observance of security of information and confidentiality of responses to the interview questions. These respondents were asked to answer some personal questions in an interview for demographic profiling. Moreover, they were also requested to provide their evaluative responses to the interview questions pertaining to the efficacy of the implementation of professional development programs in their respective schools as well as the efficacy of supervisors in relation to specified indicators of the development programs. As to the experiences of the teacher-respondents in this study, one teacher claimed that he studied English for seven years. He started learning English from secondary level in a university. He had been teaching English for two years at the time of the interview. The second interviewee was a female teacher who had been handling English for seven long years. She considers her experience as a great achievement knowing that English was not her first language. The third on was a male teacher who had newly-graduated but fortunately was employed in teaching English. The fourth one was a preparatory school teacher who expressed that she liked her job because it was interesting. However, she didn't have a wide experience yet in teaching English using several methods.

Method of Data Collection and Analysis

The investigator conducted an interview with the purposively-selected respondents. This interview intended to gather pertinent data to obtain the basic profile of the respondents as well as to collect substantial information based on the questions stipulated in the interview guide such as: Do you get any training programs after graduating from university?, What are the current professional development programs and activities being implemented in your school? These questions were considered vital in the collection process for the main purpose of making the respondents at ease with the interviewer. The researcher used a relevant interview guide in the gathering of substantive data or information. The guide was customized to ensure the collection of pertinent information on the extent and effectiveness of the implementation of professional development programs in selected Libyan schools. The items in the interview guide were used to gather data on professional development strategies employed by school supervisors. It was divided into ten indicators with five items for each level of professional development programs in terms of the following seven indicators namely: Peer Coaching, Study Groups, Action Research, Mentoring, Teaching Portfolios, In-Service Training and Team Teaching. The instrument was validated by experts before the conduct of the interview. The researcher asked permission from the supervisor to invite teacher professionals to participate in the study. Upon approval, the researcher provided a copy to the school supervisor. Next, the researcher personally contacted the respondents to make arrangements for interview. Before the conduct of the interview with the selected participants, the researcher explained to them that their participation is voluntary. In addition, the researcher assured the participants that their identities will not be disclosed and will be treated with utmost confidentiality.Afterwards, the researcher gathered the data from the scheduled interview with the teacher-interviewees. The data from the interview conducted were classified, organized, and coded. Themes were identified to ensure the reliability and accuracy of the results. The conversations in the interview focused on the nature of the professional development programs that were being implemented by supervisors in the respective schools. Collection of information, encoding of data, interpretation of findings and analysis of results were carried out by the researcher himself. The findings of this investigation are expected to serve as bases in the further improvement of professional development programs being implemented in the selected Libyan educational institutions. These professional development programs will benefit the institutions' stakeholders or clients as well as its administration and staff.

Analysis of the Data

A well-structured interview guide was used in this study to gather responses of the respondents to determine the extent and efficacy of the implementation of development programs in the chosen Libyan schools. The data gathered were analyzed based on two cycle coding methods as used by Corbin and Strauss (2008) as well as proposed by Saldana (2005). The data analysis involves a careful examination of the evaluation made by the respondents on the efficacy of the implementation of the professional development programs in favor of Libyan teachers. In addition, relevant data were systematically organized to establish certain categories. These categories of analyzed data were in turn combined into similar patterns to make comparisons of responses. The comparison and contrast of coded and analyzed categories were utilized to come up with a framework of connections of responses to the research questions. This processing of relevant connections of responses was eventually resulted to the development of theoretical constructs through the identification of themes on professional development as indicators of success in the implementation and promotion of educational objectives.

