

KARADENİZ TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY * THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF WESTERN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

MASTER'S PROGRAM IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO MONE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS'
PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY IN TERMS OF DIFFERENT VARIABLES AND
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES**

MASTER'S THESIS

Özlem SÜRMEN AKOVA

SEPTEMBER - 2024

TRABZON

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Thesis Advisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Raşide DAĞ AKBAŞ

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TRABZON

APPROVAL

Upon the submission of the dissertation, **Özlem SÜRMEN AKOVA** has defended the study “**An Investigation into MoNE English Language Teachers’ Professional Autonomy in terms of Different Variables and Professional Development Practices**” in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics at Karadeniz Technical University, and the study has been found fully adequate in scope and quality as a thesis by **unanimous / majority** vote on **20/11/2024**.

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ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı (MEB) bünyesinde çalışan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin profesyonel özerklik ve profesyonel gelişim uygulamalarını cinsiyet, yaş, deneyim, akademik durum, okul seviyesi ve okul konumu gibi değişkenleri dikkate alarak incelemiştir. Ayrıca, öğretmenlerin profesyonel özerklik seviyeleri ile profesyonel gelişim faaliyetleri arasındaki ilişkiyi de analiz etmiştir. İzmir'de gerçekleştirilen karma yöntemli bir vaka çalışması olup, MEB'e bağlı devlet okullarında görev yapan 188 İngilizce öğretmenini kapsamaktadır. Bu öğretmenler ilkokul, ortaokul ve çeşitli lise türlerinde görev yapmaktadır.

İlk olarak, öğretmenlerin özerklik seviyelerini nasıl algıladıklarını ve profesyonel gelişim uygulamalarına katılma motivasyonlarını anlamak amacıyla Okay ve Balçıklı (2021) tarafından geliştirilen Öğretmen Profesyonel Özerklik Anketi (TEPAQ) uygulanmıştır. Ardından, öğretmenlere, bir etkinliğe katılmalarını etkileyen faktörler ve hangi etkinliklerin gelişimlerine en fazla katkı sağladığına dair iki açık uçlu soru sorulmuştur. Bu aşamada, öğretmenlerin profesyonel gelişim faaliyetlerine yönelik tutumlarını daha derinlemesine anlamak amaçlanmıştır. Açık uçlu sorulara 127 öğretmen yanıt vermiştir. Nitel veriler SPSS 25.0 kullanılarak, incelenen değişkenler dikkate alınarak analiz edilmiştir. Nicel veriler ise Creswell'in (2007: 148; 2013: 184) belirttiği döngüye göre analiz edilmiştir. Veriler, katılımcıların yanıtlarına göre kodlanmış ve ardından kodlama ve gözden geçirme aşamasından sonra bu kodlar daha geniş kategoriler ve temalar halinde birleştirilmiştir. Veriler, bu kategorilere ve kodlara göre tartışılmıştır.

Çalışmada, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin yüksek bir profesyonel özerklik seviyesine sahip olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır. Kadın öğretmenlerin erkek öğretmenlere göre daha içsel motive oldukları bulunmuştur. Daha genç öğretmenlerin, yeni şeyler öğrenme ve özerk davranışlar sergileme konusunda daha kendine güvenli oldukları sonucuna varılmıştır. Öğretmen deneyimi ve akademik durumla ilgili belirgin bir fark bulunmamıştır. Okul konumunun uzak olması ve okul kademesinin lise olması ise zaman yönetimi için bir sorun olarak gözlemlenmiştir. Ayrıca, öğretmenlerin genel olarak profesyonel gelişim faaliyetlerine katılma konusunda güçlü bir isteğe sahip oldukları, bu durumun yeni şeyler öğrenmeye ve öğretim uygulamalarını geliştirmeye açık olduklarını gösterdiği bulunmuştur. Ancak, öğretmenler genellikle kendi alanları, öğretim becerileri, sınıf yönetimi becerileri ve teknolojik bilgi ile ilgili etkinliklere katılmayı tercih etmektedir. Çalışmaya katılan öğretmenler, mesleki gelişimlerinde meslektaşlarıyla çalışmayı faydalı bulmaktadırlar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğretimi, Öğretmen Mesleki Gelişimi, Öğretmen Mesleki Özerkliği, Sürekli Mesleki Gelişim, Mesleki Gelişim Uygulamaları

ABSTRACT

This study examines professional autonomy and professional development practices of English Language Teachers for the Ministry of Education (MoNE) considering different variables such as gender, age, experience, academic status, school level, and school location. Moreover, it also analyzes the relationship between the professional autonomy levels of teachers and professional development acts. It is a mixed-method case study, conducted in İzmir with 188 English Language Teachers working for state schools within MoNE. These teachers work at primary or secondary schools and different types of high schools.

First, the Teacher Professional Autonomy Questionnaire (TEPAQ) by Okay & Balçıkanlı (2021) is applied to gather quantitative data. It is aimed at understanding how they perceive themselves about their autonomy levels and whether they are motivated to attend any professional development practice. Then, teachers are asked two open-ended questions about their perceptions about the factors they are affected to attend an activity and which activities contribute most to their development. By this, it is aimed to learn more in-depth to understand their attitudes when it comes to their professional development acts. For open-ended questions, 127 teachers have given answers. The qualitative data is analyzed using SPSS 25.0. considering investigated variables. The quantitative data is analyzed according to the cycle that Creswell (2007: 148; 2013: 184) states. The data is tallied into codes according to the responses of the participants. After coding and reviewing it, these codes are combined into broader categories and themes. The data is discussed according to these categories and codes.

In the study, it is concluded that English Language Teachers have high professional autonomy levels. It is found that female teachers are internally driven more than male ones. It is concluded that the younger the teachers are, the more confident they become in terms of learning new things and having autonomous behaviors. Teacher experience and academic status do not make a remarkable difference. The distant school location and the school level being high school have been observed as challenges for time management. Moreover, teachers generally have a strong desire to engage in professional development activities, which means they are open to learning new things and to enhance their teaching practices. However, they prefer to join activities that are related to their own field, teaching skills, classroom management skills, and technological knowledge. Teachers participating in the current study find working with colleagues useful for their teaching development.

Keywords: English, TEFL, Teacher Professional Development, Teacher Professional Autonomy, Continuing Professional Development, Professional Development Practices

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BLNE:	Basic Law on National Education
CPD:	Continuing Professional Development
ICT:	Information and Communication Technology
MoNE:	Ministry of National Education
OECD:	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PD:	Professional Development
SPSS:	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TALIS:	Teaching and Learning International Survey
TEFL:	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TEPAQ:	Teacher Professional Autonomy Questionnaire
TKFT:	Teacher Field Knowledge Test
TPA:	Teacher Professional Autonomy
TPACK:	Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge
TPL:	Teacher Profession Law

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the background of the study is presented briefly and basic concepts such as teacher autonomy and professional development are introduced. The problem of the study is stated clearly and the significance of the study is mentioned. After the purpose of the study is discussed and the methodology is mentioned, an outline of the study is given.

Operational Definitions

Professional Development: Professional development is defined as the process of improving and increasing your skills, knowledge, and abilities in your profession. This can happen through various methods, including formal training, informal learning, and self-study, and involves both conscious and unconscious efforts to replace old skills or knowledge with new, better ones (Evans, 2018: 7-8).

Autonomy: Benson (2007: 23) summarizes the history of autonomy by mentioning the description of Holec (1981) which was “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning.”

Teacher Autonomy: Lamb (2008: 275) mentions two different conceptualizations of teacher autonomy. One of them is the capacity to improve teaching skills and self-development, and the other one is to be free from constraints in the teaching process.

Teachers’ Professional Autonomy: In this study, teachers’ professional autonomy is accepted as in Okay & Balçıklı’s (2021) study as “teachers’ capability, motives, and time to develop themselves professionally in collaboration with their students and colleagues”.

Background of the Study

In today’s world, change occurs in every part of life because of the dynamic structure of humans and life. Education is one of these changing structures which affects and is affected by human beings. Therefore; the teaching context is not a stable one and requires a change in time. At that point, teachers have many responsibilities to direct teaching in an effective way. Every teaching context has its own characteristics, so a teacher needs to adapt himself, his way of teaching, or other elements that have effects on the learning of the students. Teaching is accepted as a professional career by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and

International Labor Organization (ILO); therefore, reform in education requires the professional development of the teachers (Lv, 2014). As teachers are considered to change themselves and the education process, professional development; which can be achieved by traditional or more planned methods or collaborative and solitary methods; has been a significant area as it allows keeping pace with the modern times (Zhao, 2013).

Change in time may require more than simple steps to change. As Larsen-Freeman (2000) suggests, being aware of one's actions and thoughts in the classroom for a teacher may help positive and useful changes. This shows that a teacher needs effective changes when necessary and plans his actions for this positive change. For instance, while reading comprehension was emphasized more, a shift to oral comprehension emerged because of the learners' needs, which resulted in many approaches and methods emerging. When an army needed soldiers who learned other languages in a short time, the audio-lingual method showed up (Richards & Rogers, 2001). When it was necessary to overcome the barriers to learning, desuggestopedia was suggested (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). This means that teaching requires constant change or adaptation considering the teaching context. A teacher should develop himself, his way of teaching, or his knowledge to provide effective teaching, which necessitates professional development. As Korucu Kış (2014: 31) states, professional development serves as a crucial mechanism for educators to enhance their knowledge, skills, and instructional methods.

Understanding the concept of professional development is crucial for recognizing the types of activities that qualify as professional development practices. When a teacher changes his viewpoint and what he does in the classroom to increase learning, professional development can be mentioned (Guskey, 2002). According to Day (1999), professional development practices are both natural and planned actions to help the quality of education. This means that an action can be intentionally planned for the sake of professional development aims, or an action may naturally result in professional development although it may not be planned to develop professionally. Özdemir (2013) points out different types of professional development activities that are either traditional or modern: Workshops, courses, seminars, or formal methods can be professional development activities; besides, sharing views with colleagues, social networking, or examining student work can also be included. Teachers can develop their practices by employing formal courses or workshops, or they can learn in some informal ways such as from colleagues or the work of students (Borko, 2004). According to Corcoran (1995), professional development practices include learning new methods, working with colleagues, and examining and reflecting on new methods. It can be deduced that a teacher needs to follow new changes in education and to be in touch with his colleagues. Teachers may have the chance for many professional development experiences through different activities. While more formal practices seem to be more academic and advantageous, teachers rely more on informal ones, especially learning from a peer as they think that experience is the primary source

(Scribner, 1999: 228). Quality teachers are told to be open to changes and eager to try different things that are based on not only academic knowledge but also experiences (TED, 2009).

Teachers can be motivated better when they witness the positive outcomes for students during their professional development process. Guskey (2002) shares the ideas of teachers about professional development and the factors that motivate them to engage in the professional development process. It can be seen that teachers give importance to enhancing student learning outcomes by becoming better teachers. At that point, it is important to achieve the link between formal knowledge and the practices of teachers (Zhao, 2013). In order to believe in the contribution of a professional development program, a teacher may be more comfortable with a practice that is applied and shows evidence of success. Lv (2014) attracts attention to the importance of teacher beliefs in their development. Teachers tend to be motivated more when they recognize the remarkable outcomes of a program. Guskey (2002) also emphasizes that point and suggests that a professional development program does not probably change the beliefs of teachers first, but it should motivate the teachers to change and then change their beliefs because teachers want to feel sure about the outcomes of practice. Moreover, Özdemir (2013) points out that informal experiences of teachers to develop professionally have positive effects on student learning when teachers have intrinsic motivation for participating in professional development programs or experiences.

Considering the factors that affect the professional development of teachers, Darling-Hammond (1998) focuses on the importance of doing, reflecting, and collaborating in teacher learning, and experience is emphasized. Similarly, Guskey (2002) refers to the success of professional development programs that provide opportunities to be in cooperation with their colleagues and find solutions to common problems. Park et al. (2007) highlight the role of teachers in this cooperation that they may support each other, solve a problem, or become a mentor to another teacher. They may create a collaboration to overcome problems or direct one another. Comparing formal professional development programs with learning from colleagues, one can observe many differences. Borko (2004) points out the limited information that formal programs provide about the change in teacher practices. However, as teachers share common concerns with their colleagues, it is clear that learning from colleagues may have influences more (Park et al, 2007).

As for the diverse landscape of professional development, Yoon et al. (2007) highlight the unique characteristics of online professional development compared to traditional forms; and online courses, teacher-learning communities, and web-based types of training are mentioned. Day et al. (2014) point out that online components are important in professional development when interaction is necessary but difficult because of the distance. Donnelly (2009) emphasizes the opportunities that information and communication technology provides, and it is suggested that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) makes interaction between colleagues

easier, and online sources easier to reach. Besides, it also gives teachers the chance to direct their learning themselves according to their needs.

Professional development is a critical issue in order to achieve reform in education or success in student learning and teacher quality (Özdemir, 2013). To achieve this quality, Day & Sachs (2004) use the term “continuing professional development (CPD)” and suggest that it includes a variety of practices that teachers experience during their careers to develop their work. These practices are important to develop continuously. Similarly, Missoum (2015: 173-174) highlights the importance of a continuum in teacher development and proposes that changes in teaching conditions or their lack of knowledge in their teacher training time require a teacher to renew himself to maintain effective teaching. He enumerates some items for an effective CPD, and claims that it needs more collaboration, suitable conditions, and convenient time; moreover, fewer resources should be adequate as time, money, or energy. One should not wait for authority to approve these actions in order not to fall behind the target and offer incentives for engagement in the CPD actions. Quality teachers are told to be open to changes and eager to try different things that are based on not only academic knowledge but also experiences (TED, 2009).

Exploring the realm of professional development, Özdemir (2013) identifies different types of professional development activities that are either traditional or modern. Workshops, courses, seminars, or formal methods can be professional development activities; besides, sharing views with colleagues, social networking, or examining student work can also be included. Day & Sachs (2004) refer to the classification of professional development settings by Liberman (1996):

- Direct Learning (conferences, workshops, consultations)
- Learning in schools (peer coaching, mentoring, critical friendships, active research, team planning & assessment, appraisal)
- Learning out of school (School-led renewal or reform networks, school-university partnerships, subject or phone-specific networks, professional development centers)

Recognizing different kinds of activities for professional growth, Feimen-Nemser (2003) points out the facilitators of these activities and states the role of experienced teachers in the professional development of new teachers. It is proposed that new teachers are eager to learn from experienced teachers and their advice has effects on their practices. Missoum (2015: 171) also proposes that senior teachers tend to perceive continuing professional development as unnecessary and time-consuming while younger teachers tend to be more willing. Moreover, Feimen-Nemser (2003) refers to a classroom where a new teacher solves a problem in her classroom with the help of a more experienced colleague and gets positive results. Donnelley (2009) addresses the term “continuing professional development”, which is previously mentioned, focusing on teachers’ learning from one another and teaching each other helps

professional competence in their profession and fosters their confidence. Moreover, it also contributes to the learning process of the learners.

Considering these activities and the role of teachers throughout the process, it is possible to encounter handicaps. As Missoum (2015: 171) suggests some teachers may be reluctant to implement professional development activities as they need more time and expertise, and they may feel that their professional competence is criticized. He also emphasizes the importance of accessibility of CPD actions and sharing among teachers, and information technology is suggested to be a useful tool for creating a resource among them. Not only does the information technology allow teachers to collaborate with their colleagues but also access necessary online professional development tools such as webinars, audios, or videos at a distance. It is understood that professional development comprises a wide range of elements or activities and has many dimensions to be analyzed. One can say that professional development refers to the process of acquiring and enhancing the skills, knowledge, and experiences that contribute to one's career growth and effectiveness in the school or classroom for teachers.

In the process of professional development of teachers, there is also a need for them to make their own decisions where autonomy can be mentioned. As teachers invest in their professional development, they not only enhance their skills but also gain the confidence to direct the teaching process. Benson (2001: 14) defines autonomy as the capacity to take control of one own learning. Trebbi (2008) attributes the term autonomy to freedom; however, it is assumed not to be totally free from limitations, but to be in harmony with the conditions. Benson (2001) proposes that it is possible to control one's own learning by becoming free of others. However, it is also mentioned that autonomy is not isolation which is used as independence because it can exclude "interdependence" among teachers which is thought to have benefits for autonomy (Benson, 2001). Hargreaves et al. (2013: 6-7) give some descriptions of autonomy, motivation, and teacher autonomy:

Autonomy. Autonomy is "having a sense of one's own identity and an ability to act independently and to exert some control over one's environment, including a sense of task mastery, internal locus of control, and self-efficacy" (Benard, 1995, p. 1).

Motivation. Motivation is "an internal concept based on a person's needs and the fulfillment of those needs" (Benton, 1995, p. 125).

Teacher autonomy. Teacher autonomy is "the independence teachers maintain in exercising discretion within their classrooms to make instructional decisions" (Street, 1988, p. 4).

Besides these descriptions, Pearson & Moomaw (2005: 38-39) relate the teaching profession to doctors or lawyers as they can choose the best options for their patients or clients, and it is necessary to have this kind of freedom for teachers, which can be called as teacher autonomy. Moreover, teachers need to have a say in their workplace or decisions about their jobs.

Teacher beliefs and teacher autonomy seem to be closely linked with professional development practices. Smith & Erdogan (2008: 90) analogize teacher beliefs to colored lenses which make them see the world according to the color they wear and propose that if they know the alternatives, they can change them to see things in different colors. This implies that such beliefs are subject to change over time as teachers consciously navigate this transformation, highlighting the role of teacher autonomy. Shaw (2008: 189) also claims that freedom from others is not enough, but it is also a process of freedom from one's own stereotyped thoughts; which is not an easy thing to do, and a long professional development process. Smith & Erdogan (2008: 86) claim that teacher autonomy serves not only as an outcome of professional development but also as a tool that helps professional development. This is because self-directed teacher learning can be a valuable way for teachers to improve their skills and knowledge, and it can also foster a greater willingness to learn and grow. By taking an active role in their own learning, teachers can become better equipped to support learning and development. Shaw (2008) highlights that teacher autonomy involves teachers engaging in a search in order to continuously improve their teaching. This type of critical reflective practice is thought to be essential for teachers to effectively identify and address the various challenges that can emerge in the classroom, and engaging in dialogue with others can provide valuable insights and perspectives. Smith (2000: 90) argues that teachers are also learners as they focus on learning about teaching and it may also be thought to be similar to learner autonomy when teacher autonomy is mentioned. Moreover, he also highlights the "intrinsic value" of teacher learning as it is directed by the teacher himself. Smith & Erdogan (2008) mention the dimensions of teacher autonomy and emphasize its being self-directed, capacity for self-directing, and freedom to do this. Lawson (2004: 4) assumes that teachers' being critical and reflective during their teaching may help their progress by being autonomous. Smith & Erdogan (2008) mention teachers as learners and teacher autonomy as the ability to improve necessary skills in harmony with others.

With a focus on personal preference and self-awareness in beliefs for initiating developmental change. Missoum (2015: 167) claims that it is important to become aware of one's beliefs to initiate change for development. That is to say, it is about being able to direct one's decisions and actions by himself in accordance with the available options and finding alternatives. However, even in developed countries, financial issues, time issues, and negative attitudes may become challenging to make a plan for continuing teacher development. Therefore, the autonomous CPD model can be an alternative professional development program in which teachers determine the aims, plan the process, use the available resources, and reflect on outcomes. One can say that an autonomous teacher creates opportunities instead of waiting to be offered them. Hargreaves et al. (2013) highlight the importance of preference, starting the process and relationship between their status and development focus for an effective CPD. Furthermore, initiation and adaptation in different situations, independent views or actions, and relevant choices are brought forward for effective CPD. Smith & Erdogan

(2008) refer to the process of professional development as the learning process of a teacher, which is self-directedly driven by an autonomous teacher.

To sum up, professional development can be assumed to help teachers improve their teaching practices and student success. Continuous professional development emphasizes the continuous nature of learning during their development. While developing skills, teachers are expected to make their own decisions about how they teach and manage the classroom, which can be called teacher autonomy. Professional autonomy extends this concept beyond individual classrooms and is used as having a say in their professional development process. Furthermore, it can be concluded that it is important to be self-directed, free from others and one's own stereotyped beliefs, to be able to have control over one's own teaching ways or developmental process in teacher autonomy. These ideas show how important it is to empower teachers through learning, reflection, and the ability to shape education to meet students' needs.

Significance of the Problem

One should be clear about what the teaching profession requires to be developed. As Küçükahmet (2006) proposes, the teaching profession consists of three basic components; general world knowledge, content knowledge, and professional teaching knowledge. In a way, one can say that a teacher should be familiar and open to the world, and know what to teach and how to teach. In addition to these components, Lv (2014: 1440) emphasizes some other elements such as teaching beliefs, personality traits, and “initiative of the self-development”. What a teacher does in order to develop these aspects and increase the accessibility of educational aims can be regarded as professional development practices.

Analyzing the literature review, it can be seen that teacher autonomy is mainly considered in the scope of classroom practices and also, there is a significant focus on professional development. Nevertheless, there is limited research on the intersection of professional autonomy and teachers' autonomy within the context of their professional development. Moreover, no research to date has been available about MoNE English Language Teachers in Türkiye, specifically concerning the aspects of professional autonomy and teacher development within this context. Before the pandemic, the professional development process was generally carried out face-to-face. After online work has come into our lives, teachers could have more chances to choose different online professional development sessions via computers as the problem of quota or inaccessibility has vanished. Therefore, this study may have more credible results as teachers have more opportunities for their professional development and whether they are autonomous professional learners or not and whether this has to do with several variables can be seen. It is important to know the factors that have an effect on the professional development of the teachers in order to foster their autonomy and

professional development practices. In this study, variables that may affect teachers' professional autonomy are investigated and discussed, too.

The professional development and autonomy of English Language Teachers (ELTs) are crucial elements in shaping the quality of education. In the context of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), understanding the dynamics that influence teachers' perceptions of their professional autonomy and their participation in development activities is of paramount importance. This study aims to explore the professional autonomy and development practices of English Language Teachers in MoNE, reviewing the factors affecting their perceptions and participation in professional growth activities. By analyzing these factors, the research seeks to provide valuable insights for multiple stakeholders, including teachers, policymakers, researchers, and students. Exploring teachers' self-perceptions regarding their autonomy for professional development, the study can identify key factors that either encourage or hinder their participation in such activities. The inclusion of variables such as gender, age, experience, academic status, school level, and school location allows for a comprehensive understanding of how these aspects shape teachers' professional development practices. Furthermore, the open-ended questions offer a deeper exploration of teachers' attitudes and the specific activities they find most beneficial for their growth. The findings of this study can inform policymakers for designing effective professional development programs that address the diverse needs of teachers. Moreover, teachers might benefit from the study, as it focuses on understanding their professional autonomy and development practices. By examining how teachers perceive their autonomy and which professional development activities they find most beneficial, the study aims to improve their professional growth and support their ongoing development. Furthermore, the study could also provide valuable contributions for the researchers. English Language Teachers' perceptions of their professional autonomy and development findings might offer researchers an opportunity to find out the difference in teachers autonomy levels in terms of factors (such as gender, age, experience, academic status, and school context) and teachers' engagement in professional development. The findings could contribute to the existing literature on teacher professional development and autonomy, and present potential topics that can be focused for future research. Additionally, the open-ended responses from teachers may provide researchers with deeper, qualitative insights. Lastly, students might also benefit indirectly from the study. If teachers are better supported in their professional development, it could enhance the quality of teaching, leading to improved outcomes for students. However, the main focus of the study is on teachers and their development. In conclusion, the findings of this study have the potential to make significant contributions to the professional development of English Language Teachers. By identifying key factors that affect teachers' perceptions and participation in development activities, the study can inform the creation of more effective and tailored professional development programs. It can also serve as a resource for teachers seeking to understand their autonomy and growth practices better, while offering researchers a deeper insight into the complex factors influencing teacher development.