Ethical Issues

To come up with authentic results, the researcher observed the protocol in taking care of ethical issues pertaining to the conduct of interview with the selected participants. This research study provided an utmost safety and protection of all participants. They were well-informed about the nature and purpose of this project. Upon the approval of the participants, they agreed to be interviewed at their most convenient time and location. The researcher gave them the assurance that their identity and personal information will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Findings and Discussion of the First Research Question

When asked whether they are provided with in-service training programs as English teachers after graduating from the university, two of them declared that there were very limited training programs. Some of them had not availed yet since they started with their teaching career in Libyan schools but they were looking forward to be given the much-needed training in whatever ways. On the other hand, one teacher answered positively by saying that he received a training program as an English instructor while the other interviewee tried to get a course at his own expense. The participants were asked about their success stories as English teachers. All of the teacher-participants enthusiastically answered that they consider themselves successful in the field of teaching. In fact, one of them said that up until now he managed to reach his goals by continuing with his teaching career. A female participant was proud in saying that she received an excellent rating every year from her supervisor. The other female respondent likewise jubilantly expressed that her students were very fond of her; thus, she thought that she was successful in her job. The other male interviewee answered yes to the question but did not elaborate his response. Nonetheless, it was certain that he consider himself as gleeful in terms of his teaching occupation.To further investigate what they do for the improvement of their mental capacities, they were asked what they do to increase their knowledge about teaching. The responses as expected were varied due to their differences in their background, personality and experiences. On male teacher verbalized that he entered in a language course to further enhance his communication skills. He also found time to listen to native speakers whenever possible so he could get used to listening and speaking in that foreign language. Aside from listening, he made it a point that he had time to watch English movies. These learning strategies really helped him a lot in terms of English language acquisition. The other male respondent replied that he did some research work using printed books. Similar to the first male interviewee, this teacher also listened to English programs and watched television channels where there were English speakers. Additionally, one female pronounced that she attended workshops and conferences that dealt with teaching English language which he regarded as TEL while the other female participant articulated that she oftentimes read several English materials to increase her knowledge as well as used the modern technology such as the World Wide Web or the internet in social networking. As the interview progressed, the topics proceeded to the question regarding the issues and concerns that they were experiencing as professional teachers of English in Libya, Participant A uttered that one major problem was being unable to communicate with native English speakers. Participant B stated that, she had a great deal of adjusting herself in managing the first year of teaching in a secondary school for boys. It was rather difficult for her to train the young boys. The good thing was that her supervisor assisted her all the way. When Participant C was asked, he replied that his main problems were about the English sounds. He had a hard time learning English due to its phonologic patterns which are totally different from his native tongue. Participant D, however, revealed that at times she could barely find time to improve herself in terms of English communication as she was most of the time preoccupied with her responsibilities as a mother of two children.Towards the end of the informal conversation with the selected interviewees, they

were inquired regarding the help that they receive from the government for their professional development. Their answers were the same. According to the Libyan teacher-respondents, there was no assistance coming from the administration of the state. It was noted that there were a number of available support which the government could provide for the teachers. Nevertheless, the managerial staff neglected to connect with a ton of its subjects for their procurements. Hence, they recommended that the government needed to develop its system. The framework in the conveyance of assets for backing to the training area had to be given full consideration.

Finally, the one-on-one talk ended up with the question whether the curriculum could help the teacher develop oneself. The answer was equally vital. They all said yes to the question. Additional, one male member recognized that books were a big assistance but how the teacher use them was more important. The other male respondent likewise concurred by expressing that the educational modules could help the instructor create contingent upon nature. Both female members additionally considered the training educational modules valuable as it gave a venue to instructors to build up their techniques for direction. Be that as it may, of course, they proclaimed that showing English in the Libyan environment was a significant test because of dialect obstructions.

Findings and Discussion of the Second Research Question

The findings related to the second research question and the discussion will be presented according to the seven professional activities mentioned before as: peer coaching, study groups, action research, mentoring, teaching portfolios, in-service training, team teaching, academic and social development of students, content and instruction, and culture of continuous learning.