Ultimately, this study may lead to enhanced teaching practices and, consequently, improved educational outcomes for students.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims at analyzing English Language Teachers in MoNE about their professional autonomy and professional development practices considering different variables. Initially, teachers are given a questionnaire to understand how they perceive themselves about their autonomy levels and whether they are motivated to attend any professional development practice. It is also analysed in terms of different variables such as gender, age, experience, academic status, school level, and school location. Then, teachers are asked two open-ended questions about their perceptions about the factors they are affected to attend an activity and which activities contribute most to their development. By this, it is aimed to learn more in-depth to understand their attitudes when it comes to their professional development acts.

In line with the purpose of the study, the following research questions are aimed to answer:

Major Question 1: What is the level of professional autonomy of MoNE English Language Teachers?

Minor Questions:

- 1.1. Is there a relationship between MoNE English language teachers' professional autonomy and their professional development acts?
- 1.2. To what extent can teachers decide on the professional development activities they can attend?
 - 1.2.1. What factors do they think may affect this?
 - 1.2.2. What kind of activities do teachers think that contribute most to their professional development?

Major Question 2: Is there any difference in MoNE English Language Teachers' professional autonomy levels in terms of demographic and contextual variables?

Minor Questions:

- 2.1. Is there any difference in MoNE English language teachers' professional autonomy levels in terms of their gender?
- 2.2. Is there any difference in MoNE English language teachers' professional autonomy levels in terms of their age?
- 2.3. Is there any difference in MoNE English language teachers' professional autonomy levels in terms of teaching experience?

- 2.4. Is there any difference in MoNE English language teachers' professional autonomy levels in terms of academic status?
- 2.5. Is there any difference in MoNE English language teachers' professional autonomy levels in terms of their current school level?
- 2.6. Is there any difference in MoNE English language teachers' professional autonomy levels in terms of their school location?

Limitations of the Study

Guskey (1994) proposes that professional development evaluation does not rely on only teacher attitudes or practices, measuring students or having sound data about it is also useful. However, this study focuses on teachers' professional autonomy levels about professional development rather than measuring how successful their professional developmental practices.

Outline of the Study

This study consists of four chapters. In the first chapter, the literature review before the study is presented. In this chapter, teaching is discussed as a profession. Then, professional development in education is dealt with. Professional development practices by the Turkish National Ministry of Education are mentioned. Ways of professional development are stated. These are followed by discussing autonomy, teacher autonomy, and professional autonomy. Lastly, relevant studies are given to attract attention to the studies in the literature. The second chapter discusses the methodology of the study. It informs about the methods while this study is conducted to research questions it addresses. It also gives information about the sampling, data collection process, and data analysis method. The findings and discussion of the study are dealt with in the third chapter. After data are collected and analyzed, findings are stated within the framework of the research questions. The last chapter provides information about a summary of the findings of the study, its limitations, and some implications. Moreover, it also comprises suggestions for further study.

CHAPTER ONE

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Introduction

This chapter covers various aspects related to teaching as a profession, professional development, autonomy, and relevant studies. First of all, the concept of teaching as a profession is discussed, and teaching status is mentioned within the context of Türkiye. Then, as one can mention, professional development where there is a profession, professional development, continuing professional development, and professional development of teachers are presented. After referring to the teaching profession and professional development of teachers, autonomy and in a particular sense professional autonomy are dealt with. The chapter concludes with relevant studies about professional development and professional autonomy.

1.2. What is profession?

According to Collins Cobuild (n.d.), a profession is characterized as a job type that demands advanced education or training, encompassing intellectual skills in fields such as medicine, law, engineering, teaching, and others, and professional is defined as the people work requiring such special and advanced training. "Profession" is stated to be used as a preferable term to identify individuals engaged in the education process and considered to be the conveyors of formal knowledge as well as to refer to its role as a way of earning life. Moreover, it indicates that formal knowledge is organized into specialized occupations within various disciplines (Friedson, 1986: 21).

Putting aside the dictionary meaning, it can be seen that the use of profession as a term dates back to the religious sphere of the Middle Ages especially for monks giving public speeches, and is also used in political fields (Götz, 1995: 8). The term "profession" has a respectable history and originates from the Latin verb "profiteor," which means to publicly announce, recognize, admit, openly acknowledge, or express openly. Another word derived from it; "professio" is known as a public declaration of one's occupation or vocation. It is broadly used in reference to rhetoric, philology, philosophy, magic, and medicine during classical times. It is then discussed as something that provides benefit for oneself or other people (Wright, 1951: 749). Friedson (1986: 21-26) summarizes the historical evolution of the term "profession": Original meaning is said to be the oldest usage of "profession" in English referring to a declaration, avowal, or expression of intention or

purpose. It has been initially associated with taking consecrated vows and is rooted in the clerical foundation of medieval universities. In its early usage, "profession" has been positively evaluated, implying religious and moral motives for dedicating oneself to a good cause. However, it has also carried the notion of potential insincerity or claiming in words what is not done in fact. By the sixteenth century, "profession" has started being applied to secular occupations beyond the clergy, such as medicine, law, and others. This has expanded meaning including both positive and negative evaluations. "Profession" may refer to exclusive, prestigious occupations or, conversely, to the entire range of occupations by which people have identified themselves. It may describe high-status learned professions or more humble occupations like haberdasher, tailor, or barber. The term "professional" has gained negative connotations in time in contrasts such as professional versus amateur. Being a professional has implied earning money from an activity, potentially casting doubt on one's dedication or motivation. In the nineteenth century, new meanings have emerged. "Profession" has begun to be associated with middle-class occupations and was sometimes used disparagingly, implying unseemly amounts of energy or attention in an activity. Moreover, a narrow meaning of "profession" has evolved, emphasizing specialized knowledge or skill, often acquired through formal education. This definition highlights the distinction between professionals and amateurs based on the quality and dedication to their work. In addition to formal education, the concept of "profession" involves institutions influencing the conduct and commitment of its members, implying social control over professional behavior. These definitions demonstrate the evolving nature of the term "profession" from its origins as a declaration to its multifaceted connotations in various societal contexts. Williams (1998: 18) refers to the findings of the Council on Professional Affairs (CoPA) and states that the term "profession" originates from "profess," initially a religious term denoting a declaration. In addition to dictionary meanings, a profession is generally characterized as a vocation requiring expertise in a specific field of learning or science, particularly in theology, medicine, or law. Moreover, he enumerates what a profession should possess:

- A well-defined purpose and objectives of the profession.
- Qualifications for training, experience, and professional development.
- A set of ethical guidelines that direct proper behaviors in particular situations.
- An acknowledged certification that requires continuous upkeep.
- Standards that align with other peer groups.

Having examined the historical evolution of the term, examining the definitions can provide additional insights. Cogan (1955: 107-108) states three different profession definitions, one of which is a historical and lexical one. In this definition, a profession is meant to be a calling that relies on an understanding of the theoretical framework of a particular field of knowledge or science, along with the skills associated with this comprehension. This knowledge and skill set are then applied to practical human affairs, guided by a combination of generalized knowledge and the collective

wisdom of humanity to rectify specialization errors. The primary ethical duty of a profession is committed to serving essential human needs. For persuasive definition, engaging in a profession requires rigorous training and a personal commitment to an ethical code. Convincing individuals to undergo such training and adhere to a prescribed code has historically been a necessary persuasion. As for the third definition, operational definitions are mentioned and they serve as practical guidelines for professionals in their day-to-day decision-making. These guidelines encompass rules for professional conduct, mediating the practitioner's interactions with clients, colleagues, the public, and professional associations. They also outline specific criteria for general and specialized education, requirements for entry into practice, and standards for a qualified service.

Hoyle (2008: 286-287) defends the concept of a "profession," acknowledging its long history and widespread use in English and other languages. Despite being a controversial concept, the continuing value of the term is argued and three reasons are presented for sustaining academic interest in the concept. For the semantic case, the term "profession" is told to remain widely used in public discourse, serving both a symbolic function, implying the worth of one's occupation, and an ideological function, used by occupational elites to seek enhanced status. It also has literal meanings, such as legal status in some countries. For the heuristic case, the concept provides access to educational issues related to knowledge, skill, power, status, ethics, control, practice, development, and leadership. It enhances understanding, generates debates about the future, and informs policy formulation. While not the only framework for addressing these matters, it holds significant influence. For the normative case, despite the controversial nature of the term, the author argues for retaining "profession" as an ideal for teaching and other public service occupations. A profession is not just a job category; it involves a distinct way of thinking, a unique lifestyle, and a strong commitment to a particular ethical code. Knowledge, university-based training, continuous development, autonomy, and a code of ethics can draw attention as they may be considered as key factors which are mentioned above in various definitions. Moreover, a profession is not just a means to earn a living; it also represents a respected status. This status comprises being well-educated, having certain standards, and having the autonomy to make decisions in one's job based on the training received throughout their education and ongoing professional development.

Sanders (1961: 46) lists the major points of a profession. According to his study, a profession involves embracing a distinctive way of life, prioritizing public duty over financial rewards. It operates within an ethical framework, requiring significant moral responsibilities and judgments, with roots in religious traditions for certain professions. It consists of an organized community dedicated to upholding professional ideals. Professions combine both art and science, with the former demonstrated in human practice and the latter providing the knowledge base. The profession establishes and maintains educational and intellectual standards, often relying on universities for basic education. In essence, a profession is a commitment to public service, ethical conduct, an organized community, a blend of art and science, and the establishment of educational standards. A

true profession is based on a unique form of relationship between its practitioners and those who seek their assistance. (Pellegrino, 1983: 172)

Similarly, John (2008: 12) summarizes the key characteristics of a profession:

- Knowledge gained in both theoretical and empirical ways
- University-based long training process
- Specialized education prepared for enabling and integrating individuals into the culture and symbols associated with it.
- Socially valuable tasks
- Prioritized well-being of the client
- Profession accepted for a long term with continuous development
- Autonomy dominated on performances
- Practice and values described considering the code of ethics improved well.

Wright (1951: 752-756) mentions five elements that a profession should encompass to be called as profession. The first essential element identified in the concept of a "profession" is the public avowal and offer of public service, exemplified by practices like the public dedication of priests or the legal profession's admission rituals. The second element emphasizes the assumed possession of special skills by professionals. This assumption is crucial, not necessarily because all professionals must be skillful, but because they should profess to possess such skills. The third element underscores the importance of training and education in distinguishing a profession from other callings, rejecting the notion that a profession can be attained instantly without requisite training or education. The fourth element once thought to be essential but now considered unreal and unfair, involves privilege or state recognition. The author argues that the changing social landscape has made this criterion outdated, emphasizing that state recognition does not necessarily determine professional status. Lastly, the fifth element defines a profession as a self-disciplined group with a community of interest among its members. The notion of professionals being part of a larger society with shared goals and common discipline is essential for a calling to be considered a profession. As Hoyle & John (1995: 46) claim, professionals undergo extensive and specialized training to grasp research-backed knowledge, enabling them to apply it effectively and ethically within the guidelines of their profession. This ability allows established fields like medicine and law to rightfully designate themselves as professionals, preserving their standing in the occupational hierarchy.

Considering that owners of professions find a place in society, Inlow (1956: 256) contends that a profession should be dedicated to the service of mankind. To effectively serve humanity, professionals must be well-educated encompassing humanities, social sciences, and sciences, with an orientation towards both the present and the past. Specialized education, built upon a foundation of broad general knowledge rather than replacing it, should strike a balance between theory and

practice during the period of specialization. The culmination of specialized education ideally involves an apprenticeship-type experience, serving as a bridge between theoretical knowledge and accepted professional status.

Mentioning associated definitions, Hoyle & John (1995: 16-18) describe professionalism as having knowledge, skills, and autonomy for facilitating effective practice, values, and attitudes about responsibility. Professionalism is described as the status and conditions of the profession. Professionalization is defined as improving the level of professionalism. Professionalism is also mentioned as the process of forming the professional status (Johnson, 1972: 34) and an occupation's displaying different attributes (Johnson, 1972: 22). Hoyle & John (1995: 3-8) refer to some sociological approaches to the idea of the profession, one of which is criterion approach. It is proposed to use a set of criteria as a framework in order to evaluate "profession-ness". These are identified by examining respected occupations that are commonly recognized as professions. The basis of this approach is based on functionalism which considers the social role of the profession as sustaining the wellness of the social system. If these criteria cannot be met fully, semi-, quasi-, or emergent professions are mentioned. The criteria of the profession might also determine the basis of the continuing professional development of the practitioners. This view is criticized because the criteria might not be accepted in a complete agreement. The symbolic approach is another one. Professions are described as high-status work in society and need to be respected as professions and individuals as professionals. For this reason, they have in relation with politicians, media, or different groups influencing society to be assumed as professionals. The ideological approach refers to a more political view that demands power and influence on policy. Serious academic training is emphasized; however, it is also criticized as there may be little connection with practical matters despite its importance on the status of a profession.

While the profession is defined in various ways and subject to diverse interpretations, it has also encountered criticism for not being precisely delineated. Götz (1995: 9) finds the definition of the term "profession" insufficient and mentions some occupations that do not fit the definition, but are considered professionals such as nurses, dancers, actors, etc. Some occupations, like garbage collection, sanitation engineering, firefighting, and football, deviate significantly from the conventional definition of a profession. Additionally, there is a considerable number of individuals involved in roles labeled as professional, such as nurses, dancers, actors, and massage therapists, which do not neatly fit into the broad category of labor. It is evident that the current definition of a profession is no longer sufficient. Hoyle & John (1995: 1) refer to the concept of the profession as contentious, because there is a lack of consensus considering its precise meaning despite its widespread usage in the media and among individuals typically considered professionals. Sociologists, philosophers, and historians have made considerable efforts, yet a common agreement remains elusive. Professions are often exemplified rather than precisely defined, with dictionaries leaning towards conveying meaning through examples rather than enumerating distinct qualities.

When qualities are mentioned, they usually revolve around knowledge and responsibility that limit this contest; however, it is also questioned whether the distinctiveness of professions from other jobs is based on these two qualities or not.

The current study centers on teaching as a profession and examines it according to the definitions of the profession, and the evolution of teaching toward professionalization is handled in the next section.

1.2.1. Teaching as a profession

In certain systems, a profession is recognized as a legal status entailing specific rights and responsibilities, and teaching has been granted such a status. Another indicator is how teaching is categorized within official statistics under various 'profession' classifications. There may be some, though limited, potential for elevating the status of teaching in this context. What holds more importance for teachers is the semantic question of whether their occupation is commonly referred to as a profession by politicians, commentators, and the general public. Determining this is challenging, as the term 'profession' is often used symbolically or ideologically to assert or deny status (Hoyle, 2008: 297). In order to classify teaching as a profession, certain criteria can be addressed. For example, Nunan (2001: 4-5) mentions four criteria that can be used to assess whether a particular paid job can be classified as a profession. These are:

1. Continuous Advanced Education and Training: The process of education and training goes beyond graduation, extending throughout one's career.
2. Establishment of Standards and Certification: Standards of practice are typically linked to certification or licensure. In some instances, the profession directly oversees licensing, while in others, professional associations wield significant influence, especially in cases where governmental bodies determine licensure.
3. Agreed Theoretical and Empirical Foundation: Professions are distinguished from trades by having a theoretical and empirical foundation and a shared framework of principles.
4. Advocacy by Professionals: Professional associations are common and play a crucial role in supporting their fields. They influence legislators to create favorable laws or oppose those detrimental to the profession.

Various criteria can be referred to and discussed, but in the case of the teaching profession, it can be observed that there is a lack of consensus on the conceptualization of the term; “teacher professionalism”. However, it can be understood as a professional domain encompassing sociological, ideological, and educational dimensions, with the goal of achieving a high quality in the teaching profession. This is rooted in developing professional expertise, knowledge, skills, and

values. It is highlighted that teacher professionalism is connected to improving the quality of teachers' work and how the public perceives them. Generally, different approaches agree that teacher professionalism includes meeting specific education standards and showing proficiency (Demirkasimoğlu, 2010: 2050). This lack of consensus leads to the ongoing debate regarding whether teaching should be classified as a profession. Tichenor & Tichenor (2005: 89) compare teaching to other professions such as engineering, playing baseball, being an accountant, or law or medicine jobs and claim that "anyone can teach" can be found in the teaching profession. This shows that the role of a teacher in education is not always equated with professionalism in the broader context. Despite the distinct perception of teachers compared to other professionals, the significance of effective teachers in driving societal change cannot be understated. Altan (2013: 3) proposes that even though teaching needs the status of a profession much more than any profession needs, it is highly open to unprofessionalism. Furlong (2008: 88) refers to teaching as not fully a profession like medicine or law professions in the past; however, the status of teaching has improved. This requires and leads to reaching an adequate number of qualified teachers and the conditions to be better in terms of pay or status. The qualified education is based on teacher professionalization as their professional development process is a key to improving education. At its fundamental level, the term "professional teacher" denotes an individual who receives compensation for teaching. At a more advanced level, it can also encompass educators who exemplify excellence in the profession, establishing the highest benchmarks for best practices (Tichenor & Tichenor, 2005: 90). Building upon this perspective, it is essential to consider the multifaceted nature of teacher professionalism and its implications for educational quality and societal advancement.

Aligning it with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) definition of a profession, Thomas (1998: 18) claims that the crucial factor lies in the understanding of the term "teacher quality". He emphasizes that it can be assessed through easily measurable attributes such as qualifications, teaching experience, and indicators of academic or subject-matter proficiency. He adds a list of capabilities, including the ability to articulate ideas clearly, create efficient learning environments for diverse students, cultivate positive teacher-student relationships, have a will for enthusiasm and creativity, and collaborate effectively with colleagues and parents. In OECD (2021: 13), it is claimed that controversial views have changed into an acceptance that teaching should be thought of as a profession, encompassing the associated expectations regarding knowledge, ongoing professional development, and the status typically attributed to a profession. A professional is someone capable of addressing the specific challenges and responsibilities inherent to their job, utilizing skills, experience, and expertise specific to that role. As the challenges confronting educators have evolved, so has the concept of professionalism in teaching. It is proposed that modern teachers must confront some of the major challenges. These are maintaining authority in the absence of automatic respect and balancing a sense of calling with the need to prevent the job from consuming one's entire life. Moreover, promoting cohesive values in the face of moral diversity and acknowledging shared interests with students without compromising the teacher-student

distinction are some of the other challenges. Feeling at ease with one's professional identity at school, even if it differs from one's personal identity at home, and navigating a prescriptive system's demands while preserving one's own values and unique skills can also be counted as significant challenges (Baggini, 2005: 11). In various educational settings, the definitions of teacher professionalism can be centered around aspects such as teachers' professional qualifications, encompassing notions like "proficiency in their role," "meeting the highest standards," and "attaining excellence." (Demirkasımoğlu, 2010: 2049). Hoyle (2008: 285) refers to one of the features of the profession as being able to behave effectively in ambiguous situations. Considering all these, it can be seen that there are various views about teacher professionalism and there are some controversial parts about it. However, it can also be proposed that teaching is getting closer to the idea of professionalism and it is discussed as a profession despite the conceptual distinctions.

Teaching is a challenging task that requires skilled and knowledgeable educators. Teachers must handle various responsibilities simultaneously, such as managing the class, providing feedback to students, and addressing disruptive behavior. The knowledge needed for effective teaching is both broad and intricate, including understanding the subject matter (content knowledge) and knowing how to create effective learning environments (pedagogical knowledge) (OECD, 2021: 14). Koehler & Mishra (2009: 63-65) address to a current and broader model; Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), which stands for technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge and explains these components. For the subject matter a teacher knows deeply, content knowledge is used. The methods and practices of teaching, classroom management, lesson planning, and student assessment stand for pedagogical knowledge. Linking teaching methods with the curriculum and student needs to be able to teach effectively is explained as pedagogical content knowledge. When it comes to technology part, the ability to use and adapt technology for various educational tasks, understanding how technology and content influence each other, and guiding teachers on how to apply technology to enhance content delivery are used as technological content knowledge. Technological pedagogical knowledge explores how different technologies can change teaching and learning practices, including their pedagogical affordances and constraints. Lastly, TPACK represents the integrated understanding of these content, pedagogical, and technological knowledge and emphasizes that effective teaching with technology requires a sophisticated grasp of how these domains intersect to represent concepts, address learning challenges, and build upon students' prior knowledge. All these efforts to explain the various aspects of teaching knowledge and practice represent steps toward recognizing teaching as a profession.

Essential foundations in teaching include a thorough command of one's subject, proficiency in pedagogical methods, and effective classroom management. It is assumed that a teacher without competence in these areas cannot be considered a proficient professional. (Baggini, 2005: 6). Inlow (1956: 259) points out a time when teachers should be employed if they have a Bachelor's degree, join a full-time teaching experience after an acceptable training session about their profession, and

incorporate the necessary ability to seem competent in a community. In that way, it is more likely to become a profession. As the decline in authority has occurred, there has also been a decrease in status. In the past, teachers have been naturally respected within the community. Unfortunately, nowadays, they are more likely to face a diminishing level of esteem and may even be looked down upon. Adapting to this shift is a key measure of a teacher's professionalism because effectively managing and guiding a classroom is a skill unique to educators. It involves a nuanced approach, where a teacher must lead, maintain control, and earn respect without depending on inherent deference or resorting to authoritarian methods. The professionalism of a teacher is assessed by their ability to assert authority without being overly authoritarian (Baggini: 2005, 6-7). It can be proposed that with the growing recognition of teaching as a profession, expectations for teachers' qualifications have risen, and teachers are now more subject to scrutiny.

Entwistle (2008: 255) addresses the literature about professionalization, mentions the importance of relating theory and practice, and considers theory as providing esoteric knowledge which is noted as a criterion of a profession. If the knowledge is exoteric, an assumption that anyone can perform that profession can be concluded according to some people. It is also objected to as it is a restrictive practice for a profession. In Cambridge (n.d.), esoteric is defined as “a very unusual and understood or liked by only a small number of people, especially those with special knowledge, which can point to the deep and complex feature of teaching”. Similarly, Baggini (2005: 11) argues that a person is considered as a professional precisely when someone lacks experience and specialized skills and cannot take over his role because it would be challenging. This is why the expression of professional pride is completely warranted. Overcoming these challenges is not easy, and teachers should take pride in their efforts and achievements when facing and surmounting such challenges.

When considering the necessary properties that teachers need to possess, one can refer to the five pillars of teaching outlined in the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) in OECD (2021: 13). These pillars include several key aspects. First is the knowledge and skills base, which requires standardized sufficient skills and knowledge. Next is the status and standing of the profession, which is about the ethical and legal status. The other one is peer control, which allows collaborative work for professionals. The fourth one is responsibility and autonomy, which is about having a say in the decisions. The last one is the social value and prestige of the profession. Examining these items, it is evident that being skilled in the profession is important. These important points can be summarized as having essential knowledge, having a deserved status, being in coordination with others, having one's own responsibility in professional life, and, as a natural outcome, having better prestige. According to John (2008: 20), besides being skilled and having professional status, understanding the profession is equally crucial, because it allows professionals to be aware of the reasoning and actions clearly. This awareness challenges the narrow focus on specific job requirements and encourages continuous learning and growth. Teachers, for instance,

must continually enhance their subject-specific knowledge and general knowledge, express their practice and knowledge clearly, and learn through action and test knowledge through reasoning. They need to understand the underlying processes behind their actions, constantly improve their interpersonal and professional skills, stay updated with new knowledge, evaluate the utility and relevance of knowledge for improvement, and test that knowledge in various contexts. Growing emphasis on professionalism is closely linked to the shift in perceiving teaching as more of a career and less of a calling (Baggini, 2005: 5). This emphasis has naturally led to a change in the teaching profession. Some teachers perceived that these changes have created fresh opportunities and expanded the scope of professionalism. However, others feel that these changes have led to a decline in their control, creativity, and independence, resulting in a more limited or stretched form of professionalism (John, 2008: 12).

The study of Tichenor & Tichenor (2005) explores teachers' perspectives on professionalism, highlighting various aspects related to attitudes and behaviors. The analysis reveals that teacher comments align with established categories of professionalism and effective teaching, particularly Sockett's (1993) five categories: 1) character, 2) commitment to change and continuous improvement, 3) subject knowledge, 4) pedagogical knowledge, and 5) obligations and working relationships beyond the classroom.

1. Character: Professional teachers, according to participants, exhibit qualities such as resilience, composure, caring nature, friendliness, patience, organization, flexibility, confidence, and being role models. They are described as conscientious, creative, dedicated, goal-oriented, ethical, and open to new ideas. They prioritize high standards, take pride in their work, and are passionate about teaching.

2. Commitment to Change: Teachers acknowledge the need for continuous improvement in their classroom practices. They express a commitment to change and actively seek ways to enhance their teaching methods.

3 & 4. Subject and Pedagogical Knowledge: While there's more emphasis on pedagogical knowledge, teachers recognize the importance of innovative teaching, reflection, effective curriculum implementation, action research participation, student motivation, assessment skills, application of learning theories, addressing children's needs, and utilizing appropriate teaching strategies.

5. Obligations and Working Relationships: Participants acknowledge that professionalism extends beyond the classroom. Professional teachers, as perceived by the study participants, have responsibilities to collaborate and cooperate with faculty, staff, administration, parents, and community members.

Taking these items into account, it can be stated that teachers are expected to have certain characteristics deserving of respect. They should have the ability to change and adapt, to have a good

command of knowledge not only about subjects but also about pedagogical issues, and the ability to be in good relations with the environmental factors and individuals related to the educational process.

It can be concluded that teaching is still a matter of research as a profession. However, it seems that the status of teaching is getting closer to being a profession. Understanding and examining the role of teaching as a profession is crucial not only in a global sense but also it holds particular significance within the Türkiye context. Teaching is analyzed as a profession that plays a central role in shaping the future of the nation having challenges and opportunities and the state of teaching is dealt with within the Turkish education system.

1.3. The state of teaching in Türkiye

It is necessary to look at the historical background of teaching in Türkiye in order to understand the evolution of teaching in the Türkiye context. The Law about education was accepted on March 13, 1924, and teaching was defined as “a profession that involves the general duties of the state, particularly in the field of education, divided into separate classes and ranks”. Similarly, the Basic Education Law No. 1739, which came into effect on June 14, 1973, highlighted teaching as “a specialized profession responsible for the educational, teaching, and related administrative tasks of the state” (Gönülaçar, 2016: 9). However, Erdogan Coskun (2022: 48-50) has dated back to the Ottoman Empire and explained the situation in Türkiye regarding institutionalization of the education. It was claimed that this process dated back to the end of the 18th century. Ottoman Empire needed a reform in military education as it lost its power in the West. So military and medicine schools were opened. After 1838, civil schools were opened, and the first university was opened in 1900 in the name of “Darulfünun”. In 1847, all schools were gathered under one Ministry, which was also known as the Ministry of National Education in the history of the Turkish Republic. Becerikli (2020: 385) attracts attention to March 16, 1848; the establishment of Darulmuallimin, as the starting point of professionalism in teaching. These reforms increased the need for qualified teachers, which led to the opening of schools for teacher training. After the 1924 Law of Unification of Education and the 1928 Adoption of the Turkish Alphabet, the need for qualified educators increased (Yamaç, 2023:233).

Concerning the history of the teacher education process in Türkiye, the Higher Education Law No. 2547, enacted in 1981, unified the teacher training colleges, institutes, and academies that were previously under the Ministry of National Education. Universities were unified under the Higher Education Council on July 20, 1982 (Gönülaçar, 2016: 34-35). At this stage, four-year Higher Education Schools were transformed into Education Faculties and two-year Teacher Training Institutes into Education Colleges. With the transfer of teacher training from the Ministry to universities in 1982, it was aimed that political influences on teacher training could diminish. However, a disconnect emerged between the Ministry, which became a mere institution with the

authority to employ teachers, and universities, relevant faculties, and colleges. Moreover, in teacher training, emphasis was placed more on quantity than quality, and teacher trainers were not able to have the spirit and knowledge of teaching. To recruit quality teachers into the education system, it was widely believed that a selective system should have been adopted to admit successful and teacher-inclined students into university education programs, ensuring they receive quality pre-service training and effective employment upon graduation. It was also claimed that the university entrance exam system was not adequate to measure verbal expression skills, suitability for the profession, personality structure, psychological traits, etc. This has made it questionable whether the teacher trainers have been suitable for the profession because they answered a few extra questions, without having developed speaking and communication skills, patience, and resilience, and without acquiring skills related to group processes. In 1985, the first exam was implemented in order to measure teacher competence by the Teacher Competency Exam. However, the quantity of students taking this exam was not more than the needs of the teacher. This eliminated the function of the selection of the exam. In some years, the exam was not even implemented. In 2001, the examination was held again as a Public Profession Exam because the number of graduates exceeded the need of the Ministry. In 2002, the name of the exam was changed to Public Personnel Selection Exam. The Public Personnel Selection Exam was used as a selection tool by the Ministry of National Education. The Teacher Field Knowledge Test (TFKT) was first administered in 2013. Since that time, it has been applied to teacher candidates across 16 subject areas. These were German Language Teaching, Biology Teaching, Geography Teaching, Religious Culture and Ethics Teaching, Science/Technology Teaching, Physics Teaching, Primary School Mathematics Teaching, English Teaching, Chemistry Teaching, High School Mathematics Teaching, Guidance Counseling, Classroom Teaching, Social Studies Teaching, History Teaching, Turkish Language and Literature Teaching, and Turkish Teaching. In addition to the General Aptitude, General Culture, and Education Sciences tests, the TFKT was also included (Gönülaçar, 2016: 44-46). Regarding the implementation of the examination system for teachers, Akdemir (2013: 25) has claimed that various types of exams have been applied, but teachers were measured only in terms of their professional knowledge and general cultural knowledge at a theoretical level. However, their personal characteristics were never taken into account. They have never been tested in terms of their professional competencies and their abilities in practical application. After their appointment to the profession, they have been subjected to in-service training to address their deficiencies. The TFKT, which has been implemented since 2013 for the selection of candidates in teacher appointments, could be considered to be an important step in selecting teachers based on their subject knowledge. However, this exam was also subject to criticism for only assessing through multiple-choice questions and for encompassing both subject knowledge and subject education in its questions. Graduates from education faculties mostly could take courses focusing on subject-education-oriented programs. Considering the teacher selection process, it can be seen that only theoretical knowledge could be assessed via examinations. In order to prevent this, an oral exam has been implemented since 2016. This was stated in The Regulation on Contracted Teacher Employment (2016: Law Number 11-12):

Table 1: The subjects and weights of the oral exam

Educational sciences and general culture	20%
Comprehension, summarization, expression, and reasoning skills	20%
Communication skills, self-confidence, and persuasion ability	20%
Openness to scientific and technological developments	20%
Ability to represent in front of a group and educational qualifications	20%

This exam is still being applied. Considering the subjects and weights of the oral exam in the Public Personnel Selection Exam, candidates, starting from the one with the highest score, three times the number of quotas determined for each field are called for the oral exam. Candidates with the same score as the last candidate are also called for the oral exam. The oral exam is conducted at oral exam centers where an oral exam committee is established by the Ministry. Candidates who qualify to participate in the oral exam for contractual teaching positions are evaluated by the oral exam committee on a scale of 100 points. Those who score 60 or above in the oral exam are considered successful and have the right to choose for appointment to contractual teaching positions. Even though this is called an oral exam, Özkal Sayan & Berk (2020: 786) claim that an oral exam is typically a test conducted by boards using a question-and-answer method to measure a person's level of knowledge. On the other hand, according to the Turkish Language Association, an interview is a mutual conversation conducted to make selections among individuals to be employed. Therefore, it can be inferred that while an oral exam is aimed at measuring individuals' knowledge, the interview technique is aimed at getting to know individuals. Considering the subjects of the exam, it is stated that it is more like an interview.

Besides these exam issues, In Basic Law on National Education No. 1739 [BLNE 1739] (1973: Law number 43), teaching is described as a specialized profession that encompasses the educational, instructional, and administrative responsibilities of the state. Teachers are obliged to fulfill their duties in accordance with the objectives and fundamental principles of Turkish national education. Preparation for the teaching profession is achieved through general knowledge, specialized field education, and pedagogical training. It is essential for teacher trainees, regardless of their educational level, to receive higher education in order to acquire the mentioned qualifications. This education is structured to allow horizontal and vertical transitions at pre-bachelor's, bachelor's, and postgraduate levels. Examining these issues about the teacher selection process and BLNE no. 1739, it can be deduced that teachers in Türkiye are expected to be well-qualified in various terms, however, measurement may not correspond to the expectation mentioned in Law No. 1739.

Pişkin & Parlar (2021: 21-25) summarize the results of their study about the state of teaching in Türkiye and mention various factors that affect the societal status and perception of the teaching

profession. Factors such as the quality of the education system, the qualifications and salaries of teachers, the legal framework of the profession, media-created perceptions, reward mechanisms, and career advancement opportunities are claimed to play significant roles in determining the status of the teaching profession. To increase the respectability of the teaching profession and elevate its value, it is crucial to consider these factors and take necessary measures. Professional development practices are suggested to be given adequate importance and teacher career stages are pointed as a necessary step to be taken. In the professional sense, individuals across different occupations carry out their duties and responsibilities in accordance with legal frameworks and may possess specific rights. Certain professions, like engineers and architects, operate under distinct professional laws, like Law No. 3458 concerning Engineering and Architecture. Similarly, lawyers are subject to regulation through Law No. 1136 about the Legal Profession and other relevant legislation. However, teachers lack a dedicated professional law for their occupation. Instead, regulations related to the teaching profession are expressed in various laws rather than a single, comprehensive teacher-specific law (Tuna & Kazdal, 2021: 17-18). This has been the case till 2022. Since then, Teaching Profession Law (TPL) has been accepted, though it is still controversial in some terms and is under debate. With this law, the Ministry of National Education divides the teaching profession into three career stages after the candidate teaching period: teacher, specialist teacher, and head teacher. Teacher candidates have to join the Teacher Candidate Training Program, which consists of education and practice. Those who are successful in the evaluation conducted by the Candidate Evaluation Commission at the end of the candidacy period are appointed as teachers (TPL, 2022: Law No 3-4).

In TPL (2022: Law No 6), the career stages of teachers are explained clearly as follows:

- 1) Those with at least ten years of service in teaching, including candidate teaching:
 - a) Having completed the Specialist Teacher Training Program consisting of no less than 180 hours of professional development,
 - b) Having completed the minimum required studies for specialist teaching in professional development areas,
 - c) Having no penalty of stopping grade progression,

Teachers can apply for the written exam for the title of specialist teacher. Those who score 70 or above in the written exam for the title of specialist teacher are considered successful. A specialist teacher certificate is issued to those who succeed in the written exam.

- 2) Those having at least ten years of service in specialist teaching, no penalty for stopping grade progression, and who have completed the Principal Teacher Training Program consisting of no less than 240 hours of professional development and completed the studies required for principal teaching in professional development areas can apply for the written exam for the title of principal teacher.

Those who score 70 or above in the written exam are considered successful. A principal teacher certificate is issued to those who succeed in the written exam.

3) Those who have completed master's education are exempt from the written exam required for the title of specialist teacher, while those who have completed doctoral education are exempt from the written exam required for the title of principal teacher.

4) The periods spent in educational institution management and contracted teaching are taken into account in the calculation of the teaching period.

5) Benefits are accrued from the date of approval by the authorized officer for the teacher title, and from the date of issuance of the specialist teacher/principal teacher certificate for the title of specialist teacher/principal teacher. After acquiring the title of specialist teacher or principal teacher, teachers who change fields or whose fields are removed or renamed by relevant regulations continue to use the titles they have acquired.

6) A degree is given separately for each title to those who acquire the title of specialist teacher or principal teacher.

7) Those who have received a penalty for stopping grade progression can apply for the title of specialist teacher or principal teacher after their penalties are deleted from their personnel files.

Besides teacher selection exams or teaching profession in Turkish Laws, it may be more clarifying to take a deeper look at the state of in-service training of teachers in Türkiye. Gönülaçar (2016: 72-73) draws attention to the Ministry of National Education's 2015-2019 Strategic Plan, and 2019 objectives that directly or indirectly concern teachers are summarized as follows:

- Increasing the annual in-service training duration per employee from 1.6 hours to 3 hours.
- Increasing the percentage of personnel who have completed postgraduate education from 7.54% to 10%.
- Conducting in-service training planning based on general and specific teaching competencies, employee requests, unit needs, inspection reports, and problem areas identified by units.
- Increasing the number and quality of distance education activities for teachers.
- Ensuring that teachers receive training periodically on identified problem areas (leadership and classroom management, competency, teaching methods, assessment, material preparation, communication, effective and efficient use of technology, foreign language, and professional ethics), and collaborating with relevant institutions and organizations.

It seems that in-service training has gained more importance over time. As Çelikten et al. (2005: 226) state, in-service training can be provided to teachers through various training programs at the institutional level as well as individually through the teacher's own efforts. No matter what type or value of education is received before starting teaching, and no matter how good an internship process is joined, this training is only informative in nature. It is necessary for professionals to update their knowledge and carry out their professional practices efficiently by in-service training; which is also the same for teachers. It is easier to implement structural changes in educational programs in a short time, but it takes longer to have a change or adaptation in the workforce of the system. The studies about in-service teacher training in Türkiye claimed to show that the objectives of these trainings mostly do not correspond to the needs of teachers as teacher thoughts are not adequately taken into consideration. (Gönülaçar, 2016: 39). According to the research findings of Can (2019: 1642), training can be provided to ensure the professional development of teachers by identifying their interests, needs, and expectations. For this purpose, needs analysis should be conducted initially, and professional development programs should be developed and implemented accordingly. Especially, to ensure teachers' access to and active participation in professional development programs, activities can be organized utilizing open and distance education as well as mobile learning opportunities. At that point, one can mention “professional development” which is examined in detail in the next section.

1.4. Professional Development

Professional development plays a crucial role in the broader initiative to elevate standards and enhance societal growth capacity by refining policies and practices across various public service sectors, particularly in education. However, implementing professional development necessitates modifications to professionalism. The ability to bring about such changes is crucial (Evans, 2008: 35). Shwartz & Bryan (1998: 3-5) define professional development as a mentoring act that adds to their professional career and an education certification process or renewal. It is also defined as a professional or personal plan of staff to become better at their profession.

Evans (2008: 30) claims that professional development contributes to the overall advancement of the entire profession, as seen in the transition to an all-graduate profession. Additionally, it involves the enhancement of knowledge, skills, and practices. It is defined as the process through which individuals' professionalism and/or professional identity are perceived to be improved. This interpretation acknowledges that professional development can have varying levels of relevance, ranging from individual professionals to entire professions. It can be applied to different professional units, including individual practitioners, institutional staff or departments, groups with common roles, and the profession as a whole. The deliberate inclusion of the phrase 'may be considered to be' allows for the recognition of subjectivity in defining what constitutes development. Thus, this study specifically examines the professional development of teachers.

1.4.1. Professional Development of Teachers

As discussed in the previous sections about teaching, considering it as a profession, it is possible to discuss the professional development of teachers. Avalos (2011: 10) defines the professional development of teachers as a multifaceted process involving both cognitive and emotional engagement, wherein educators learn, learn how to learn and adapt their knowledge for the benefit of student growth. This process occurs within specific educational contexts, which can either support or hinder learning. Various methods, such as formal training sessions or collaborative activities like curriculum development and data analysis, serve different purposes based on teachers' and students' needs. Not all professional development activities suit every teacher, emphasizing the importance of ongoing evaluation, experimentation, and reflection to tailor development initiatives effectively. The effectiveness of professional development depends on understanding and addressing certain factors including teachers' backgrounds, student demographics, system expectations, working conditions, and available learning opportunities. Teachers may have quality training or may not receive adequate training. In each case, it is reasonable to expect them to continue developing their teaching skills throughout their careers. While teacher training can offer valuable preparation, it is unrealistic to expect it to fully prepare teachers for every situation they may face throughout their careers. Moreover, changes in curriculum, student demographics, and working conditions introduce new demands that may not have been addressed during initial training. Therefore, teachers must continually update and enhance their teaching skills to meet evolving needs and prevent skill decay. Ongoing efforts to improve and maintain teaching effectiveness are also essential for sustaining quality education (Missoum, 2015: 166). Altan (2023: 211) suggests that teachers need to be good learners if they aim at an effective teaching process and bringing students one step forward. They need to be active and curious to maintain learning and development. Elmore (2002: 6) highlights the distinction between professional development and pre-service training in taking courses while they have already been working in their jobs in terms of teacher knowledge and student outcomes. The questions about the results of instructional practices on real students and effective teaching should be asked to have any effect on the outcomes of students and the knowledge of teachers.

John (2008: 22) outlines key principles that characterize professionalism. These are having a general knowledge base accepted by professionals and implemented by teacher councils, supporting this base with some principles and integrating it into continuing professional development programs. They should be based on educational research findings. Management decisions should be given information about professional needs and these two should be in harmony. Education and training should be continuous in a profession and life-long career. This professional development process is a personal, institutional, and national responsibility, which should be supported by necessary resources. Teaching involves different tasks and workforce, teachers and teaching assistants should view themselves as part of a profession governed by agreed standards. Collaboration is essential to establish appropriate status and career progression, ensuring individuals meet the necessary criteria

in knowledge and skills. Similarly, Whitcomb et al. (2009: 210) suggest that professional development is most effective when teachers collaborate in a supportive environment. Many programs emphasize participation in professional communities where respect and trust are essential. In such environments, teachers feel safe to take risks, engage in challenging discussions, and try new teaching practices. Successful professional learning communities strike a balance between acknowledging the individuality of teachers and critically evaluating teaching practices. Altan (2023: 155) resembles the learning process of teachers to learners' peer learning and highlights the collaboration among teachers. They claim to learn teaching from each other during their teaching process.

The teachers' willingness about the professional development process is regarded as a factor that can enhance the effectiveness of this development (Chi et al., 2023: 33). They are more inclined to acquire, apply, and adapt new input to their practice. Successful teaching relies on knowledge in three key areas: a profound understanding of the subject matter and the skills to be taught, known as "subject-matter knowledge" (e.g., history and mathematics), proficiency in instructional techniques applicable across various subjects, termed "general pedagogical knowledge," and mastery of instructional strategies tailored to the challenges of teaching and learning specific subjects, known as "pedagogical content knowledge" (Elmore, 2002: 17). In addition to these key areas, Fraser et al. (2007: 159) summarize various aspects which are important for professional development. The first one is the personal aspect which highlights teachers' beliefs, attitudes, interests, or motivation. The second one is the social aspect which focuses on the relationships and supportive atmosphere among group members to facilitate practicing or risk-taking. The third one is occupational which is related to the profession and strengthens the link between theory and practice. In that process, as Elmore (2002: 14) proposes, professional development is not only about what an individual teacher learns but also how he contributes to organizational development. Moreover, the importance of developing of common set of successful implementation of professional development (PD) activities rather than focusing on only the individual's growth is highlighted; which is stated as "collective good" contributing to the quality of the school system. In discussing the element of effective professional development, Evans (2008: 31) refers to two essential components of teacher development, which are equally applicable to the broader concept of professional development: functional development and attitudinal development. Attitudinal development is defined as modifying individuals' attitudes toward their work, while functional development is claimed to focus on improving individuals' performance. Moreover, attitudinal development is reviewed to encompass two key aspects of change: intellectual and motivational. Intellectual change refers to the development of individuals' thinking, thought processes, and ideas, while motivational change relates to individuals' evolving levels of motivation. Similarly, functional development is claimed to consist of two focal points of change: procedural and productive. Procedural change pertains to the development of procedures utilized, while productive change involves what and/or how much individuals 'produce' or 'do' in their work. Considering all these factors for effective professional development, it can be noted that

subject matter, general pedagogical, and pedagogical content knowledge are key elements in a PD process. Besides these “knowledge” issues, motivation and willingness are also highlighted. To discuss a step beyond that, combining theory and practice and being able to use it for the sake of the education system are important in PD.

Building on the discussion of professional development for teachers in general, it may be enlightening to cover the context of language teachers briefly. As for English language teaching, Missoum (2015: 166) proposes that all participants in the educational process should agree that one of the primary objectives of education is to promote effective learning. Efficiency in this context refers to achieving optimal learning outcomes using available or minimal financial, human, and time resources. In order to facilitate optimal learning among their students, teachers of English as a foreign language must possess certain essential teaching skills, including:

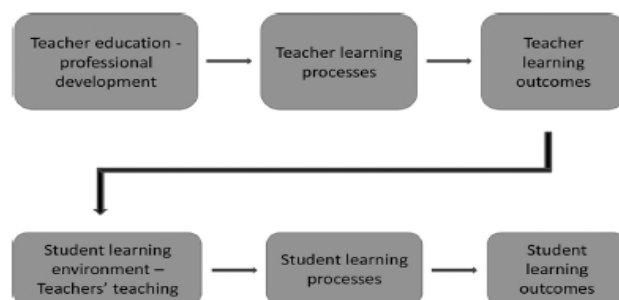
1. Proficiency in English language
2. Capacity to develop, plan, and deliver lessons effectively
3. Skill in managing classroom dynamics and addressing disruptive behavior
4. Ability to communicate effectively with both colleagues and students
5. Aptitude for assessing student learning progress
6. Proficiency in utilizing modern tools such as ICT to enhance teaching practices.