Peer Coaching. Based on the data gathered, an outstanding remark was given to Libyan supervisors for providing the teachers with the opportunities to showcase their best teaching. The Libyan supervisors got an average remark in terms of encouraging teachers to provide feedback on the performance of their co-teachers, appointing teacher coaches and trainees to work cooperatively with each other, and leading in the reflection of the quality of teaching. However, they were observed as poor for leading in the work collaboration of teachers. This shows that the supervisor helps the teachers to work with each other cooperatively and creates activities that will promote harmonious relationships among the teaching staff. According to Thorn (2007), peer coaching is beneficial to teachers as it reduces isolation among leaders, establishes collaborative norms, and most importantly, builds a shared knowledge base. Besides, since "peer coaching has nothing to do with evaluation" it does not seem like creating any stressful learning environment for teacher development (Çağanağa&Kaymakamoğlu, 2015, p.147).

Study Groups. In this level, the Libyan supervisors received an excellent remark for providing opportunities for teachers to meet and discuss effective teaching methods and strategies, for appointing leaders in discussing effective teaching methods and strategies specific to the different subjects and disciplines, and for leading in the analysis of students' outputs or progress. An outstanding remark was given to them for leading in the changes of ideas and planning of lessons. However, an average remark was allotted for providing opportunities to discuss the relevance of school policies. It is good to note that the Libyan supervisors form study groups so that members of the team will interact with each other in a helpful manner. The main task of the study group is to resolve a problematic issue that requires more than two minds to solve (Cordingley et al, 2005). However, precautions should be taken into consideration in employing study groups. Groups should be organized based on the need and not based on who is included in the group. In this respect, teachers' beliefs about their needs need to be taken into account because it

has been claimed that although "the attitudes and the associated behaviours that are formed during a learning process are heavily related to individualdifferences, the context where the learning takes place also has a huge effect" (Kaymakamoğlu, 2016, p.39)

Action Research. As far as activity research, the Libyan chiefs were commented fabulous for urging educators to look at their own particular showing execution utilizing distinctive examination devices, providing opportunities for teachers to enhance their research skills, taking a lead in the brainstorming of what to evaluate in the teachers' classroom instruction, providing assistance to teachers to systematically gather relevant data in the analysis of classroom instruction and taking a lead in the analysis and discussion of the data gathered with reference to the objectives of the investigation. This indicates that the Libyan supervisor support the teachers in the professional development by developing their research skills and enhancement of their teaching styles.

Mentoring. For the mentoring performance, the Libyan supervisors likewise obtained an excellent remark for appointing experienced teachers to mentor less experienced or beginning teachers, organizing experienced teachers to help in the observation of classroom instruction, generating from experienced teachers relevant feedbacks about quality classroom instruction, providing opportunities for experienced and new teachers to work together in the analysis of their strengths and weaknesses, and providing opportunities for experienced and new teachers in helping struggling students. This implies that the Libyan supervisor exert an effort to create a supportive environment by building the capacities of potential teacher-professionals to become mentors.

Teaching Portfolios. As to teaching portfolios, an outstanding remark was attained by the concerned Libyan supervisors for encouraging teachers to document evidences relevant to students' learning progress and subjects taught, utilizing teachers' documents of students' learning and classroom instruction in designing and preparing lesson plans, encouraging teachers to document their best practices such as teaching methods, strategies and instructional materials, and providing opportunities for teachers to exhibit their documents for other teachers to comment and reflect. Yet, they gained an average remark for encouraging teachers to document their reflections on the evidences of students' learning and classroom research to improve their teaching performance. Actually, reflection is a very valuable tool for professional development because it can create awareness in teachers about their strengths and weaknesses. In other words, when teachers engage in reflective practice they employ metacognitive strategies for checking their teaching practices and evaluating them.The value of employing meta-cognitive strategies for improving learning has been emphasized in other areas such as language learning and it has been articulated that these strategies help individuals learning and development personally and independently. In this way, every individual "can continue the process of learning anywhere and anytime they wish"(Kaymakamoğlu& Hassan, 2015, p.26).

In-Service Training. The Libyan supervisors achieved an excellent remark again in the area of in-service training for providing opportunities through relevant school activities to develop further their instructional skills, initiating program activities to update teachers of the current trends in education and in teaching, organizing relevant activities to renew teachers' commitment and attitudes toward teaching, and consulting teachers in the conceptualization and planning of activities for teachers in the school. Still, they had an outstanding remark for inviting resource persons to conduct seminar-workshops and trainings for teachers on best practices. This simply means that more often than not, the supervisors together with the school administration organize planned activities or a series of events or extended programs for their teachers. It has been observed that radical changes exist in the education sector; hence, school head and

teachers should keep abreast of the transformations through in-service trainings. These professional development programs are proven to stimulate and inspire teachers to gain insights into their valuable teaching experiences. They will have the opportunity to reflect upon their classroom practice. In this respect, it is important to "understand the complex relationshipbetween teachers' beliefs and actual practice"(Kaymakamoğlu, 2015, p.30).

Team Teaching. As for this part, the Libyan supervisors may be proud to realize that they acquired an excellent remark as well for the following actions: encouraging team teaching in the classrooms, encouraging team teaching through subject specialization, initiating trainings on team-building and team teaching, encouraging teachers to work in teams across specializations to promote coherence in the curriculum, and initiating school activities that will develop teachers' team cohesiveness. When teachers work as a team, they develop deeper understanding and more open communication. In effect, they develop camaraderie among themselves. Eventually, they share with each other their knowledge about their job as well as their best practice. This results to quality teaching which is favorable to all as they exercise leadership skills and expertise their respective fields of specializations.

Academic and Social Development of Students. In the level of value, the Libyan supervisors were commented excellent as appropriately in this area for creating an atmosphere of trust and common respect within the school, requiring students to attend co-curricular activities, inviting experts to speak during students' orientation, encouraging students to join community and school activities an initiating academic and social activities for students to get involved. This result is in congruence with the argument of Bakay (2007). He asserted that schools heads should promote a sense of mutual respect and trust among parents, teachers, and other stakeholders. In Libyan schools, as a manifestation of their respect is shown the trust and confidence of the parents to the teachers and administrators of their children.

Content and Instruction. Investigating this area, an outstanding remark was suitably gained by the Libyan supervisors for providing feedback to teachers in helping them improve the quality of teaching, selecting the highest quality teachers available based on mandated hiring criteria, initiating efforts to ensure that teachers are committed to help every students learn, initiating in-house professional development activities to continuously improve the quality of teaching; while an excellent remark was precisely garnered for encouraging teachers to meet high performance standards. Lindahl (2010) emphasized that content and instruction does matter in the pursuit of any educational institution to excel. The beginning of quality instruction starts from the credentialing and overall hiring mechanism of teachers.

Culture of Continuous Learning. The efficacy level of Libyan supervisors in the culture of continuous learning is worth-noting. They are excellent in utilizing available school resources to support teachers' professional development activities, prioritizing teachers' knowledge and skills development in increasing student achievement and ensuring that professional learning activities of teachers are aligned with schools' improvement plan. Similarly, they are outstanding in terms of encouraging and supporting teachers to take reasoned risks in helping students to learn as well as in encouraging teachers to reflect their teaching performance to continuously improve teaching. These results are in consonance with the report of Lindahl (2010) that learning should be sustained even though it seems to be a difficult aspect in school leadership. The interest and cooperation of teachers may also be attributed to school policies and guidelines. The commitment of the teachers may be maintained and their spirit can uplifted if the school will meet the demands of teachers and students for better learning. Both supervisors and teachers should work hand in hand as partners to ensure that the professional development program is aligned with education objectives. And to further improve the professional development for teachers, the respondents

suggested that preparations be made prior to the start of classes through the conduct of training-seminars for teachers. Aside from that, there is a need to call the teachers for a series of meetings to update them. To equip them for classroom instructions, materials should be provided for the teachers.

In summary, the Libyan supervisors under study manifested an exceptional performance in their professional development strategies in terms of action research, mentoring, team teaching, in-service training and study groups. They have displayed an outstanding performance in teaching portfolios. However, they have shown a typical performance in peer coaching. Their level of efficacy with reference to academic and social development and culture of continuous learning of students was excellent while for content and instruction their performance was regarded as outstanding.