It can be noted that these skills correspond with the aforementioned issues concerning professional development such as content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and technological knowledge with first, second, third, or sixth items; or personal, social, and occupational aspects with third, fourth, and fifth items.

Putting aside what is covered here, the point of PD reaches a common aim; student learning. Elmore (2002: 17;19) addresses this issue related to directing resources effectively and achieving student success by highlighting the notion that experience leads to expertise. However, it is important to judge an expertise, unlike the conventional view. The expertise level of teachers is crucial as it decides on instructional issues and shapes the professional development capacity of schools and school systems. Teachers' experience, subject matter knowledge, and ability to collaborate are fundamental for establishing group norms and collaborative approaches to instructional practices. In addition, students' backgrounds, prior knowledge, family and community contexts, and past educational experiences influence teachers' attitudes, expectations, and teaching methods. Teachers' beliefs and expectations about student learning and their own practices guide their adoption of new teaching methods believed to be beneficial for their daily work. While it is important to establish general standards for teaching quality and prioritize specific content areas and grade levels for professional development, translating these guidelines into practical strategies for individual schools and teachers to enhance the entire educational system can be complex. If the need for expertise in

teaching can not be determined or designed well, it is inevitable to spend more resources on professional development to achieve improvement in student learning. As Chi et al. (2023: 29) state, regardless of the form of professional development activity, the objective is to take teaching standards one step forward to achieve better learning and teaching. Likewise, Mundry (2005: 13) claims that professional development programs target student achievement and meet a higher standard by equipping teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills. As it is seen as well as teacher qualifications, student achievement is also highlighted. Elmore (2002: 8-13) states that professional development participants need to have the answer to what they learn, how they involve it in their professional practices, and what they add specifically to themselves and attract attention to the “change”. Professional development should result in a change in student learning, and it is claimed to be the motivation source and criterion for evaluation. Whitcomb et al. (2009: 209) also points to the student learning part of professional development because teachers can enhance their ability to choose the best actions for student achievement with the help of professional development programs. Considering professional development and its indicators on teachers or students, Vermunt (2014: 80) presents a chain of evidence that shows the way teacher education and teacher professional development to student learning outcomes.

Figure 1: PD chain



As shown in Figure 1, it can be inferred that even though professional development activities are organized for the teachers, teacher education and teacher professional development actually aim at achieving student learning.

When it comes to the features of effective professional development, adaptability, scalability, flexibility, clearly defined principles and structure, support for providers, and well-defined materials and resources are listed (Whitcomb et al., 2009: 211). A professional development program needs to be adaptable and scalable to use in the long term. Its structure and fundamental principles must be clearly defined so that other providers can implement it effectively. Additionally, it should be flexible enough to accommodate variations in teachers, students, and educational contexts depending on its core principles. Supporting and training professional development providers is crucial for sustainability and scalability. The program should offer well-defined materials and resources so that they can be easily adapted to new settings. Lastly, the aim should have a focus on student learning

while improving teachers' knowledge and pedagogical practices. It can be seen that researchers enumerate various features for an effective PD, and increasing teacher knowledge and practices and supporting student learning can be counted among very common features.

Elmore (2002: 9) attributes to the two principles for a professional development program: the first being systemwide improvement and the second being in accordance with educators' decisions. The former includes certain categorical programs that serve special populations such as English language teachers, and students with disabilities or high capabilities. In the latter one, educators or schools decide what to focus on for their professional development. Schwartz & Bryan (1998: 7-8) mention levels of professional development. Those are individual ones, group or programs, departmental ones, divisional ones, professional associations, and formal/informal/nonformal ones. Individual professional development programs are for degree attainment or personal enrichment. Even shorter courses like keyboard skills or aerobics a lunchtime can be seen as part of professional development. In group programs, people with similar interests gather to improve in a professional interest. In departmental programs, activities are held among specific work groups and mostly they are related to the job-specific subject. In divisional ones, it is important to convey specific information for all members of a division having common aims. Professional associations provide development opportunities through meetings at different levels, supporting professionals of all backgrounds and experience levels, generally with a focus on assisting newcomers.

Alongside these mentioned features, components, or principles, there are reasons leading to the failure of PD. Professional development aims to enhance teachers' skills and knowledge, assuming that this will lead to more effective teaching. However, if it only focuses on this aspect, its impact may be limited or even negative. This is because teachers often return to unchanged classroom and school conditions, with the same students and content. They may find that ideas learned in training can not be implemented effectively in their classroom realities, which leads to frustration and cynicism toward new approaches. This cycle can create a negative reinforcement pattern, undermining the effectiveness of professional development efforts (Elmore, 2002: 24). Vermunt (2014: 84) draws attention to the need for teacher learning and claims that it does not receive adequate importance when teachers meet new methods. This may be seen as an important reason for an innovation to fail. If teachers cannot understand or implement a new method properly and if they cannot acquire new skills to practice it in their classroom environment, it fails. Therefore, when an educational innovation is aimed, teachers are expected to adapt their teaching way, which necessitates effective teacher learning. In addition to these situations concerning conditions, Osborn (2008: 68) touches upon an issue regarding teachers. The professional responsibilities of teachers are classroom actions such as planning lessons, preparing plans according to the needs of students, evaluating the results of their learning, and reporting on their development. Moreover, they are also responsible for children's personal or social needs, providing guidance about their future education,

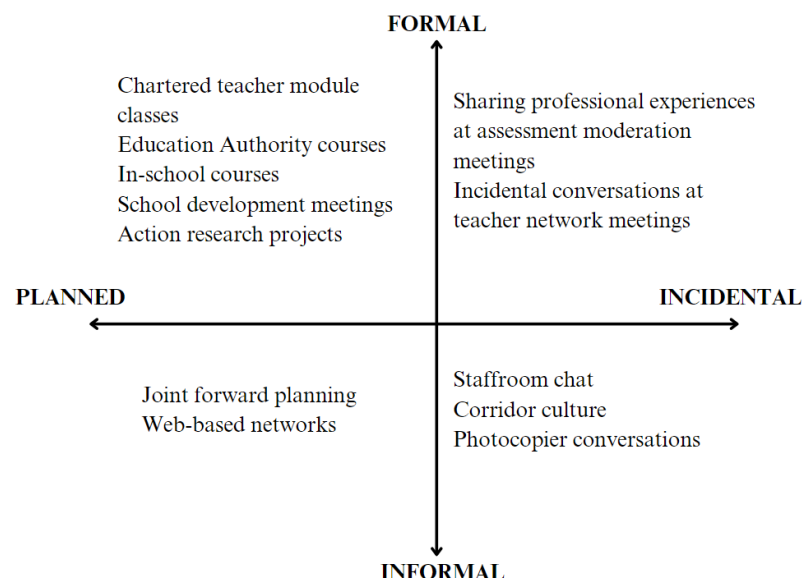
being in contact with their parents or some people outside the school, and participating in meetings. Besides these responsibilities, they should also carry out performance management and take part in professional development activities. This can be overwhelming for teachers.

Having explored the significance of professional development for teachers, discussing effective professional development and programs for professional development, and reviewing the reasons for failures, it is now important to examine the different types of professional development that can be implemented in educational settings. In the next section, types of professional development are explained shortly.

1.4.2. Types of Professional Development

Analyzing Reid's quadrants of teacher learning (see Figure 2), it can be seen that formal and planned activities are held in formal places such as schools in a formal structure, formal but more incidental ones can be practiced in teacher meetings with more incidental and experiential conversations. Considering informal but planned ones, planning can be on board, with more casual environments. Informal and incidental development can be even in a photocopy room with a usual, daily teacher chat. It can be concluded that professional development can take place in various settings, ranging from highly structured and formal environments to casual and unplanned ones. (Fraser et al, 2007: 161)

Figure 2: Reid's quadrants of teaching



Various types of professional development activities can be identified; however, in this study, the most frequently used ones are dealt with. Reform/traditional PD, formal/nonformal/informal PD,

face-to-face/online PD, and continuous professional development, which is gaining more attention lately, are examined.

1.4.2.1. Reform/ Traditional Professional Development

Desimone et al. (2002: 85) divide types of PD activities into two as reform and traditional activities and classify traditional ones as within-district workshops, courses for college credit, and out-of-district workshops. Reform activities are classified as teacher study groups, teacher collaboratives, networks or committees, mentoring, internships, and resource centers. These professional development activities are named according to their being a reform or traditional one, which coincides with Reid's quadrants of teacher learning. It can be said that more formal and planned ones are more traditional. Reform activities are more resilient, thus many other activities, especially the ones fostering collaboration or practical ones, can be told to be reform ones.

1.4.2.2. Formal/ Nonformal/Informal Professional Development

Though not always directly related to classroom instruction, formal professional development sessions conducted on some specific days by relieving teachers from their regular duties focus on various topics such as student discipline, test preparation, and policy changes at the district or state level (Elmore, 2002: 10). They are generally held in large-group settings outside of the classroom environment. These initiatives aim to enhance teaching practices and student learning in response to demands for accountability. Bolt (2008: 188) mentions one of the characteristics of a formal development program as acquiring qualifications within universities, formal organizations or colleges. Mansvelt et al. (2008: 579-580) claim that professional development programs should address diverse skills, attitudes, and learning styles. In his study about e-learning professional development programs, participants emphasize that e-learning and associated professional development are not solely about improving technological skills but also about understanding pedagogy and its application in teaching contexts. However, they feel that formal professional development often falls short in addressing these needs, leading to a preference for informal development methods which are popular and perceived as effective.

From a different point of view, Evans (2018: 14) questions formal professional development and addresses the value of repeatedly analyzing the same topics without going deeper into how and why educators learn and develop. Informal and implicit learning in the professional development process is claimed to be explored more because much of the research focuses on the nature and benefits of specific professional development programs. While informal development allows staff to improve, its informal nature makes it challenging to assess learning outcomes precisely. In contrast, formal development programs offer more control over learning content, increasing the likelihood of

exposure to important pedagogical aspects alongside technical skills. On the other hand, it is claimed that formal activities are found to have longer-lasting effects when integrated within the framework of the school (Chi et al. 2023: 32). Informal programs are related to the deliberate learning through experiences and reflection and discussion are given importance without the necessity of formal instruction. (Bolt, 2008: 189). The most common type of professional development was informal in nature, involving activities like sharing knowledge with colleagues, learning spontaneously from work or personal experiences, and browsing the internet for information (Mansvelt et al., 2008: 578).

Nonformal education differs from formal education in its more limited scope, time, or knowledge whereas formal education is considered to be a more systematic, planned, and integrated form of education. Despite these differences, they have also similarities. They offer learners to improve their knowledge by employing ready and quick programs that they cannot have the chance to acquire through their environment. Informal education can be mixed with nonformal education, but nonformal education is also a similar form of formal education which is held by nongovernmental organizations like youth groups, some business organizations, unions, cooperatives, or a specific association or societies. Informal education is a kind of process in which learners learn through their experiences, the environment they are in, or daily relationships. It is an unsystematic, unplanned, and unintentional form of learning. However, this kind of learning is limited to one's experiences in his lifetime. (Coombs, 1985: 24).

By summarizing some advantages and disadvantages of formal, nonformal, and informal education, differences and similarities can be seen clearly. For formal education, a specific curriculum, standardized assessment, certification, support for funding by the government, professional educators and comprehensive learning experiences can be counted as advantages while limited flexibility, missing individual needs, and hierarchical structure lead to difficulty in reaching a program, emphasis on testing are disadvantages. For nonformal education, flexibility and compatibility with learner needs, innovative and participatory methods, quick implementation, and addressing unique challenges. It also addresses gaps in formal education and provides more practical skills. In contrast, it may lack standardization and certification, external funding, challenges in coordinating among organizations, and limited reach. For informal education, continuous and lifelong learning, adaptable and personalized interests, creativity, problem-solving, accessibility, practicality, real-world knowledge, and skills can be counted as advantages. On the other hand, lack of formal recognition, inequalities, limited structure to fill the gaps in knowledge, openness to misinformation, and difficult measurement are disadvantages (Coombs, 1985: 90-97). It can be inferred that there are advantages and disadvantages of these professional development types and they can fill the gaps of each other and stand out in different ways.

1.4.2.3. Face-to-face/Online Professional Development

Three structural features that set the context for PD are form, duration, and participation. The form is about the type of PD activity such as traditional workshops or conferences, or reform type of activities such as study groups, teacher networks, mentoring, etc. Duration is about the time period teachers spend in the PD activity. Participation is about the teachers taking part in the activities and whether they are from the same school or same grades etc. (Birman et al., 2000: 29). Fishman et al. (2003: 646-647) refer to the elements which are taken into consideration while designing a PD program. The first one is the content of PD which includes the general knowledge of teaching and the subject matter. The second element is the strategies as pedagogical approaches while teaching teachers PD. The third one is sites in which learning takes place. The last element is the media used during the PD process such as face-to-face or online. Elliot (2017: 114-119) refers to online professional development and claims that it offers teachers the opportunity to select programs that they find personally meaningful, while also providing flexibility in scheduling. Online PD providers need to facilitate collaboration among participants to enable them to work together on challenging subjects. Offering various professional development options allows for diverse professional growth needs and enhances levels of interest. Furthermore, supplying resources for future reference can help sustain relevance and increase engagement levels. If a teacher experiences online professional development newly without knowing what to expect, or he has experienced a badly designed one formerly with a negative impact on his mind, this negative impact might be worse than no experience. However, when it is implemented in a good way, it can overcome the disadvantage of face-to-face professional development when teachers cannot attend because of the distance and foster collaboration.

1.4.2.4. Continuing Professional Development

Professional development is an evolving issue. Besides different types of activities and practices, the way professional development is implemented is also on the stage. Continuing professional development (CPD) is gaining more attention. The school-based CPD is getting more important as it gives schools more chance to lead their own Professional development programs and gain confidence about contributing their own professional development process rather than trusting only others. Connecting these programs with national strategies also sounds sensible (Furlong, 2008: 93). CPD is a process in which teachers improve their practice by adding on to their initial learning about teaching to be more effective for their students. In this type of development, it is not only about individual improvement but also school improvement (Bubb & Early, 2007: 3-4). Bolam (2008: 162) refers to the studies in which teachers consider CPD programs like traditional professional development programs such as short, external training. However, CPD offers more school-based or course-based practices as well as nationwide dissemination activities and it provides more coaching about teaching or learning, sharing knowledge, and collaborative and reflective practices. It seems

to have a more positive impact on teacher motivation, attitudes, knowledge, and skills. The involvement of teachers in educational change is crucial for its success, particularly when the change is complex and spans multiple settings over extended periods. Meaningful and effective involvement goes beyond simply acquiring new knowledge or techniques; teachers are not just technical learners but also social learners (Hargreaves, 1994: 11). This may require a real environment for teachers while providing change and improvement. CPD can be achieved effectively by prioritizing the teaching skills of teachers and evaluating them. Individual needs and school needs should be handled together within a limited budget in order to reach the required pace for ongoing improvement (Bubb & Earley, 2007: 42). Friedman & Phillips (2004: 362-363) mention CPD as a program that offers learning how to promote personal growth, and cultivate professionals who possess flexibility, self-reflection, and the ability to manage their own learning processes. Nevertheless, this focus on individual development may contradict the idea of CPD as a tool for training professionals to meet specific job requirements and enhance their professional competence, because CPD focuses on institutions more than individuals to achieve cumulative success. Furlong (2008: 94) puts forward that it is significant to create partnerships in professional development similar to the successful ones in teacher training. Schools should have a say in what they need to learn and be actively involved in training sessions that appeal to their specific needs. It is also valuable for teachers and schools to share their successful practices with each other via network. However, schools should still give importance to university offers formally and systematically. This is not about giving universities all the power, but it is about recognizing their role in providing high-quality ongoing education that benefits everyone involved.

Effective continuous professional development should address two key questions: who it is intended for -whether the individual, the school and its students, or the broader education system- and what its overall purpose is. While the goals of professional development may vary, they should ultimately focus on improving student outcomes and fostering the growth of staff in their teaching, management, and leadership skills. The development should be useful and contribute positively to the school's overall improvement. Staff should have access to a variety of development opportunities, which can influence their beliefs and behaviors, leading to positive changes in the classroom and school practices. However, any changes made should result in improvement; but it is not the kind of change just for the sake of change (Bubb & Earley, 2007: 21). Considering this process that leads to change, some expectations of teachers can be noted. The first one is continuity which provides students uninterrupted and cohesive learning journey as teachers from different levels of schools benefit from each other. The second one is progress, which is about the expectations about outcomes in student learning. Thirdly, differentiation is about matching students' learning to reach their potential considering their prior knowledge or skills addressing their needs. The fourth one is increasing and updating subject knowledge (Bell & Gilbert, 1996:1-7).

It can be seen that there are many types of CPD and it is still evolving. Considering recent CPD programs, Fraser et al.(2007: 166) propose the following suggestions:

- Structured and formal activities, primarily focusing on professional aspects, are less likely to result in significant professional growth for teachers.
- Using both formal and informal planned activities is better to foster transformative learning, as they address personal, social, and professional aspects. However, discrepancies between design and implementation may hinder attention to personal and social aspects,
- Opportunities allowing teachers more control over the learning process are likely to address personal and social aspects more comprehensively, leading to professional growth.
- The significance of informal and unplanned learning opportunities in teachers' professional development is currently not well-researched and thus remains uncertain.

To conclude, it is significant to decide on an effective program for the needs of students and teachers in appropriate contexts as there are many types and subtypes of PD. In this case, it would be better for teachers not only to attend the offered training programs but also to understand their own needs and design their professional development accordingly. At that point, the concept of “autonomy” can be discussed.

1.5. General Framework of Autonomy

Autonomy is defined as “self-directing freedom and especially moral independence” in Merriam-Webster (n.d.). According to Benson (2001: 50), this concept first appeared in politics to describe the places governed by themselves with their own rules not by any other power. Then it has started to be used in philosophy and about the individuals since the sixteenth century. Benson (2001: 27-34) refers to the relevant names about the autonomy. First of all, Rousseau (1762) viewed autonomy as the integration of individual wills with the general will, emphasizing that individuals are inherently good and should be their own authority, free from corrupting social institutions. Dewey (1916) is claimed to believe autonomy in education involved moral responsibility and active participation in a democratic society, with schools fostering problem-solving and community engagement. Kilpatrick (1921) is proposed to extend Dewey’s ideas through the 'project method', where students plan and create their own learning projects, promoting skills necessary for democratic participation. According to Freire (1970), autonomy is a critical social participation within education, focusing on addressing power dynamics and fostering transformative learning. Illich (1971) advocates for informal learning networks that empower learners to set and achieve their own educational goals outside traditional systems. Rogers (1983) emphasize the teacher’s role in facilitating a non-judgmental environment for self-actualization, allowing learners to develop naturally with minimal intervention. In short, autonomy has been searched throughout time and gathered around the idea that being free, but responsible.

Autonomy's definition of Holec (1981:3; cited in Benson, 2001: 59) is referred to as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" and the definition is explained: A learner is responsible for the learning goals, contents, and progress, methods, procedure and evaluation steps. This process is related to the capacity to make successful decisions and direct learning, managing, and organizing the process. Similarly, an autonomous person is identified as a person who understands their own identity and objectives in relation to others in their life, not just to gain recognition from others but also to recognize themselves. Being able to explain one's behavior is not just about showing it to others but also about communicating its significance to oneself. Autonomy requires individuals to be accountable for their actions, both to themselves and to others, and to effectively communicate their intentions and reasons behind their actions. Autonomous individuals are not reliant on others to define or interpret their actions; instead, they can deliberate and articulate the rationale behind their behavior to themselves and others (Shotter, 1984, cited in Bell & Gilbert, 1996: 42). These definitions are close to the definition by Benard (1995: 1, cited in Hargreaves et al., 2013: 6) who defines autonomy as having a self-identity and ability to behave independently, to control one's environment, to complete tasks successfully by having a self-control and to believe in one's own abilities. Considering these definitions, Dağ Akbaş (2011: 24) lists the characteristics of an autonomous learner as being aware of their learning process, goals, and outcomes, having a strong motivation and self-confidence to guide their decisions and actions, and being flexible in adapting their strategies to achieve educational objectives. Furthermore, they need to think and act independently, making strategic use of their environment, and understanding the importance of negotiation to meet their needs.

Benson (2001: 58-60) claims that autonomy in language learning is explained as the ability to control one's own learning, and it is defined as the capacity to take control of one's own learning. It is also suggested that defining autonomy more precisely is not necessary because control over learning can look different depending on various aspects of the learning process. Autonomy is seen as a multidimensional skill that can vary from person to person and even within the same person in different situations or times. In addition, as there is a social aspect of a learning process such as language learning and it is important to elaborate on aims, content, or resources, it might not be fully self-directed and isolated from others; which is necessary for autonomous learners. However; it is important to be free enough to make one's own decisions during the process.

In addition to explaining what autonomy is, it may be noteworthy to touch upon how it can be improved. Littlewood (1997: 81-82) claims that autonomy is developed by helping learners to have independent acts and independent communication skills, to take charge of their own learning, and to generalize their autonomy levels for different situations in the language teaching process. Moreover, learners' ability to act autonomously is evaluated by considering the level of motivation, confidence, knowledge, and skills. Similarly, Trebbi (2008: 33-36) handles the issue of this independence and

being free from a different point of view. He claims that it is impossible to talk about being totally free as humans are social beings and live in a socio-cultural context. However, it is better to talk about conditions and be conscious about them. Autonomy is not about being totally free, but free from constraints in the conditions they are living with by raising consciousness. Additionally, Benson (2001: 14) suggests that while the opportunity for self-directed learning is seen as necessary for developing autonomy, this opportunity alone is not enough to ensure the development of autonomy. Self-directed learning is a necessary precondition for autonomy does not mean that it is not necessarily a complete condition on its own. In other words, simply having the chance to learn independently does not automatically lead to the development of autonomy. At that point, Dağ Akbaş (2011: 45) highlights the role of motivation in autonomous learning and claims that motivation increases learners' autonomy and success. Lamb (2008: 272) identifies autonomous learning not only as the ability to control one's learning but also the ability to learn how to learn besides being motivated enough; therefore, it can be said that autonomy is needed to be able to learn independently and to find the suitable strategy. It seems that being motivated and finding the right way for oneself is also significant as well as being free on one's decisions and responsible for one's learning.

According to Benson (2001: 126), practices for fostering autonomy can be analyzed under six headings: Resource-based approaches focus on having independent relations with learning materials. Technology-based approaches emphasize using educational technologies on one's own. Learner-based approaches aim at behavioral and psychological changes in the learner. Classroom-based approaches stress having control over the planning and evaluation of classroom activities. Curriculum-based approaches broaden the concept of learner control to the entire curriculum. Lastly, teacher-based approaches emphasize the role of the teacher and the importance of teacher education in promoting learner autonomy. According to this teacher-based approach, the teacher is crucial to facilitating learners' autonomy and should be autonomous in their teaching and learning. In this thesis, teachers are focused in terms of autonomy; therefore, it is thought to be appropriate to examine teacher autonomy and professional autonomy closely.