Professional development has been personal responsibility that Libyan school supervisors are tasked to initiate local school professional development activities for teachers. In her study Kaymakamoğlu (2017) also found that the participant teachers viewed professional development as an individual process rather than collaborative.In the age of globalization and internationalization, components of effective professional development have been approached from different perspectives. In essence, all professional improvement energies should definitely be concerned about the improvement of instructors' learning, aptitudes and dispositions in educating with quality. Professional development strategies are argued to be the means upon which school supervisors and other stakeholders like teachers venture to further one's knowledge attitudes and skills in the delivery of quality education. There are considerable issues on professional development exercises outside the school consequently in-school preparing project is tremendously favored both by non-public schools and government funded schools. The successes of instructive organizations are the consequences of the collective aims of multi-stakeholders. School directors are requested to be skilled in discovery fruitful answers for issues and they should enhance the execution of teachers. Effective professional development systems aid as a technique for the work and exchange of chances for cross reference of gauges, preparing in new abilities, chances to trial, and training.

There is also a need to help the teachers understand the place of the beliefs they hold for developing themselves in their profession. They should be guided or the needed opportunities and the environments that can foster their professional development as teachers are needed to be generated. Actually, this awareness should start as soon as they enter into the teacher training program Therefore, "there is a need for education programmes designed in such a way that they create opportunities to help learners become aware of their existing beliefs" (Kaymakamoğlu, 2017, p.10).Since the nature of the activities carried out in the teacher training programs is likely to influence the the teachers' learning, adopting contemporary views in the professional development programs is essentials. Therefore, according the new perspective of professional developmentthe programs that are based on Constructivist principles are believed to help teachers' development more since this new perspective regars teacher learning as along-term and constructive process in which "the focus is on self-regulated (i.e. autonomous), contextualized learning" (Kaymakamoğlu, 2014, p.217). However,

> "this understanding becomes even more difficult when in-service training programs focus on theoretical knowledge rather than practice, in other words when information about Constructivist teaching principles and educational targets is presented to the teachers in a Traditional, non-Constructivist manner, in which the authorities lecture and the teachers as learners receive knowledgepassively" (Kaymakamoğlu, 2010, p.45).

Limitations of the Study

The behavior of this study was constrained to the seven areas in determining the extent of professional development strategies employed by Libyan supervisors in terms of peer-coaching, study groups, action research, mentoring, teaching portfolios, in-service training and team teaching. Furthermore, with the utilization of a meeting guide with five sorts of comments, this study decide the subjective greatness of adequacy of Libyan bosses with reference to scholastic and social advancement of understudies, substance and guideline, and additionally culture and consistent learning of the understudies in Libya. This examination included a couple chose educators who are right now serving in different schools around Libya. Subsequently, the aftereffects of this study don't cover an exceedingly expansive extension as far as expert improvement exercises for instructors.

Implications of the Study

The investigation associates that exploration abilities advancement and upgrade ought to likewise be incorporated into the expert improvement program for instructors. If resources are not enough to support the teachers in their struggle to promote students' quality learning outcomes, then the school supervisors should be in the frontline in making sure that the school's physical environment will provide for the teachers' professional advancement. In any case, educators should be given support in every single positive undertaking to be more inspired to function admirably. Most importantly, the school supervisors, with the support of the local or national government, are expected to spearhead in designing activities that are deemed appropriate in stimulating and motivating the teachers to continuously improve their classroom instruction. School pioneers ought to have an inside and out information of instructor and instructional adequacy. This kind of authority must be especially useful in completing the basic elements of educational programs. All schools should have strong a professional development program.

Suggestions for Further Studies

For the continued progress of the educational system of Libyan schools, professional development programs undergo a careful analysis and deliberation. It is likewise suggested that further inquiries be conducted to determine what specific programs for professional teachers will work best in sustaining quality education for Libyan learners. There is a need for other qualitative and quantitative studies to be conducted in different context to give a clearer picture of the issue.

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