1.5.1. Teacher Autonomy

Teacher autonomy is defined as teachers' ability to achieve teaching independently, through reflection or research, shows one aspect. Autonomy can also mean having the ability of self-direction or self-development or being free from constraints (Lamb, 2008: 275). While describing teacher autonomy, Benson (2001: 15) chooses to use the word interdependence, which implies collaboration among teachers and students to achieve common objectives. This is different from independence because it is the antonym of dependence that means an overreliance on teachers or teaching materials. However, autonomy does not imply being totally isolated. It suggests knowing what to do and how to do it. Similarly, teacher autonomy includes understanding and clarifying challenges teachers come across. They can collaborate to face these challenges and consider it as a chance for growth, which

is directed by personal and professional development (Barfield et al, 2002: 220). Benson (2001: 189) cites McGrath (2000) and explains that teacher autonomy can be thought of in terms of controlling the teaching process and controlling the professional development process. It is discussed as “self-directed professional development” and associated with teacher education, reflection, and action research. Considering definitions of teacher autonomy, Little (1995: 179) claims that successful teachers take responsibility for their own teaching and are more autonomous. They reflect on and analyze their practices constantly, and have a good command of affective and cognitive control of the teaching process, which provides freedom.

If teachers are considered as learners for their development, learner autonomy can also be referred. Dağ Akbaş (2011: 19) highlights key aspects of learner autonomy as control and responsibility. Learners are expected to take responsibility for their own learning and have control of this process. Teachers and learners are compared in terms of autonomy, capacity, freedom, and responsibility to make decisions regarding learning and similarly teaching is mentioned. Teachers can be more efficient if pedagogical strategies for autonomy are practiced, reflected on, and experimented with. Therefore, studies about teachers and teacher autonomy are becoming increasingly significant as autonomy is integrated into large-scale programs in the curriculum (Benson, 2001: 196). Okay & Balçıklı (2021: 513) address teacher education and separate experience from development because it needs to be an ongoing renewal and revision process to keep up with the changes and cope with the weariness of pedagogical knowledge through time. It is suggested that teachers should take responsibility for their own learning after graduating. Teacher autonomy is perceived as an important aim in teacher development, including practices such as reflective practice and action research. It rejects the idea that teachers are like technicians, and it highlights professionalization and progressive teacher development (Shaw, 2008: 188). These interpretations differ from the idea of teacher learning, which emphasizes the ability to make decisions about one's own professional learning needs and being free to choose.

Signifying the role of autonomy in education, Viera (1999: 25) explains an autonomy-based school philosophy. He claims that teachers work together to make decisions about the needs, expectations, or interests of learners and adopt a research-oriented approach by continuous questioning and exploring in order to improve their teaching and maintain the professional development process. Besides, they challenge social and institutional norms for the sake of learners' learning process and to foster their autonomy to be able to take charge of their own learning. This type of philosophy also supports reflective movement in teacher education and leads to the development of a personal and collective sense of direction, enabling them to take informed and socially responsive actions. As a consequence of this, education can facilitate the social reconstruction of knowledge and bridge the gap between school and life. To sum up, Viera's autonomy-based philosophy is a holistic approach that emphasizes collaboration, inquiry, continuous

professional development, critical reflection, and the empowerment of both teachers and learners through a focus on autonomy.

Smith (2003:1) refers to teachers as teacher-learners and outlines the characteristics of teacher-learner autonomy as the ability to have appropriate skills, adequate knowledge, perceptions about themselves as a teacher, and to cooperate with others. It is important not only in relation to teachers but it is also important for the autonomy of the students and the autonomy of pedagogy. According to Shaw (2008: 190), autonomous teachers seek answers to their problems in the teaching and learning environment, which has an inquisitive nature shared among teachers working together. In this context, Smith (2003: 5) addresses teacher-learner autonomy as one aspect of teacher autonomy which is a larger concept, and he relates teacher-learner autonomy to professional development and the teacher-learning process.

Viewed from another perspective, the autonomy issue within the profession is criticized because it is about avoiding accountability rather than being free in their decision to do the best for clients. (Hoyle & John, 1995: 8). Hargreaves (1994: 3) considers the process of teacher change ironic because attempts to support teachers' professional growth and foster a sense of professional community may often fail despite good intentions if they are being forced into rigid models or spoiled by excessive supervision. Additional time granted for professional development may be guided by increased monitoring and regulation. When collaborative cultures turn into forced collegiality or bureaucratic control, these administrative approaches not only undermine teachers' autonomy but also threaten their passion for teaching itself, taking the heart out of the profession. The teaching profession has evolved into a more recognized field with increased emphasis on academic qualifications and CPD throughout time. Advances have been made in pedagogical knowledge and practices, although these may not be widely acknowledged outside the profession. Public perception of the profession is not as expected, with less willingness to leave decisions to teachers. However, individual relationships between parents and teachers often remain positive. While there is less autonomy at the school level, paradoxically, individual teachers may have more influence in the management of their schools (Thomas: 2007: 15).

1.5.2. Professional Autonomy

Autonomy constitutes a key element of teacher professionalism, offering individuals space for independent decision-making to attain their goals and influencing the management of situations pertaining to their work (Demirkasımoğlu, 2010: 2049). Smith & Erdogan (2008: 87) compare teacher-learner autonomy to “the engine which powers career-long professional development.”. Elmore (2002: 32) suggests that those knowledgeable about teaching and professional development should have a say on the content of professional development activities as they are the professionals. This right can be defined as professional autonomy, which is expressed as being free practitioners

while making decisions considering their professional practice by Hoyle & John (1995: 78). Professional autonomy is claimed to be a fundamental aspect of a profession. The rationale is that professionals operate in ambiguous situations where judgment takes precedence over following a set routine. To ensure effective practice, it is crucial for them to be free from bureaucratic and political constraints. This autonomy enables professionals to act based on their judgments in the best interests of their learners. However, arguments against autonomy suggest that professional practices are more predictable and assessable than certain interest groups claim. These claims of autonomy, in reality, may serve as strategies to evade accountability and resist involving participants in discussions about practice (Hoyle & John, 1995: 77). Quality teacher preparation and development should foster teachers to make their own decisions, and take initiative in their actions and development. Additionally, it should empower teachers by equipping them with an understanding of the various options and alternatives to their current teaching practices, and their own beliefs, which is a critical factor for understanding behaviors (Missioum: 2015: 167).

Supporting the previously cited arguments, Pearson & Moomaw (2005: 48) point out the necessity for teachers to have control over their work environment and the authority to make personal on-the-job decisions and mention the importance of this autonomy that is crucial for maintaining teacher commitment to their profession. This freedom seems to be necessary for this autonomy. When discussing freedom in teacher autonomy, it is suggested that it encompasses not only external issues but also internal factors such as teachers' beliefs, values, and assumptions. (Shaw, 2008: 199). These internal factors can be mentioned for teachers to be examined by reflecting on their teaching process. Smith (2003: 8) refers to reflection as a learning process from teaching expresses and also as a teacher-learning tool. This is suggested to be emphasized more to improve their skills and motivation to learn independently by reflecting on when, where, how, and from what kind of sources they can learn.

As Altan (2023: 8) proposes, a teacher needs to know what he knows or does not know, which requires professionalism. However, it is not so easy because a teacher is generally not fully aware of what he is aware of. Pearson & Moomaw (2005: 46) find a stronger correlation between perceived empowerment, autonomy, and professionalism in teachers. Specifically, as teachers' sense of empowerment increased, so did their perception of professionalism. In addition, a positive relationship is observed between general teaching autonomy and both perceived empowerment and professionalism. This means that higher levels of autonomy are associated with increased feelings of empowerment and professionalism among teachers. In Pearson & Moomaw's study (2005: 49), professionalism is measured by items related to teachers' perceptions of recognition for high performance, the accessibility of administration, and participation in school-level committees. It is found that general teacher autonomy has a stronger relationship with feelings of empowerment and professionalism. Lamb (2008: 277) proposes that research in teacher education and professional

development can provide insight into teacher autonomy and professionalism. Moreover, it is crucial to investigate how teacher autonomy affects learning outcomes, motivation, or job satisfaction.

Considering professional autonomy, Kennedy (2005: 17) proposes that some models of CPD focus on transmission more while action research or transformative models allow professional autonomy. As the professional development process is criticized for highlighting knowledge, but not practice, Kennedy's categorization can reveal which model is better at transforming theory into practice. Moreover, it is also suggested that this can increase the level of autonomy.

Figure 3: Models of CPD

Model of CPD	Purpose of model
The training model The award-bearing model The deficit model The cascade model	Transmission  Increasing capacity for professional autonomy
The standards-based model The coaching/mentoring model The community of practice model	Transitional
The action research model The transformative model	Transformative

Kennedy (2005: 4-16) outlines nine distinct models of CPD in this table. Firstly, the training model emphasizes skills-based teaching, often led by experts, but may lack relevance to the classroom context. Secondly, in the award-bearing model, completion of validated programs is highlighted, serving as both a quality assurance measure and a form of control. The third one is the deficit model which targets perceived teacher deficiencies, potentially neglecting systemic issues and relying heavily on baseline competence measures. In the fourth model which is the cascade model, training events are followed by teachers disseminating information, possibly prioritizing skills over values. The fifth one is the standards-based model that uses standards to structure professional development, yet this may lead to a narrowing of teaching approaches and perspectives. The sixth is the coaching/mentoring model emphasizes one-to-one relationships to support CPD, fostering personalized growth and development. Community of practice models, which is the seventh one, involve groups of teachers supporting each other, differing in size and level of confidentiality compared to coaching/mentoring models. The action research model; the eighth, allows teachers to critically examine their practice, although it may not address broader political factors influencing practice parameters. Lastly, the ninth model, which is the transformative model, integrates various CPD approaches while being mindful of power dynamics and agendas, fostering comprehensive professional growth and change. It can be concluded that reform models of professional development are expected to increase professional autonomy capacity more than traditional ones.

Considering the Turkish context, Altan (2023: 10) attracts attention to the inefficiency of professional development practices for teachers because change never stops. Therefore, it is significant for teachers to be aware of which activities are of benefit for their development or qualities, and to have the chance to choose their own way. Güven (2010: 13) discusses the teaching profession in terms of five characteristics Tobias & Baffert (2010) mention. The first one is teacher knowledge which includes general knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and pedagogical field knowledge. The second one is professional organizations and professional principles that need to direct the educational system by providing professionalization. The third one is about entrance to the profession, in-service training, and inspection of implementation. In Türkiye, teachers are selected according to an exam about general knowledge and educational sciences. In-service training is held by the Ministry of National Education, mostly in short-term practices in some centers or by online seminars. The fourth characteristic is the social status of teaching, which is generally determined by the government as the economic source, and social respect is provided by it. The last characteristic is teacher autonomy. In Türkiye, teachers carry their lessons according to MoNE plans and books. They can also spend little time on their professional development because of some economic or time problems. In this context, Gönülaçar (2016: 21) argues that it is difficult to talk about the autonomy of teachers in Türkiye. What and how teachers teach, and which textbooks they use are largely determined by the Ministry of National Education. Teachers are provided with pre-service and in-service training courses or seminars on 'program development,' but they are not allowed to develop their own programs and to teach their lessons according to the programs they have developed. Instead, lessons are presented to teachers in packaged programs, which distances teaching from being a specialized profession and reduces teachers' role to mere technicians who implement predefined programs. As Hoyle (2008: 291-292) proposes, this situation reflects a broader tension in the idea of being a "professional," where politicians focus on efficiency and teachers focus on independence. Teachers see professionalism in different ways: as meeting standards or as having autonomy and respect. There are two kinds of professionals: restricted professionals who trust their instincts and value freedom, and extended professionals who are logical, seek improvement, and see teaching in a larger context. The concept of extended professionalism is contradictory because it limits teachers by requiring them to follow policies. It's hard to find teachers who fit the old idea of restricted professionals. Ironically, recent changes in professional development follow older ideas of expanding professionalism, but these changes have reduced teachers' independence and increased their work on accountability tasks. Therefore, the characteristics of the teaching profession in Türkiye, as outlined by Güven, demonstrate a complex interplay between professionalism, autonomy, and the role of teachers, reflecting a tension between the ideals of efficiency and independence in the educational system. The autonomy levels of teachers while planning their professional development acts are examined in this study and it is planned to have a slight trace in the literature.

1.6. Relevant Studies

There are many studies aiming at searching for autonomy issues, especially about teacher autonomy. Some of them also contain professional development and professional autonomy. Fitzgerald et al. (2003) has a study which is designed to explore teachers' perceptions of appraisal including the issues about their professional development and autonomy to maintain this development. The sample consists of 268 responses from primary and secondary school teachers in the eastern and western Bay of Plenty area of New Zealand. Data are collected through a postal questionnaire. The analysis reveals that while teachers want to be accountable for their professional work, their direct and ongoing involvement in the development, implementation, and review of any performance management process is critical to its success and longevity. This involvement is crucial because it guarantees that teachers have the autonomy to actively contribute to and adapt the process based on their unique professional experiences and insights. It can be concluded that they should have the autonomy to influence and shape the process according to their professional insights and needs. In another research, continuing professional development (CPD) and autonomy are explored. Wermke (2013) investigates teachers' perceptions of continuing professional development (CPD) in Germany and Sweden using a questionnaire study involving a total of 711 predominantly lower secondary teachers. The study argues that CPD is influenced by the level of autonomy granted to the teaching profession by the state. Teachers are expected to perform their duties effectively and are held accountable by both the state and society. Their practice and development are monitored by colleagues and principals, who assess whether they meet the expectations of the prevailing educational culture. Teachers who do not align with these expectations are often stigmatized as ineffective. The trustworthiness of sources becomes a crucial factor for teachers when evaluating the appropriateness of knowledge for their professional development. In summary, the study shows that how well teachers develop professionally depends on the level of freedom they have, how they are held accountable, and how much they trust the sources of their professional knowledge.

Çolak et al. (2017) aim to determine the relationship between teachers' autonomy behaviors and job satisfaction. The study also examines whether teachers' autonomy behaviors and job satisfaction levels significantly differ based on variables such as gender, school type, and seniority. In the study, teacher autonomy is analyzed in different forms such as teaching process autonomy, professional community autonomy, curriculum autonomy, or professional development autonomy. The study employs a survey model. The population of the research consists of primary, secondary, and high school teachers working in Muğla province and its districts during the 2015-2016 academic year. The sample includes 380 teachers selected using disproportionate cluster sampling. Teachers exhibit the highest level of autonomy in the teaching process, followed by professional communication and curriculum autonomy. The dimension where teachers demonstrate the least autonomy is professional development autonomy. Teachers showing the highest autonomy in the teaching process indicate that they find this dimension of autonomy more applicable compared to

others. For example, decisions regarding how much time to allocate to different activities, how to reward students, and how to integrate current issues into lessons are made during the teaching process. Although legal regulations, administrators, or parents sometimes restrict autonomy in these areas, the nature of the classroom environment, being relatively free from continuous oversight, allows teachers to exercise more autonomy in their decisions.

Finland is known for their successful educational practices, and Niemi et al. (2018) aim to introduce the main features of the Finnish educational system and their relation to teachers' work. The study explores teachers' professional autonomy and responsibilities within Finnish schools, highlighting key reforms and their impact on the teaching profession. The Finnish educational system offers teachers significant professional freedom but is also highly demanding. From 2014 to 2016, Finland implemented substantial national core curriculum reforms for both basic education and high schools, aimed at enhancing students' 21st-century skills and life skills. These reforms have led to changes in teachers' roles, requiring new practices to align with the core principles of the education system. Teacher education in Finland is highly competitive, with only 5 percent of applicants being accepted into programs such as those at the University of Helsinki. This contrasts with neighboring countries like Sweden and Norway, where teacher education is less sought after. The attractiveness of Finnish teacher education is attributed to factors such as the requirement for a 5-year master's-level program, the academic status of teachers, supportive school environments, and strong national education policies that emphasize quality and professionalism. A quality teacher in Finland is expected to possess a broad knowledge base, including subject matter knowledge, pedagogical skills, and an understanding of diverse learners. They should demonstrate competence in various learning environments, have a professional ideology aligned with ethical standards, and possess research skills. Finnish teachers are also expected to engage in continuous professional development, be innovative, and support the development of their own and their school's expertise. The Finnish National Board of Education emphasizes core values for teacher competence development, including lifelong learning, research-based orientation, effectiveness, and anticipation of future educational needs. The teaching profession in Finland is seen as a learning profession, with ongoing development and adaptation expected throughout teachers' careers. It can be seen that teaching is highlighted as a profession and development is highlighted as a requirement. The system also provides freedom for teachers as professionals.

In a Turkish context, the relationship between EFL teachers' professional identity and their professional autonomy is analyzed by Dilek & Altaş (2022). It aims to identify the levels of professional identity and professional autonomy among 250 Turkish EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers. The study also investigates whether these levels differ by gender, the school in which the teachers work, education level, and work experience. The survey-based research has found that EFL teachers possess a high level of professional autonomy. The findings indicate that EFL teachers are highly internally motivated and enjoy developing themselves. The study also reveals

that EFL teachers exhibit a very high level of capability, which includes their ability to utilize profession-related materials and technological tools, as well as to acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses. Capability, combines ability and capacity, facilitating autonomy in the professional context. Additionally, EFL teachers demonstrate strong collaboration skills, which are crucial for sharing work and experiences to enhance job performance. Time management, another aspect of professional autonomy, is performed at a moderate level. External factors such as better financial conditions and promotions have a moderate impact on EFL teachers' professional autonomy. The study also explores differences in professional identity and autonomy based on gender, education level, work experience, and school type. Findings show that female EFL teachers have a higher level of professional identity, greater pedagogical and didactical expertise, and higher professional autonomy compared to their male counterparts. Although collaboration, time management, and external drives do not differ by gender, female EFL teachers are found to be more internally motivated and view themselves as more capable. It is concluded that the higher levels of professional identity and autonomy among female teachers may be attributed to their efforts to challenge social stereotypes through enhanced pedagogical expertise and greater internal motivation.

In another research, Erbiyik (2022) aims to determine primary and secondary school teachers' perspectives and opinions on professional autonomy. The study employs a qualitative research method designed in a phenomenological framework. Data are collected through face-to-face interviews using a semi-structured interview form developed by the researcher. The study sample consists of 40 teachers working in primary and secondary schools under the Ministry of National Education in Sivas Province and its districts. Maximum variation sampling is preferred. According to the findings, participants interpret the concept of teacher autonomy as the ability to act independently and have authority in every phase of education. Most participants feel they do not have autonomy in the dimensions of "Program Development," "Implementing the Curriculum," and "Assessment and Evaluation," but feel autonomous in "Classroom Management" and "Preparing Teaching Materials." Participants believe that an autonomous teacher can support students in gaining independent learning skills, ease classroom management through an increased role in the classroom, make adjustments based on students' readiness, and be more effective in problem-solving by participating in decision-making. Many participants report that teacher autonomy is limited due to several factors: "school administrations" being authoritarian, "unions" lacking supportive activities for teacher autonomy, "professional laws" being inadequate, and teachers feeling insecure. They also note that the "2023 Vision Document" does not include provisions supporting autonomy. To enhance teacher autonomy, participants suggest that teachers should improve their subject knowledge and personal development, engage in active communication and that school administrations should value teachers' opinions and support their autonomy. Furthermore, they emphasize the importance of teachers staying updated with contemporary educational practices and participating in relevant training, which positively affects the teaching process. Thus, in-service training should include seminars and courses tailored to teachers' needs and interests. Teachers should also have the authority

to make adjustments in the teaching process and flexibility in the curriculum. To support this, teachers' scope of action in the educational process should be expanded, and high-quality teacher training programs should be implemented, with legal protections to ensure teachers can apply their decisions without concerns.

Erol (2022) aims to examine the relationship between decision-making styles and professional autonomy among teachers at different educational levels within the district of Nazilli, Aydın Province, in the context of 21st-century skills. The study also investigates whether this relationship varies by gender, age, professional seniority, school type, and subject area. The sample comprises 435 teachers working in various educational levels in Nazilli during the 2021-2022 academic year. This quantitative research employs a relational (correlational) survey model and uses the Personal Information Form, the Multidimensional 21st Century Skills Scale, the Decision-Making Styles Scale, and the Teachers' Autonomy Scale as data collection tools. The study has concluded that teachers have low average scores in terms of professional development autonomy, which is attributed to the lack of choice regarding the topics and timing of in-service training. Teachers report that they can not be autonomous in choosing the time, topic, location, or trainer for the training sessions they want to attend, leading to decreased effectiveness and attractiveness of these trainings. Although information is collected annually about the topics teachers want to learn, the same topics are repeatedly covered in training programs. Additionally, some training programs are only held at central locations with limited quotas, making participation difficult. Teachers, who have to dedicate separate time for training, often do not have the option to choose their preferred training times and are expected to attend training programs after a long and exhausting day. Furthermore, teachers face negative attitudes from school principals when seeking to improve themselves through in-service training, scientific activities, science fairs, or postgraduate studies. Due to the expectations of school principals and teachers' heavy workloads, teachers are unable to dedicate the necessary time and effort to these educational activities. Additionally, some training programs require passing an exam as a prerequisite, but teachers who are already motivated to participate in these activities are discouraged by such barriers. The results indicate that female teachers demonstrate higher levels of autonomy compared to male teachers. The findings also suggest that newly graduated or early-career teachers exhibit more autonomous behaviors and decision-making. Moreover, teachers working in elementary schools are found to have higher levels of autonomy compared to those in high schools.

Considering these studies abroad and in Türkiye, it can be concluded that autonomy and professional development are examined in different ways. Most of the studies directly address teacher autonomy. However, this study focuses on the professional autonomy of the teachers and this type of autonomy is analyzed according to different variables, and professional development practices of teachers are examined besides their professional autonomy levels. Moreover, open-ended questions provide a deeper insight into the perceptions of the teachers.

CHAPTER TWO

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, major and minor research questions are presented. It follows with an explanation of the participants, settings, and methodology. Data collection instruments and the procedure are introduced. Lastly, data analysis is explained.

2.2. Statement of the Method

Mixed-method case study was chosen in the current study since it sought qualitative and quantitative data to answer the research questions. It was conducted with English language teachers working for state schools in the metropolitan city of Türkiye, İzmir. First of all, a TEPAQ (Teacher Professional Autonomy Questionnaire) by Okay & Balçıklanlı (2021) was applied in order to get information about the professional autonomy levels of English Language Teachers for their professional development. There were 23 questions that allowed participants to answer with a five-item Likert scale. This quantitative data was significant because it helped reach generalizable facts (Dörnyei, 2007). The questionnaire was analyzed via SPSS 25.0. The results were analyzed considering selected variables; age, gender, experience, academic status, school level, and school location.

To get information about whether their professional development practices correspond with their professional autonomy levels, they were asked two open-ended questions about their perceptions of professional development. These open-ended questions were analyzed and coded accordingly and helped to get greater insight into their perception of their professional developmental practices in the light of their autonomy. As Dörnyei (2007) has proposed, the shallow nature of quantitative data is a weakness that a qualitative component can remedy. For this reason, open-ended questions were aimed to gain a little deeper information.

2.3. Research Questions

In line with the purpose of the study, the following research questions were discussed:

Major Question 1: What is the level of professional autonomy of MoNE English Language Teachers?

Minor Questions:

- 1.2. Is there a relationship between MoNE English language teachers' professional autonomy and their professional development acts?
- 1.2. To what extent can teachers decide on the professional development activities they can attend?
 - 1.2.1. What factors do they think may affect this?
 - 1.2.2. What kind of activities do teachers think that contribute most to their professional development?

Major Question 2: Is there any difference in MoNE English Language Teachers' professional autonomy levels in terms of demographic and contextual variables?

Minor Questions:

- 2.1. Is there any difference in MoNE English language teachers' professional autonomy levels in terms of their gender?
- 2.2. Is there any difference in MoNE English language teachers' professional autonomy levels in terms of their age?
- 2.3. Is there any difference in MoNE English language teachers' professional autonomy levels in terms of teaching experience?
- 2.4. Is there any difference in MoNE English language teachers' professional autonomy levels in terms of academic status?
- 2.5. Is there any difference in MoNE English language teachers' professional autonomy levels in terms of their current school level?
- 2.6. Is there any difference in MoNE English language teachers' professional autonomy levels in terms of their school location?

2.4. Setting and Participants

This study was conducted in İzmir with English Language Teachers working for state schools within MoNE. These teachers work at primary or secondary schools and different types of high schools. In Türkiye, English Language Teachers are expected to have a 4-year bachelor's degree education. Then, they are expected to achieve the Public Personnel Selection Examination since 2002 and TFKT since 2013 (Gönülaçar, 2016: 46). They have also been expected to pass an oral exam since 2016 according to the Regulation on Contracted Teacher Employment (2016: Law Number 11-12). English Language Teachers can work at a primary, secondary, or high school. They can also change their school level while changing their schools for any reason.

The study group consisted of 188 English Language Teachers within MoNE who were working in İzmir. To be able to reach the participants, convenience sampling was selected. Convenience sampling is commonly used in social sciences because it allows the selection of participants based on their accessibility to the researcher, considering factors like proximity, availability, ease of access, or willingness to participate. Even though convenience sampling is primarily based on ease of access, they often also requires participants to have specific characteristics relevant to the study aims. (Dörnyei, 2007: 99; Friedman, 2012: 186). The researcher reached the participants via school meetings of English Language Teachers and online groups of İzmir English Language Teachers. In order to have sound results, willingness was prioritized to get sincere responses. The questionnaire was applied during the spring term.

Table 2: Profile of the Participants in the Questionnaire

		N	%
Gender	Male	67	35,6%
	Female	121	64,4%
Age	20-35 Years old	61	32,4%
	36-44 Years old	85	45,2%
	Over 45 Years old	42	22,3%
Experience	1-10 years	59	31,4%
	11-20 years	84	44,7%
	More than 20 years	45	23,9%
Academic Status	Bachelor's Degree	151	80,3%
	Master's Degree	37	19,7%
Current School Level	Primary School	50	26,6%
	Secondary School	53	28,2%
	High School/Vocational High School	27	14,4%
	Science High School/Anatolian High School	54	28,7%
	Other	4	2,1%
School Location	City Centre	110	58,5%
	Town/Village	78	41,5%

Examining the profile of the participants, it could be seen that there were 121 (64,4%) female teachers and 67 (35,6%) male teachers. As there were more female English Language Teachers working within MoNE in Türkiye, it seemed it was similar in İzmir. Considering the age variable, it seemed that 36-44 year-old teachers were the largest age group in number, comprising 85 (45.2%) participants in the sample. This suggests that the majority of participants could be considered middle-aged. According to the experience variable, teachers having 11-20 years of experience represented 44.7% (n=84) of the sample. Those with 1-10 years of experience represented 31.4% (n=59), and 23.9% (n=45) had more than 20 years of experience. This distribution showed a significant number of participants had considerable professional experience. Besides, teachers having a Bachelor's

Degree were 80.3% (n=151) of the participants while only 19.7% (n=37) had a Master's Degree. This indicates that the educational background of the participants was predominantly at the bachelor's level. Analyzing the current school level, it could be identified that there were 50 (26.6%) English Language Teachers working in primary schools, and 53 (28.2%) of the teachers in secondary schools, 27 (14.4%) teachers in high schools/vocational high schools, and 54 (28.7%) teachers in Science and Anatolian high schools. Most of the participants worked in city centers (n=110, 58.5%). 78 (41.5%) of the participants were working in a town/village. Overall, the data revealed that the sample was predominantly female, middle-aged, and experienced, with a higher number of participants holding a Bachelor's Degree. The majority worked in city centers and were involved in a variety of school levels.

Considering 188 participants, it could be evaluated that the number of participants could be deemed adequate referring to Dörnyei (2007: 99) suggesting that the minimum number of participants should be below 100.

2.5. Data Collection

This study comprised the participants of specific teachers in a specific setting. According to Dörnyei (2007: 151), the 'case' can include not only individuals but also programs, institutions, organizations, or communities, as long as it represents a specific entity with clear boundaries. In the case study, the case should be clearly defined within specific parameters, such as time and location, to ensure that the case is outlined to be manageable (Creswell, 2013: 98). The process of collecting data in case studies can be relatively straightforward due to the limited number of participants or sites involved. This often makes it easier to recruit participants and obtain necessary permissions compared to other research designs that may require numerous approvals from multiple stakeholders, such as institutions or parents (Duff, 2012: 103). In this study, the approval was taken from İzmir Directorate of National Education.

In case study research, data collection involves gathering detailed and contextual information about a specific case, and data can be collected by both quantitative and qualitative approaches. (Dörnyei, 2007: 152). To effectively address the research questions, researchers employ various data collection methods. The emphasis is placed on practical implications and ensuring that the research findings are relevant and applicable to the specific case being studied (Creswell, 2013: 28-29). As for the aim of case studies, it can be claimed that they are not designed to generalize but rather to specify and provide insights into the case at hand (Duff, 2012: 96).

Regarding this study, the aim was to obtain a general view about the professional autonomy of teachers and to have a greater insight for further studies. In the literature, a few studies were referring directly to the 'professional' autonomy. The literature has mainly addressed teacher autonomy in

general. As the topic was a specific one, a practical setting and sample group worked well to have a better idea about that part. For practical issues, the qualitative part was also added to the questionnaire as open-ended questions. In this way, it was possible to apply the questionnaire with the taken approval, and many open-ended responses could be gathered for a variety of ideas. Data collection instruments were questionnaires in a quantitative way and open-ended questions in a qualitative way. In the study, the questionnaire was analyzed first and open-ended questions were analyzed then as qualitative data was used to “expand and elaborate on quantitative findings” (Creswell et al., 2006: 5). The reason that open-ended questions were placed before the questionnaire in order not to allow the items bias the ideas of the teachers.

2.5.1. Questionnaire

For the data collection process, the relevant literature has provided several questionnaires about autonomy or teacher autonomy. Teacher autonomy and the related questionnaires seemed to be used frequently. However, data collection instruments specifically addressing professional autonomy were limited. Teachers’ Professional Autonomy Questionnaire (TEPAQ) by Okay & Balcikanli (2021: 521) was used as a quantitative scale, as this questionnaire focused directly on professional autonomy to “evaluate the strengths and weaknesses regarding teachers’ or teacher trainees’ professional autonomy and the areas they need support and assistance to take responsibility for their professional learning”. Analyzing the factor analysis and reliability analysis of the questionnaire, it was found that it was finalized with validated 5 factors and 23 items.

Figure 4: Cronbach Alpha Coefficients for 5 Factors in TEPAQ

		Items	Cronbach's α
Factor 1	Internal Drives and Motives	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9	.89
Factor 2	Capability	10-11-12-13-14-15-17	.82
Factor 3	Collaboration with Colleagues	19-20-21	.85
Factor 4	Time Management	23-24-25	.74
Factor 5	External Drives and Motives	26-29	.73

The aim of developing this questionnaire was compatible with the current study as it was intended to get insights into teachers’ status about their professional autonomy. Okay & Balcikanli (2021: 528) stated this aim in detail as in the following:

It should be noted that TEPAQ is not developed as a scale that gives an overall degree of professional autonomy. Rather, it is a questionnaire encompassing five factors which are sine qua non for Teacher Professional Autonomy (TPA). To explain it further, for teachers to be professionally autonomous, they need to: (a) be internally and/or (b) externally driven to keep learning about their profession; (c) have capability to develop themselves professionally; (d) be able to work with their colleagues to better their teaching; (e) and manage their time to continue their professional development. It can be argued that these five factors are the pillars to hold

teachers' professional autonomy, and TEPAQ is the tool that measures the strength of these pillars and tells which pillar(s) need(s) more support for teachers to consolidate their professional autonomy.

The scale was a Likert-type scale, where participants were expected to choose one option between 1 and 5, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The questionnaire consisted of the 5 factors of TPA. However, these headings were distracted from the questionnaire and presented as a whole in order not to bias the responses of the participants.

2.5.2. Open-ended Questions

Open-ended questions were used for qualitative data. Friedman (2012: 186) proposes that open-ended questions are one of the forms of various data elicitation for qualitative data. Moreover, it is considered significant to have open-ended questions in a study for some qualitative researchers to get adequate information (Stake, 2010: 90). Findings of this qualitative data could be a facilitator for interpreting quantitative data and finding deeper meanings, insights, or ideas. (Byrman, 1988: 145; Creswell, 2013: 40). Similarly, qualitative data could be claimed to be used in order to "add meaning to numbers" and quantitative data was used in order to "add precision to words" as Dörnyei (2007: 45) has suggested.

Friedman (2012: 190) has compared open-ended questionnaires to the interview. However, responses to these questionnaires can be found written and they could be applied online. The chance of giving written responses could give more time for participants to elaborate on their responses before writing. Moreover, these responses could be written already and may not need transcription. In this study, the open-ended questions were chosen because the aim was to be able to fill several gaps in the questionnaire and learn the ideas of teachers separately with their own sentences without sticking to a set of pre-prepared responses. Questions were asked to several colleagues and an academic scholar having her doctorate in order to be sure that questions were understandable enough. Under the supervision of experts, several changes and final checks were done before implementation.

2.6. Data Collection Procedure

After the questionnaire and the open-ended questions had reached their final form, they were transferred to the online platform, Google Forms. In this way, it could be shared via groups in teacher groups. Meanwhile, it was also photocopied and applied to English Language Teachers in İzmir around the reachable areas and in teacher face-to-face meetings. In this way, 188 teachers joined the study. All teachers were given information about the study and their consent was asked to participate in the study. After implementing the questionnaire, the responses of the participants were transferred into SPSS 25.0 to analyze. Open-ended responses were held in a file to be analyzed, tallied, and

coded. As Creswell (2013: 28) has stated, using multiple data collection sources has helped find the best answers to research questions.

2.7. Data Analysis

For data analysis of the questionnaire as quantitative data of the study, SPSS 25.0 was used. For the major research question, descriptive and frequency analyses were used. For minor questions, Independent samples t-test and One-way ANOVA were used according to the results of homogeneity of the data. Moreover, for the relationship between professional levels and professional development acts, Pearson Correlation Analysis was applied. Using these tests, the results were analyzed and interpreted. For reliability, the Cronbach Alpha test was used.

For the data analysis of the open-ended questions, the cycle that Creswell (2007: 148; 2013: 184) suggested was used and the analysis was conducted manually. According to Creswell & Guetterman's model (2018: 244), the data were read and divided into segments. Using these segments, many codes were labeled. After these codes were reviewed, the number of the codes was reduced considering their redundancy. Then these codes were categorized under categories and lastly under themes. While coding the data, prefigured codes or categories were not used because they might limit the codes reflecting participants' responses and some codes might be ignored (Creswell, 2013: 185). In order to avoid errors or minimize them, the implementing or coding process should be designed well (Révész, 2012: 204). In the study, the inductive approach was used because it could enable starting with broad research questions, and refining them based on data as it was collected and analyzed. In the process of coding, the data was reviewed line by line or sentence by sentence to identify themes. Not every line had a code, but this method helped ensure that all relevant themes were captured. Open coding was applied, and codes were grouped into broader categories and eventually into themes. This process helped organize the data meaningfully (Rivas, 2018: 878- 885).

The data were analyzed according to the research questions one by one. The findings were represented in a narrative form which is used as a primary form of reporting qualitative findings and allows summarizing the results of the analysis in detail (Creswell & Guetterman, 2018: 257).

For the reliability of the data analysis, an academic scholar was requested to revise the coding and to suggest if there needed to be any changes. As Creswell (2013: 253) proposed, the reliability of the qualitative analysis depended on the coders' stability of responses. After coding separately, common codes and categories were decided and the data were discussed according to these codes and categories.

2.8. Ethical Considerations

In conducting this research, several ethical considerations were carefully addressed to ensure the integrity of the study and the welfare of all participants.

Before participation, all subjects were provided with a comprehensive informed consent form detailing the purpose of the study, procedures involved, potential risks, and benefits. Participants were informed that their involvement was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Informed consent was obtained in writing from all participants, ensuring that they fully understood their role and rights. To protect participants' privacy, all data collected was collected by giving attention to ensure anonymity, and no questions containing personal identification information were asked. Data were stored securely, with access restricted to the researcher only. The necessary permissions to conduct the survey were obtained from the İzmir Provincial Directorate of National Education.

Efforts were made to ensure accessibility for the participants via online platforms or in written forms. The questionnaire was kept short enough to be able to gather the necessary data for the study while avoiding overwhelming the participants. Moreover, open-ended questions are added right after demographic questions and before the questionnaire. In this way, it was intended that teachers were not biased because of the items in the questionnaire. Moreover, in the original version of the questionnaire (TEPAQ), the five factors were stated above the relevant questions. These sub-headings were also removed in order not to bias.

CHAPTER THREE

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the findings and the discussion of the data are presented. Firstly, the quantitative data is presented according to the research questions. Then, qualitative data is analyzed and discussed.

3.2. Analysis of the Data

The questionnaire was discussed and analyzed addressing each research question one by one. While analyzing each question not only the general score of professional autonomy but also five factors addressed in the questionnaire were taken into consideration. Not only major research questions but also minor questions were analyzed considering these five factors. Variables were analyzed according to these sub-headings:

- **Internal drives** to keep learning about the profession
- **Capability** to develop professionally
- **Working with colleagues** for better teaching
- **Management of time** to continue professional development
- **External drives** to keep learning about the profession

3.2.1. The level of professional autonomy of MoNE English Language Teachers

In this section, the questionnaire was analyzed in general. Referring to the developers of the Teacher Professional Autonomy Questionnaire (TEPAQ), the level of professional autonomy was dealt with in five different sub-headings as factors that were considered to be significant factors for teacher professional autonomy. These were internal drives and motives for teachers, the capability to develop professionally, collaborating with colleagues, handling time issues, and external drives and motives. They aimed to give insight into the strengths and weaknesses that teachers have experienced concerning their professional autonomy rather than giving an overall score (Okay & Balçıkanlı, 2021: 528).

Major Research Question 1: What is the level of professional autonomy of MoNE English Language Teachers?

This research question was discussed according to the five factors addressed in the question as previously mentioned. For this reason, the mean scores of each item and the total mean score of these five factors were analyzed separately. As it was also stated in the methodology part, items were answered from 1 to 5 tagged as ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘strongly agree’ respectively.

Table 3: Mean Scores of Internal Drives and Motives

	N	$\bar{X}$	SD
1. I want to develop myself professionally because I feel I have to.	188	4,28	,537
2. It is my own wish to continue my professional development.	188	4,52	,521
3. I am curious about new ways to develop my teaching.	188	4,46	,551
4. I want to develop professionally because it is a necessity to meet the needs of students.	188	4,46	,579
5. I enjoy developing myself professionally.	188	4,53	,541
6. I feel obliged to continue my development as a teacher.	188	4,36	,563
7. I constantly look for ways to develop my teaching.	188	4,23	,601
8. I want to develop myself professionally in order to push the limits of my abilities as a teacher.	188	4,33	,565
9. I want to develop professionally to meet the needs of my students.	188	4,39	,579
TOTAL: Internal Motives and Drives (General Score)	188	4,39	,407

Analyzing the table, it can be seen that the internal motives and drives scores of the teachers seem high because they have 4.39 (Sd = 0.407) out of 5 as an overall mean. This means that teachers agree on these items because 5 stands for ‘strongly agree’ and 4 stands for ‘agree’. Moreover, teachers enjoy developing themselves professionally as they have the highest score for this item ($\bar{X}$ = 4.53, Sd=0.541). The first and sixth items may not be considered as internal factors at first sight. However, these are also about the ‘sense of responsibility’, and this responsibility is stated as one of the key terms of intrinsic values (O’Keeffe-Foley, 2019: 55). Therefore, it can be seen that not only the joy of learning but also a sense of responsibility are significant for teachers according to these mean scores.

Table 4: Mean Scores of Capability

	N	$\bar{X}$	SD
10. I am able to search out information about teaching.	188	4,42	,537
11. I can find profession-related materials (i.e. books, journals, etc.) about teaching.	188	4,42	,575
12. I have the ability to develop my teaching.	188	4,43	,576
13. I am able to identify my weaknesses/strengths as a teacher.	188	4,37	,546
14. I am able to use technology to develop my teaching.	188	4,42	,584
15. I can adapt to recent developments in teaching.	188	4,26	,623
16. I have access to technology to continue my development as a teacher.	188	4,43	,557
TOTAL: Capability	188	4,39	,430

Mean scores regarding the capability factor of English Language Teachers to develop professionally are also high ($\bar{X}$ =4.39; Sd =0.430) and they think that they have the ability to develop their teaching. Teachers consider themselves capable of finding new materials, using technology, and being able to search for information about teaching.

Table 5: Mean Scores of Collaboration with Colleagues

	N	$\bar{X}$	SD
17. I can work with my colleagues to develop my teaching.	188	4,39	,606
18. I like to learn from my colleagues to develop my teaching.	188	4,35	,579
19. I have colleagues whom I can consult when I need help about my professional development	188	4,07	,674
TOTAL: Collaboration with Colleagues	188	4,27	,517

This table reveals that teachers think that they can collaborate with their colleagues to develop professionally. As $\bar{X}$ =4.27 (Sd=0.517) is a score that is between “agree” and “strongly agree”, it can be commented to be a high score to consider teachers as collaborative with their colleagues. However, one can comment that some might have a slight difficulty in finding colleagues to consult. Nevertheless, the mean score can also be considered high ($\bar{X}$ =4.07, Sd=0.674)

Table 6: Mean Scores of Time Management

	N	$\bar{X}$	SD
20. My workload is too heavy to engage in activities to develop myself as a teacher.	188	3,94	,668
21. I find very little time outside the school for professional development activities.	188	4,00	,607
TOTAL: Time Management	188	3,97	,562

This table shows that the answers of the teachers are between ‘not sure’ and ‘agree’ ($\bar{X}$ =3,97; Sd =0.562). It can be inferred that teachers may encounter time management issues during their professional development process and their responsibilities outside of the school has a slightly higher score. Teachers agree that they have little time outside the school for their development.

Table 7: Mean Scores of External Drives and Motives

	N	$\bar{X}$	SD
22. I want to develop myself professionally to better my financial condition.	188	3,92	,610
23. I want to develop myself professionally for a chance of getting promoted to a better position.	188	3,94	,591
TOTAL: External Drives and Motives	188	3,93	,544

According to the responses of the teachers attending in the questionnaire, the responses of the participants about external factors are also between ‘not sure’ and ‘agree’ ($\bar{X}$ =3,93; Sd =0.544). Their answers may reveal that some teachers do not completely agree with these external motives to develop professionally. Nevertheless, the mean score is not far from the ‘agree’ option. Therefore, it can be commented that these external factors can not be considered to have any effect.

Table 8: Mean Scores of Professional Autonomy and Five Factors

	N	$\bar{X}$	SD
Internal Motives and Drives	188	4,39	,407
Capability	188	4,39	,430
Collaboration with Colleagues	188	4,27	,517
Time Management	188	3,97	,562
External Drives and Motives	188	3,93	,544
Professional Autonomy (General)	188	4,30	,338

Analyzing the overall mean scores of these factors and the professional autonomy of the teachers, it can be inferred that teachers consider themselves professionally autonomous ($\bar{X}$ =4.30, Sd=0.338). Internal drives and motives and their perceptions about their capability affect their professional development more than the other three factors. External drives and motives can be

counted as the least effective factor affecting their professional autonomy. Time management issues reflect that teachers have problems in spending time on their professional development acts even though they are willing to develop.

3.2.2. Professional Development Acts of MoNE English Language Teachers

The minor research question 1.1: Is there a relationship between MoNE English language teachers' professional autonomy and their professional development acts?

Teachers are asked how many professional development acts they attend per a year voluntarily, obligatory, and out of MoNE, and correlations among them are analyzed.

Table 22: Correlations between Professional Autonomy and Professional Development Acts

		Professional Autonomy	Voluntary	Obligatory	Out of Mone
Professional Autonomy	Pearson Correlation	1	,284**	,156*	,204**
	Sig.(2-tailed)		,000	,033	,005
	N	188	188	188	188
Voluntary	Pearson Correlation	,284**	1	,351**	,497**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	,000		,000	,000
	N	188	188	188	188
Obligatory	Pearson Correlation	,156*	,351**	1	,117
	Sig.(2-tailed)	,033	,000		,109
	N	188	188	188	188
OutofMone	Pearson Correlation	,204**	,497**	,117	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	,005	,000	,109	
	N	188	188	188	188

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

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Correlation coefficients are getting stronger when the value gets closer to 1. Cohen (1988: 83) gives some ranges for these relationships. When the correlation coefficient is between 0.10 and 0.29, it means that there is a weak relationship. A range of 0.30 to 0.49 indicates a moderate relationship and a value above 0.50 indicates a strong relationship. Under the value of 0.10, there is no relationship. According to Table 21, it can be concluded that the significance levels of correlations are meaningful ($p < 0.05$). Professional autonomy has a positive relationship with professional development acts not only with voluntary acts but also with obligatory ones. However, voluntary acts have a higher score compared to others. Nevertheless, the values of relationships appear to be

weak. There is a moderate relationship between obligatory professional acts and voluntary acts ($r = 0.351$, $p < 0.05$). It can be inferred that teachers attending obligatory professional development are also willing to attend voluntary ones, too. Analyzing the relationship between voluntary professional development acts and professional development acts out of MoNE, one can say that it is the strongest relationship in the table ($r = 0.497$, $p < 0.05$). It is clear that the teachers attending voluntary professional development acts are also willing to attend professional development out of MoNE.

To sum up, teachers generally demonstrate a willingness to learn, a readiness to engage in professional development, and a sense of autonomy in their roles. Despite these positive attributes, they often face challenges related to time constraints and heavy workloads, which can impact their ability to fully focus on these strengths. Additionally, while there are some noticeable differences, such as women's having greater scores for internal drives and motives for professional growth compared to their male colleagues, the overall significance of these variables on professional autonomy appears to be minimal. In general, the variables under investigation in this study — gender, age, teaching experience, academic status, school level, and school location — do not make a substantial difference in the overall levels of professional autonomy among teachers.

3.2.2. Teacher Perceptions of Their Professional Development Process

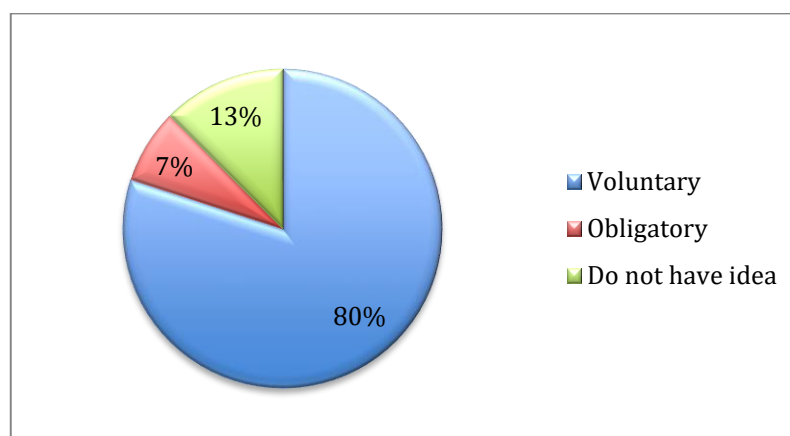
To examine teacher perceptions of their professional development process, teachers were asked open-ended questions to reach qualitative data. The responses were gathered by means of questions which were added to the questionnaire. These questions were about the professional development acts of teachers, the factors affecting their professional development acts, and the activities that contributed most. The reason for choosing this way was that they were accessible to the researcher and it was a sample of convenience as Friedman (2012: 186) suggested.

3.2.2.1. Teacher Perceptions about Their Decision on the Process

The minor research question 1.2: To what extent can teachers decide on the professional development activities they can attend?

In order to clarify the overall perceptions regarding the teachers' decisions, the qualitative data was quantified. For the first part of the research question, teacher participants were asked whether they can decide on the activities or not. 80 of the teachers referred to this question, and teachers claimed that they could mostly decide these activities voluntarily ($N=64$, 80%). Only 7% ($N=6$) of the teachers mentioned obligatory activities and did not feel themselves independent enough. 10 (13%) teachers claimed that they were not sure or they did not know.

Figure 5: Professional Development Decisions of Teachers



One of the teachers refers to both voluntary and obligatory activities:

Participant 92: *If it is an activity that I need, it is a voluntary act. If it is an activity I do not need, it is an obligation.*

In this quote, the participant claims that it is possible to choose among activities even though there may be some obligatory ones. However, another participant addresses the difficulty in finding the appropriate activity among MoNE activities. Nevertheless, it is also stated that they are asked for their opinions about their needs.

Participant 1: *It is hard to decide on the activities I need. There are some lists and I can choose among them. But once a year we, as teachers, are asked for opinions about our needs. But it is not always possible to find activities according to our needs.*

3.2.2.2. Teacher Perceptions about the Factors Affecting their Professional Development Activities

The minor research question 1.2.1: What factors do they think may affect this?

In this section, responses from teachers were examined one by one, and various codes were formed considering factors identified in each response. Each code was tallied when it was repeated in teacher responses. Subsequently, these codes were presented under the theme of factors affecting professional development, categorized into negative and positive influencing factors. These codes were arranged from the most frequently tallied to the least. The table for the themes, categories, and codes is presented below:

Table 23: Factors Affecting Teachers' Professional Development Activities

THEME: FACTORS AFFECTING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTS			
CATEGORIES	NEGATIVE INFLUENCING FACTORS	CODES	Time issues
			Location
			Workload
			Budget
			Responsibilities out of school
			Unsatisfactory ministry seminars
	POSITIVE INFLUENCING FACTORS	CODES	Perceived Contribution
			Levels or needs of students
			Desire to address the needs or deficiencies of teachers
			Self-improvement will
			Online platforms / Accessibility
			Technology
			Abilities and interests
			Adaptability
			Collaboration with Colleagues

3.2.2.2.1. Negative Influencing Factors

Time issues: 35 of the teachers refer to the time issues. They complain about the lack of time while they are deciding on a professional development activity. A teacher mentions this and suggests attending professional development camping.

Participant 7: *I try to attend some activities to improve myself. But unfortunately, their schedule is not proper for me. They are too late or in the morning. As I work at school, I can't attend. But if I had a chance, I want to attend a month camping about my professional development.*

Another 4 teachers also mention time problems; however, they attribute it to the permission of the school management:

Participant 80: *I decide it according to the compatibility with my class schedule and the permission of the school management.*

Location: 9 teachers point to the difficulty in reaching the place of professional development activity, and consider this as a hindrance.

Participant 119: *I am open to development. But I am working in a small town far from the city center and I have a limited chance to participate in the activities that I want.*

Workload: There are 6 teachers mentioning workload as a negative factor even though they are eager. One of them explains this:

Participant 50: *Workload is an important factor, which affects negatively. When I see different new things or methods, I am eager to learn them.*

Budget: 6 teachers highlight the financial problems to join these activities, and argue that the participation would be higher if the budget is sufficient.

Participant 73: *If there are sufficient financial resources and accessibility, my participation will increase.*

Responsibilities out of school: 5 of the teachers address the responsibilities out of school.

Participant 108: *The number of activities I have joined changed before and after having a child. Unfortunately, due to the increase in non-work-related responsibilities after having a child, my participation in events that contribute to my professional development has decreased. This seems to be a common issue among female teachers in our country.*

Unsatisfactory ministry seminars: 2 teachers mention another factor resulting in reluctance. While one of them addresses the unsatisfactory seminars, the other one attributes this reluctance to the repetition of the activities.

Participant 2: *...Unfortunately, the seminars and courses the ministry offers are unsatisfactory for native speakers and experienced professionals...*

Participant 6: *If I believe that it helps me develop my teaching skills, I like being a part of the activities. However, when the activities repeat themselves and I have to participate anyway, I would prefer not to attend.*

To sum up, it can be concluded that teachers challenge some issues according to this study. Time constraints are a major issue, as many teachers have difficulties in attending activities due to the incompatibility between their schedules and the time of activities. Workloads may leave teachers with limited time to participate in additional training or development activities. Limited financial resources can restrict access to quality professional development programs. Moreover, location is another limiting factor, particularly for those in remote or rural areas, who may find it difficult to attend professional development activities that are held in more central locations. Additionally, the repetition of similar activities and unsatisfactory seminars can lead to unwillingness and insufficient support from school management can negatively impact teachers to engage in professional

development. Additional responsibilities outside of school, such as family obligations, can also diminish the time available for professional growth.

3.2.2.2.2. Positive Influencing Factors

Perceived Contribution: 15 teachers address the benefit they can get from a professional development activity. They claim that they need to believe in the profit to get motivated to participate.

Participant 97: *If I believe that it will significantly contribute to my development and the program is satisfying in terms of content, I can join the activity.*

Participant 125: *I am affected by the content of the training and the professionalism of the trainers.*

Levels or needs of students: 14 teachers find the levels or needs of the students significant and prefer to choose the activities that can have a positive influence on their students.

Participant 62: *...In these days, the factors addressing student needs are crucial.*

Participant 79: *Realizing that my students are getting bored from time to time pushes me to develop professionally. The strongest will of mine is that my students have the chance to learn with joy.*

Desire to address the needs or deficiencies of teachers: 14 teachers highlight their own needs and their deficiencies while they are determining professional development activities. They refer to their weakness and their eagerness to improve. This can be about the language itself, classroom management issues or teaching skills.

Participant 22: *According to my weakness in teaching.*

Participant 32: *I have class management problems but whenever I attend a seminar or any kind of activities, nobody teaches about it. Voluntarily or compulsorily, nobody cares about it...*

Participant 41: *Speaking fluently and learning more vocabulary is my aim to be good at English...*

Self-improvement will: 14 teachers point to their will to improve themselves and see this as a reason to participate in professional development acts.

Participant 10: *...I like learning new things and following the latest trends...*

Online platforms / Accessibility: 10 of the teachers refer to the online platforms and consider this as an opportunity for easier accessibility. Moreover, they claim that it is an alternative way to be

able to attend professional development activities that are not accessible because of some difficulties such as location, time, or budget.

Participant 21: *Its important that these activities are in the city where I live. Online activities are also my choice because of availability.*

Participant 42: *I attend usually online activities that are suitable for my needs, by this way I can manage my time effectively.*

Technology: 6 of the teachers address technology as they claim that they need to improve their technological skills.

Participant 9: *Following the contribution of technology and new methods to education contributes to the learning and teaching process and enables me to make decisions.*

Abilities and interests: 5 teachers point to another issue which is related to the teachers themselves. They claim that they can also prioritize the activities that can appeal to their own abilities or interests in addition to their or their students' needs.

Participant 8: *I try to choose the activities according to my abilities and interests.*

Adaptability: 4 teachers highlight the adaptability of the activities to be able to use them in the classroom context.

Participant 60: *I try to participate in as many professional development training sessions as possible, aligning them with my professional growth needs, updates in the field, and according to the adaptability of the activities to the specific needs of the student group and subject I work with.*

Collaboration with colleagues: 2 teachers refer to their colleagues and collaboration.

Participant 71: *... and one of the important factors for me is learning about which methods or techniques my colleagues use in the classroom.*

Teachers emphasize these positive factors that can enhance professional development. In sum, online platforms are stated to offer a flexible and accessible means of engaging in professional learning in the first place. Teachers can participate in webinars or online courses that fit their schedules. Personal motivation and a desire for self-improvement drive many teachers to seek out development opportunities. When teachers believe in the benefits of a program and see its relevance to their professional needs, they are more likely to engage actively. Additionally, professional

development that aligns with teachers' abilities, interests, and the specific needs of their students can be reasons for preference. Professional development that focuses on addressing specific teaching challenges, such as classroom management or language skills, can help them overcome deficiencies and meet their needs. Furthermore, technological innovations also play a critical role in professional development. Finally, developing social skills through professional development can improve their interactions with students and colleagues, and contribute to their effectiveness in the classroom.

In conclusion, as inferred from the teachers' reports, while there are significant challenges that can hinder professional development, such as time constraints, workload, and location or budget problems, there are also many positive factors, including online accessibility, personal motivation, and the alignment of programs with needs according to the perspectives of teachers in this study. Addressing these challenges and focusing on the positive factors can lead to more effective and meaningful professional growth for teachers.

3.2.2.3. Teachers' Perceptions about the Professional Development Activities Contributing Most

The minor research question 1.2.2: What kind of activities do teachers think contribute most to their professional development?

133 teachers answered to this question. Similar to the previous section, these responses were examined, and codes were formed. Each code was tallied when it was repeated. Analyzing these codes, 6 categories were decided under the theme of the activities contributing to their professional development. These categories were 'external development programs', 'interactive activities', 'technology-oriented activities', 'in-class practices', 'projects-based practices', and 'introspective enrichment'. These codes were arranged from the most frequently tallied to the least.

Table 24: Activities Contributing Professional Development of Teachers

THEME: ACTIVITIES CONTRIBUTING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	
CODES	External Development Programs
	Interactive Activities
	Technology-oriented Activities
	In-Class Practices
	Projects-based Practices
	Self-Growth

External Development Programs: 54 teachers refer to external kind of activities such as workshops, seminars, and Master's degree programs. The most frequently emphasized activities are workshops and seminars in this section.

Participant 23: *I guess workshops are the best way to share ideas with colleagues and they also provide hands on experience for us.*

Participant 52: *I think that face-to-face seminars, which include examples from daily life, where the information given has a practical and concrete equivalent, and which are presented by academics who are truly experts in their fields, will make a serious contribution to the development of my professional education.*

9 of the teachers in the study mention a professional development activity that MoNE has given importance since 2020; the English Together Project. In this project, the MoNE Teacher Training and Development General Directorate has a partnership with the British Council. This is described as a continuing professional development model that would be sustainable and suitable to the local context in Türkiye, which is aimed to expand activities nationwide through Continuing Professional Development (CPD) or Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) programs. The aim is to implement new teaching methods and establish classrooms where students feel at ease speaking and are actively engaged in their learning. This approach is intended to enhance their English learning experience and improve student outcomes in state schools (British Council, 2020). By empowering teachers through such professional development opportunities, the project not only fosters the adoption of innovative teaching practices but also supports the development of their professional autonomy. As teachers gain more control over their instructional methods and classroom dynamics, they can tailor their approaches to better meet their students' needs and preferences, thus contributing to a more responsive and effective educational environment. They can also become more aware of their needs in terms of professional development.

Participant 7: *CPD activities seem to be useful.*

Participant 40: *PLC activities.*

8 of the teachers emphasize such kind of activities similarly; however, they also highlight that when these are about new teaching methods or classroom management skills, they are useful.

Participant 8: *Seminars related to new teaching methods and classroom management.*

Participant 12: *Several activities such as continuous learning, feedback and reflection, actively working on new skills and improving existing ones, and trying to stay updated on the latest trends have contributed significantly to my professional development.*

Participant 26: *Mostly I like learning new teaching methods.*

Participant 29: *How to teach speaking activities.*

4 of the teachers address these activities are useful when they are voluntary.

Participant 102: *The activities that I am not obliged to attend and which are interactive in nature.*

3 teachers mention international activities and find them useful as stated in the following sentences:

Participant 13: *Collaborative ones and international ones.*

Participant 14: *International/multinational projects.*

Participant 21: *International seminars.*

Only one of the teachers considers the master's program as a contributing activity to teacher professional development. This seems to be attention-grabbing because 37 teachers participating in the questionnaire have Master's Degrees.

Participant 77: *Having Master's Degree.*

Interactive Activities: There are 34 answers which address interactive practices. The most frequently mentioned issue in that part is interacting with colleagues. It seems that teachers give importance to sharing experiences or ideas.

Participant 9: *In the beginning of the every term, all ESL teachers can meet online and exchange ideas. They can share their experiences. Teachers can have a group and share their works with each other. Also as ESL teachers we should keep our speaking update. So we can improve our speaking talking with each other.*

Participant 24: *Those seminars that we attend with primary school teachers mostly contributed to my development because we could share our experiences in the classroom.*

Participant 6: *In cite conferences. Nationwide activities where I can meet different teachers from various environments...*

Face-to-face conferences are also preferred by some teachers for professional development. Teachers highlight communication skills, practicing English, and speaking activities. Moreover, they also suggest that role-play or drama can be beneficial for their development.

Participant 25: *Face-to-face conferences or activities are more effective.*

Participant 69: *I can benefit from environments where I can have the opportunity to speak English.*

4 of the teachers focus on interaction as social activities they can get together and share common things. They suggest going on some trips as teachers. One of the teachers adds music to

these social activities. It can be inferred that a small number of teachers consider some social activities as an opportunity for their development.

2 of the teachers mention online interaction and claim that they can benefit from social media to be able to find some teachers whom they can learn from.

Participant 1: *I can benefit from some teachers on social media who are sharing their activities most...*

Participant 115: *I subscribe to teacher pages on social media, especially foreign ones.*

Technology-oriented Activities: Teachers tend to choose professional development activities which are related to technological innovations such as Web 2.0., Smartboard, applications using artificial intelligence, and more. 23 teachers refer to technology, and 16 of them mention these kinds of innovations.

Participant 32: *Applications using artificial intelligence in teaching English...*

Participant 41: *Activities which can contribute to use technology better and effective during teaching will be useful for me.*

Participant 56: *The use of Smartboard.*

Participant 88: *Activities involving technology and games tend to have a more lasting impact.*

7 of the teachers who emphasize technology claim that webinars or videos may be useful for professional development.

In-Class Practices: Examining perceptions of teachers about in-class professional development, 19 participants provide insights into how real classroom experiences and various activities contribute to their professional growth:

Participant 30: *The conferences or seminars (online or face to face) related to the real classroom experiences of teachers in the field.*

Participant 127: *I believe that the activities which are carried in school environment with students provide substantial benefits to my teaching. For example, preparing students for an end-of-year performance. These are long lasting and necessitate so much effort with details, and that makes me develop. Apart from these, some special days, or activities like crazy hair day increase interaction with students and help me adopt teaching profession more.*

Participant 67: *I believe that providing students with activities such as coaching, study discipline, university guidance, information on studying abroad, finding scholarships, correct job application methods, and exploring different career fields has contributed significantly to my professional development.*

These insights stress the value of practical, experience-based learning opportunities in professional development. By incorporating real classroom experiences and engaging in various school activities, teachers can continuously improve their skills and adapt to the evolving needs of their students, ultimately contributing to their overall growth and effectiveness as educators.

Projects-based Practices: It is noted that different types of projects significantly contribute to their professional development according to some teachers. Specifically, five teachers highlight the benefits of participating in Erasmus+ programs, while eight teachers emphasize their involvement in eTwinning projects. Additionally, one teacher points out the value of TÜBİTAK, and another focuses on international projects. It can be suggested that teachers who engage in these diverse projects believe in their substantial contributions to their professional development.

Self-Growth: There is a small number of teachers who emphasize their introspective type of activities for their professional development such as watching a movie, reading a book or joining a book analysis activity and searching on the net.

Participant 110: *Exposure to English has greatly improved me. Reading and writing in English are also very beneficial for development.*

To conclude, it can be inferred from these answers that teachers choose a variety of professional development activities to enhance their skills, stay current with educational trends, and address their specific needs. These activities range from engaging in international projects and learning technological innovations to participating in social interactions and practical classroom experiences. These activities are claimed to contribute to their effective professional development strategy. By continually seeking out diverse learning opportunities and integrating new knowledge into their practices, teachers can achieve ongoing growth in their careers.

3.2.3. Professional Autonomy of Teachers According to Certain Variables

In this section, each minor research question was discussed considering five factors in the questionnaire under the heading of second major research question.

Major Question 2: Is there any difference in MoNE English Language Teachers' professional autonomy levels in terms of demographic and contextual variables?

First of all, reliability analysis was applied, and it was discovered that the results seemed reliable according to Cronbach's alpha.

Table 9: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,887	,893	23

Cevahir (2020: 22) claims that Cronbach's Alpha coefficient ranges between 0 and 1. If it is close to 0, the scale is considered to be unreliable. On the other hand, a closer value to 1 shows a greater reliability. Cronbach's Alpha is expected to be above 0.7 for an acceptable reliability. It is 0,887, hence the reliability of the study can be considered to be acceptable.

As for deciding which tests to use, normality analysis is used. First of all, skewness and kurtosis are examined because the test is considered normally distributed when these values ranges between -1 and +1 (Cevahir, 2020: 13). Hair et al. (2013) also explain this:

Skewness measure of the symmetry of a distribution; in most instances the comparison is made to a normal distribution. A positively skewed distribution has relatively few large values and tails off to the right, and a negatively skewed distribution has relatively few small values and tails off to the left. Skewness values falling outside the range of -1 to +1 indicate a substantially skewed distribution.

Another normality test is Kolmogorov Smirnov when the sample size is bigger than 30 ($n \geq 30$). The data seem to be normally distributed analyzing the Kolmogorov Smirnov test ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, parametric tests can be used in the analysis process because of the normal distribution characteristics (Cevahir, 2020: 14, 15).

Table 10: Tests of Normality

Professional Autonomy	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
	,055	188	,200*	,992	188	,338

3.2.3.1. The Gender Variable

The minor research question 2.1: Is there any difference in MoNE English language teachers' professional autonomy levels in terms of their gender?

When there are two variable groups, it is appropriate to use an independent samples t-test (Cevahir, 2020: 29). Therefore, the gender variable (male/female) is analyzed according to independent samples t-test results.

Table 11: Independent Samples T-test for Gender Variable

	Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	Ss	df	T	p
Internal Motives and Drives	Male	67	4,303	,420	186	-2,434	,016
	Female	121	4,452	,392			
Capability	Male	67	4,405	,448	186	,200	,842
	Female	121	4,392	,421			
Collaboration with Colleagues	Male	67	4,253	,516	186	-,380	,704
	Female	121	4,283	,519			
Time Management	Male	67	2,029	,576	186	,107	,915
	Female	121	2,020	,556			
External Drives and Motives	Male	67	3,880	,622	186	-,930	,354
	Female	121	3,962	,496			
Professional Autonomy	Male	67	3,774	,272	186	-1,168	,244
	Female	121	3,822	,267			

The table shows that the gender variable is analyzed according to each factor separately and the overall score. It can be inferred that there is not much difference between these factors and the overall score of professional autonomy according to the genders of the teachers. However, the situation is different when internal motives and drive variables reveal a significant difference considering teachers' genders ($t(186) = -2.434$, $p < 0.05$). Comparing the mean scores, it can be seen that female teachers are internally driven to keep learning about their profession more than male teachers do.

3.2.3.2. The Age Variable

The minor research question 2.2: Is there any difference in MoNE English language teachers' professional autonomy levels in terms of their age?

When there are more than two variables, it is appropriate to use the One-Way ANOVA test when the data are normally distributed. If there is a difference among variables, the post-hoc test should be implemented to recognize the resource of the difference (Cevahir, 2020: 53,54).

Table 12: One-Way Anova Test for Age Variable

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Internal Motives and Drives	Between Groups	,021	2	,010	,062	,940
	Within Groups	31,081	185	,168		
	Total	31,102	187			
Capability	Between Groups	1,196	2	,598	3,308	,039
	Within Groups	33,429	185	,181		
	Total	34,625	187			

Table 12 (continued)

Collaboration with Colleagues	Between Groups	,989	2	,494	1,867	,158
	Within Groups	48,995	185	,265		
	Total	49,983	187			
Time Management	Between Groups	,039	2	,019	,061	,941
	Within Groups	59,104	185	,319		
	Total	59,142	187			
External Drives and Motives	Between Groups	,317	2	,158	,532	,588
	Within Groups	55,102	185	,298		
	Total	55,419	187			
Professional Autonomy	Between Groups	,228	2	,114	1,581	,209
	Within Groups	13,323	185	,072		
	Total	13,550	187			

The table reveals that four factors and overall scores of professional autonomy do not have a significant difference in terms of teachers' age ($p > 0.05$). However, analyzing the capability factor, there seems to be a significant difference among groups according to their age. ($F_{(2, 185)} = 3.308$, $p < 0.05$). As the Anova test does not display the source of the difference and variances seem homogeneous ($p > 0.05$), the Bonferroni test is applied to find the difference.

Table 13: Test of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	p.
Capability	Based on Mean	1,227	2	185	,295
	Based on Median	1,246	2	185	,290
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1,246	2	184,699	,290
	Based on trimmed mean	1,275	2	185	,282

Table 14: Bonferroni Test for Capability Factor for Age Variable

Groups	$\bar{X}$	ss	Mean Difference		
			20-35 Years old	36-44 Years old	Over 45 Years old
20-35 Years old	4,491	,416	0	,17920*	,06323
36-44 Years old	4,312	,409	-,17920*	0	-,11597
Over 45 Years old	4,428	,467	,06323	,11597	0

* : $p < 0.05$

The sample size of '20-35 years old' is 61, '36-44 years old' is 85, and 'over 45 years old' is 42. It can be inferred from the table that the difference is between the '20-35 years old' sample and

the '36-44 years old' sample. The younger teachers ($\bar{X}=4.491$, $SS= 0.416$) seem to think that they are capable of developing themselves more than 36-44 years old teachers are ($\bar{X}=4.312$, $SS= 0.409$) at the 0.05 level of significance. However, there is not any significant difference with the elder ones.

3.2.3.3. The Teaching Experience Variable

The minor research question 2.3: Is there any difference in MoNE English language teachers' professional autonomy levels in terms of their teaching experience?

Table 15: Descriptives of Teaching Experience Variable

Groups	N
1-10 years	59
11-20 years	84
More than 20 years	45
Total	188

There are 59 teachers having '1-10 years' experience, 84 '11-20 years' experience. 45 teacher participants have been working as teachers for more than 20 years. As there are more than two groups, a One-Way ANOVA test is applied.

Table 16: One-Way Anova Test for Teaching Experience Variable

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Internal Motives and Drives	Between Groups	,866	2	,433	2,648	,073
	Within Groups	30,237	185	,163		
	Total	31,102	187			
Capability	Between Groups	1,107	2	,553	3,054	,050
	Within Groups	33,518	185	,181		
	Total	34,625	187			
Collaboration with Colleagues	Between Groups	,167	2	,083	,309	,734
	Within Groups	49,817	185	,269		
	Total	49,983	187			
Time Management	Between Groups	,095	2	,047	,149	,862
	Within Groups	59,047	185	,319		
	Total	59,142	187			
External Drives and Motives	Between Groups	,005	2	,003	,008	,992
	Within Groups	55,414	185	,300		
	Total	55,419	187			
Professional Autonomy	Between Groups	,261	2	,130	1,814	,166
	Within Groups	13,290	185	,072		
	Total	13,550	187			

There seems to be no difference among groups in any of the five factors according to the One-Way ANOVA test results ($p>0.05$). It can be inferred that experience years of teachers make no difference in the professional autonomy levels of teachers participating in the current study.

The minor research question 2.4: Is there any difference in MoNE English language teachers' professional autonomy levels in terms of their academic status?

The groups answered the academic status variable in two categories. There is a doctorate category; however, there is no participant having a doctorate. For that reason, this variable is examined in two categories, and an independent samples t-test is employed to see the differences. There are 151 teachers having Bachelor's degrees and 37 teachers having Master's degrees.

Table 17: Independent Samples T-test for Academic Status Variable

	Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	Ss	df	T	p
Internal Motives and Drives	Bachelor's Degree	151	4,392	,406	186	-,447	,656
	Master's Degree	37	4,426	,416			
Capability	Bachelor's Degree	151	4,380	,425	186	-1,052	,294
	Master's Degree	37	4,463	,449			
Collaboration with Colleagues	Bachelor's Degree	151	4,284	,518	186	,627	,532
	Master's Degree	37	4,225	,515			
Time Management	Bachelor's Degree	151	2,023	,589	186	-,044	,965
	Master's Degree	37	2,027	,440			
External Drives and Motives	Bachelor's Degree	151	3,950	,559	186	,855	,394
	Master's Degree	37	3,864	,480			
Professional Autonomy	Bachelor's Degree	151	3,806	,277	186	,100	,921
	Master's Degree	37	3,801	,233			

There seems to be no difference among groups in any of the five factors according to the Independent Samples T-test results ($p>0.05$). The academic status of the teachers does not have any effect on their professional autonomy.

3.2.3.4. The School Level Variable

The minor research question 2.5: Is there any difference in MoNE English language teachers' professional autonomy levels in terms of their current school level?

The school levels are categorized into five different headings. There are 50 primary school teachers, 53 secondary school teachers, 27 high school or vocational high school teachers, 54 Science or Anatolian high school teachers, and 4 teachers in the 'others' category.

Table 18: One-Way ANOVA for School Level Variable

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Internal Motives and Drives	Between Groups	,177	4	,044	,261	,902
	Within Groups	30,926	183	,169		
	Total	31,102	187			
Capability	Between Groups	1,679	4	,420	2,331	,058
	Within Groups	32,946	183	,180		
	Total	34,625	187			
Collaboration with Colleagues	Between Groups	2,084	4	,521	1,991	,098
	Within Groups	47,899	183	,262		
	Total	49,983	187			
Time Management	Between Groups	5,486	4	1,372	4,678	,001
	Within Groups	53,656	183	,293		
	Total	59,142	187			
External Drives and Motives	Between Groups	2,119	4	,530	1,819	,127
	Within Groups	53,300	183	,291		
	Total	55,419	187			
Professional Autonomy	Between Groups	,145	4	,036	,495	,739
	Within Groups	13,405	183	,073		
	Total	13,550	187			

Examining the results, it can be commented that there is a difference among groups according to the time management factor ($F_{(4, 183)} = 4.678$, $p < 0.05$). As Anova test does not display the source of the difference and variances seem homogeneous ($p > .05$), Bonferroni test is applied to find the difference.

Table 19: Test of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	p
Time Management	Based on Mean	1,925	4	183	,108
	Based on Median	1,331	4	183	,260
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1,331	4	181,629	,260
	Based on trimmed mean	1,957	4	183	,103

Table 20: Bonferroni Test for Time Management Factor for School Level Variable

Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	ss	Mean Difference				
				Primary School	Secondary School	High/Vocational High School	Science /Anatolian High School	Other
Primary School	50	2,240	,527	0	,268	,073	,415*	,490
Secondary School	53	1,971	,513	-,268	0	-,194	,147	,221
High /Vocational High School	27	2,166	,588	-,0733	,194	0	,342	,416
Science /Anatolian High School	54	1,824	,524	-,415*	-,147	-,342	0	,074
Other	4	1,750	,957	-,490	-,221	-,416	-,0740	0

* : $p < 0.05$

The table shows that the difference is between the primary school teachers and Science/Anatolian high school teachers at the 0.05 level of significance. Examining the mean scores, it can be commented that Science/Anatolian high school teachers ($\bar{X}=1.824$, $Ss=0.524$) seem to have more problems with time management issues than primary school teachers ($\bar{X}=2.240$, $Ss= 0.527$).

3.2.3.5. The School Location Variable

The minor research question 2.6: Is there any difference in MoNE English language teachers' professional autonomy levels in terms of their school location?

The school location is analyzed in two categories; city and town/village. Among 188 participants, 110 of them work in the city while 78 of them work in town/village. As a result, an independent samples t-test is applied to see the difference between groups.

Table 21: Independent Samples T-test for School Location Variable

	Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	Ss	df	T	p
Internal Motives and Drives	City	110	4,373	,379	186	-1,030	,304
	Town/Village	78	4,435	,444			
Capability	City	110	4,384	,432	186	-,462	,644
	Town/Village	78	4,413	,429			

Table 21 (continued)

Collaboration with Colleagues	City	110	4,251	,523	186	-,677	,499
	Town/Village	78	4,303	,510			
Time Management	City	110	2,122	,538	186	2,917	,004
	Town/Village	78	1,884	,569			
External Drives and Motives	City	110	3,931	,508	186	-,050	,960
	Town/Village	78	3,935	,594			
Professional Autonomy	City	110	3,812	,260	186	,453	,651
	Town/Village	78	3,794	,282			

The table reveals that there is a difference between groups for the time management factor ($p < 0.05$). Considering the mean scores, it can be inferred that teachers working in town/village ($\bar{X} = 1.884$, $S_s = 0.569$) have more problems with time management issues than the teachers working in the city ($\bar{X} = 2.122$, $S_s = 0.538$).

The results indicate that professional autonomy among teachers does not vary significantly based on gender, age, or years of experience. However, female teachers are more internally motivated to continue learning about their profession compared to male teachers. While age does not generally influence professional autonomy, a significant difference was found in the capability factor, though further analysis showed no substantial differences among age groups. Academic status also had no effect on professional autonomy. Differences were observed between primary school teachers and Science/Anatolian high school teachers, with the latter group reporting more challenges with time management. Additionally, teachers working in towns or villages faced greater time management issues than those working in urban areas. These findings suggest that while certain demographic factors do not impact professional autonomy, work context, particularly related to school type and location, influences time management difficulties.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents conclusions and implications of the study. Besides, limitations are also highlighted. Lastly, suggestions for further studies are included.

The study aimed to identify the professional autonomy of the English Language Teachers within MoNE working in İzmir. This professional autonomy was analyzed considering five factors mentioned in the questionnaire, TEPAQ by Okay & Balçıklı (2021). Moreover, the professional autonomy levels of teachers were examined considering the different variables such as gender, age, teaching experience, academic status, current school level, and school location. Moreover, teachers were asked about the number of professional development activities they attended. In this way, it was aimed to identify the relationship between their professional autonomy and their professional acts. In the study, there were also two open-ended questions asking whether teachers could decide their own professional development process and factors affecting this, and which activities they attended. They were asked in order to expand and elaborate on the findings of the questionnaire (Creswell et al., 2006: 5).

As for the results of the study, the first finding supports that teachers have a high level of professional autonomy. In Ceylan's (2020) study, it is also supported that teachers have a high level of autonomy. However, this study does not directly highlight professional development, it mostly addresses the relationship between the relationship between engaging in research (both conducting and reading research) and English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers' professional autonomy (TPA). Additionally, the study has sought to examine how teachers' professional autonomy relates to their educational background in the context of their research activities. To assess teachers' professional autonomy levels, Ceylan (2020) has used the Teacher Professional Autonomy Questionnaire (TEPAQ) as in this study. The findings present the highest levels of professional autonomy of teachers who are engaged in both conducting and reading research. Based on these results, it is recommended that incentives and time be provided to teachers, irrespective of their educational background, to support their research activities and enhance their professional autonomy.

Similarly, Steh & Požarnik (2004) aim to gain insight into the professional autonomy and responsibility of teachers during the process of school reform from their own perspective. The evaluation study, conducted from 2000 to 2002, uses a questionnaire with both closed and open-ended questions to allow teachers to provide detailed responses. A total of 268 questionnaires are analyzed. The findings indicate a general "weak" conception of teacher autonomy, with autonomy primarily limited to classroom activities that align with official school policies. It can be concluded that autonomy is thought to be limited to classroom activities by teachers. As the current study highlights professional development, autonomy, and professional development autonomy are mentioned separately by Çolak et al. (2017). Teachers exhibit the least level of autonomy in professional development because they consider that they can have less control over that part compared to their decision-making process in a classroom setting. The elements of professional development autonomy that they cannot control are location, timing, or trainers for in-service training and participation in scientific meetings related to their field. Centralized planning of in-service training in Türkiye is considered to be a possible reason for this finding. Another reason can be the lack of sufficient opportunities for career advancement. The "Regulation on Career Steps in Teaching" published by the Ministry of National Education in 2005 establishes three career levels: teacher, specialist teacher, and senior teacher. Despite this regulation, which includes a centralized exam, it is not currently implemented. Shifting career advancement from an exam-based system to a performance-based one and applying it regularly could encourage teachers to be more sensitive to their professional development and exhibit greater autonomy. There is no significant difference in teaching process autonomy, curriculum autonomy, professional development autonomy, and overall autonomy behaviors based on gender. However, teaching process autonomy and overall autonomy behaviors vary significantly according to school type. Primary school teachers exhibit more teaching process autonomy and overall autonomy behaviors compared to high school and vocational school teachers. Middle school teachers show more overall autonomy behaviors compared to vocational school teachers. The greater autonomy of primary school teachers might be attributed to working with younger students and the need to reflect their interests in the teaching process. Another reason can be the lower academic pressure in primary schools compared to other school types, as there is no written exam or grade in the first four grades of primary school in Türkiye.

Another finding of this study reveals that teachers consider themselves autonomous and mostly internally driven to attend professional development activities compared to external drives. They can also collaborate with their colleagues. However, it is clear that they have problems with time management. Topcuoglu (2015: 98) concludes in her study that teachers are willing to be involved in professional development activities although the content, time, location, and effectiveness affect their attendance. In our study, the responses of the participants were directed to time management issues. Besides, the teacher's responses to the open-ended questions about the factors affecting their professional development process also dominantly address the same issue, which seems consistent.

For the questionnaire, analyzing the five factors considering several variables, the findings of the study can be summarized as:

- Gender has a slight effect on internal drives of teachers and it is found out that female teachers are internally driven more than male ones.
- Age is analyzed and concluded that the younger the teachers are, the more confident they become in terms of learning new things.
- Teacher experience makes no difference.
- Academic status makes no difference.
- Science/Anatolian high school teachers have more problems with time than primary school teachers.
- Working in a town/village, teachers have more problems with time management than teachers in a city.

Open-ended questions give more insight into the factors that affect professional development and the type of activities teachers prefer to attend as follows:

- Teachers generally have a strong desire to engage in professional development activities, which means they are open to learning new things and enhancing their teaching practices. However, they prefer to join activities that are related to their own field, teaching skills, classroom management skills, and technological knowledge. Moreover, they seem to consider themselves professionally autonomous. For this professional autonomy issue, Erbiyik (2022) also suggests that teachers are willing when in-service training includes seminars and courses directed to teachers' needs and interests. Teachers should also have the authority to make adjustments in the teaching process and flexibility in the curriculum. To support this, teachers' scope of action in the educational process should be expanded, and high-quality teacher training programs should be implemented, with legal protections to ensure teachers can apply their decisions without concerns.

- Teachers participating in the current study find working with colleagues useful for their teaching development. Similarly, in the study of Yassine-Diab et al. (2014), it is claimed that most teachers (98% of the teachers in the study) actively share ideas about their teaching practices with their colleagues. Moreover, the 2% who do not engage in such discussions express a desire for these interactions even though they cannot have the chance for such interactions. All teachers report that these exchanges are enriching and lead to the evolution of their teaching approaches, as they introduce new ideas, approaches, and practices. None of the teachers viewed these exchanges as a source of conflict or wasted time. Most of the interactions occur in both informal and formal settings, sometimes virtually, rather than through conferences, symposiums, or other research contexts. Arslan Şakar (2013) also aims to investigate the perceptions of teacher autonomy among 87 English teachers working in secondary schools in Sakarya Province. The findings suggest that organizing conferences

and seminars can provide teachers with opportunities to exchange ideas about teaching, explore new methods, and develop collaborative relationships, which could enhance awareness, reflection, and professional development.

- Ineffective seminars or repeated training sessions do not attract teachers while the ones addressing their deficiencies or student needs are the reasons of preference. In Topcuoglu (2015), teachers are asked about the opportunities the Ministry of National Education should provide for teachers' professional development needs, some teachers express that in-service training programs need to be increased.

- Teachers often encounter challenges such as limited time and heavy workloads. These can be considered to be the most striking point in the study. Not only the responsibilities at the school but also outside the school are obstacles that teachers should overcome. Likewise, Topcuoglu (2015) aims to identify primary and secondary school teachers' perspectives on their professional development in his study. It is stated that reducing their workload is essential for their professional development. They suggest improving working conditions, possibly creating a free day during the week for professional growth, and addressing paperwork-related issues that prevent them from engaging with students during free periods. Two teachers mentioned that reducing the workload for administrators and teachers is necessary. While teachers generally show a willingness to attend in-service training programs, factors such as content, timing, effectiveness, capacity, location, continuity, and usefulness played significant roles. Additionally, some of the teachers propose that training programs should be held at accessible times and locations to maximize participation.

- In the current study, female teachers generally have higher scores for internal drives and motives for professional growth compared to male teachers. This suggests that women may be more intrinsically motivated for their professional development. Similarly, To Dilek & Altaş (2022), female teachers have a higher professional autonomy and they are more internally motivated and consider themselves as more capable.

- The younger teachers have more positive perceptions about their capability to develop than the middle-aged ones. In line with this, Erol (2022) reports that newly graduated teachers or teachers at the beginning of their careers show more autonomous behaviors or decisions.

- The study indicates that variables such as gender, age, teaching experience, academic status, school level, and school location have certain effects on some aspects of professional autonomy among teachers. Reversely, in the study of Karabacak (2014), teachers' perceptions of autonomy do not differ by gender or educational status.

As for the limitations, it is important to note some limitations encountered in the study. Firstly, the study relies on perceptions of the teachers rather than measuring ability objectively. The teacher practices about professional development can be observed by the researcher instead of asking directly to the teachers. This might produce unrealistic results about this issue because it is possible that teachers perceive themselves as they should be. Secondly, success in professional development can be observed not only in teachers' practices but also in the results of student success. The study does not intend to measure success; nevertheless, the success of a professional development activity is a reason for preference. This means that it may affect the process indirectly. Lastly, the study takes place in a limited area. It does not intend to make generalizations.

According to the study, it can be reached out to some implications. A teacher needs to stand out in the study. As in Topçuoğlu's (2015) study, teachers suggest that the number of training sessions should be adjusted according to needs, separate training should be organized for each branch, and the quality of these trainings should be improved. When asked about their willingness to participate in in-service training programs, many teachers have expressed a general willingness, while some of them have mentioned they would participate if the programs were relevant to their branch. Two teachers have indicated they would attend if they find the training useful and necessary, and one teacher has stated he would only participate if attendance was not mandatory. Regarding suggestions for better in-service training, most of the teachers have recommended organizing practical programs rather than theoretical ones. They have suggested that training programs should include practical examples and address potential issues that teachers might face, to be more effective. Creating environments where teachers from different locations within the same branch can share their experiences and knowledge has also been suggested to enhance the usefulness of the training.

When determining the content, location, and timing of in-service training programs organized by the Ministry of National Education, collaboration with school administrators and teachers is essential. Teachers have expressed a desire to make decisions independently of school management on this matter. It is expected by both society and the Ministry that teachers remain open to change, adapt to innovations, stay updated with developments, and renew themselves. For teachers to cultivate students who are open to innovations, it is necessary for them to be personally and professionally developed. In other words, the gender variable does not affect teachers' perceptions of autonomy; both male and female teachers adopt and find autonomy equally applicable.

As it is concluded in the study, teachers show tendency to professional development when they believe in the gain and have the appropriate conditions like time, budget, accessibility. They also tend to participate in activities more voluntarily when they are given a chance to choose. Therefore, it can be suggested that rather than imposing professional development, teachers should be given more opportunities to manage the process by themselves and according to their own needs.

Individualized programs might be useful for that. Moreover, autonomous and self-learning environments can be supported and disseminated. The professional development programs should be updated or revised according to the ideas of the teachers. Moreover, teachers might be encouraged to engage in collaborative teacher groups and share experiences. Professional communities on Eğitim Bilişim Ağı (EBA) or via approved social media accounts can be established to achieve this. In this way, they can have a better chance to exchange ideas and collaborate with each other. In addition to that, teachers may be rewarded in different ways for their attendance in professional development. They can be supported in terms of time and budget.

For further studies, some suggestions can be mentioned. It is clear that teachers have high professional autonomy levels. However, the most striking point in this study is time issues about the professional development of the teachers. This problem can be analyzed in a wider study separately. In this way, it can be possible to find out the reasons for time problems. For example, the permission of the school management is stated as a time problem because teachers can not attend some activities when there is a scheduling conflict between the activity and class times. On the other hand, some teachers mention that time is a problem because of their responsibilities outside the school. Considering these answers in detail, it is suggested that time issues can be investigated from various perspectives.

Another point that attracts attention is that teachers seem to be in need of developing their technological competence and knowledge. It is not surprising because they need to use technology in classes increasingly more. Therefore, a further study might be carried out to find out the technological competence of teachers and the ways of increasing this competence. Moreover, as technology may give more chances for teachers to get autonomous and guide their own learning, the technological competence of teachers can be investigated to investigate and provide ways of development.

The research can be carried out as a qualitative study by using diaries of teachers, attending professional development activities, and observing teachers. Moreover, a longitudinal study can be carried out to find out the effects of teacher professional development practices by observing not only teachers but also classroom practices and effects on student success.

As it is a case study implemented in a limited area and it is not possible to generalize the results, the study can be expanded to different regions of Türkiye. In that way, the study can offer great implications for making adjustments in professional development programs.

Another striking point is that teachers do not consider a Master's degree as a facilitator for professional development and it does not have any effect even on their professional development

preferences or willingness. As a Master's Degree is an educational act that can add to the knowledge of individuals, it might be considered interesting and the reasons worth researching.

Lastly, Science High Schools and Anatolian High Schools are the schools accepting students by exams and they are more academic achievement-oriented schools in Türkiye. Therefore, teachers working for such schools probably find the workload heavy to attend any professional development acts. Conversely, students have two hours of English lessons a week in a primary school. Accordingly, teachers may have more chances for their professional development. This can be also a matter of investigation and a study about this may give a researcher some suggestions or implications about teachers' professional development at different school levels.



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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: Research Ethics Committee Approval



HİZMETE ÖZEL
T.C.
KARADENİZ TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜ
Hukuk Müşavirliği



Sayı : E-82554930-050.01.04-470071 / 198
Konu : Özlem SÜRMEN AKOVA'nın Etik Kurul
Kararı

23.01.2024

Sn. Özlem SÜRMEN AKOVA

İlgi : 22.01.2024 tarihli ve E-26014373-050.01.04-469501 sayılı yazı.

KTÜ- Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Batı Dilleri ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı Uygulamalı Dil Bilimi Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencisi Özlem SÜRMEN AKOVA'nın "**An Investigation into MoNE English Language Teachers' Professional Autonomy in terms of Different Variables and Professional Development Practices**" adlı Yüksek Lisans Tezi çalışması için gerekli olan Etik Kurul incelemesi yapılmış ve başvurunuz onay verilmiştir.
Bilgilerinize ve gereğini rica ederim.

Prof. Dr. Akif CİNEL
Rektör Yardımcısı

Bu belge güvenli elektronik imzalarla onaylanmıştır.
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1 / 1



Appendix 2: TEACHER PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Participant,

The purpose of the study is to investigate professional autonomy of MoNE English Language Teachers and their professional development practices. The study is carried out with the permission of Turkish Ministry of National Education. The participation is based on your willingness. You have a right to withdraw from this study at any time. The participation lasts approximately 15 minutes. There is no right or wrong answers. Please choose the best options to reflect your opinions for the reliability of the study. For more information, you can contact me through

Thank you for your participation.

Özlem SÜRMEN AKOVA

Applied Linguistics Graduate Student / Karadeniz Technical University – TRABZON

I allow my answers to be used in a scientific research.

I have read the information provided and agree to participate. Yes () No ()

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Gender	() Male () Female () Not prefer to say	
Age		
Experience (Year&Month)		
Academic Status	() Bachelor's Degree () Master's Degree () Doctor's Degree	
Current School Level	() Primary School () Secondary School () High School () Anatolian High School () Vocational High School () Science High School () Social Science High School () Other	
Current School Location	() Village () Town () City Centre	
The estimated number of professional development activities you have attended per a year (Workshops, seminars, online or face-to-face conferences etc.)	Voluntary MoNE activity	
	Obligatory MoNE activity	
	Out of MoNE activity	

SECTION B: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

1. To what extent can you decide on the Professional development activities you can attend? What factors do you think may affect this?
2. What activities do you think have contributed the most to your professional development?

SECTION C: TEACHER PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY QUESTIONNAIRE

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I want to develop myself professionally because I feel I have to.					
2. It is my own wish to continue my professional development.					
3. I am curious about new ways to develop my teaching.					
4. I want to develop professionally because it is a necessity to meet the needs of students.					
5. I enjoy developing myself professionally.					
6. I feel obliged to continue my development as a teacher.					
7. I constantly look for ways to develop my teaching.					
8. I want to develop professionally to meet the needs of my students.					
9. I want to develop myself professionally in order to push the limits of my abilities as a teacher.					
10. I am able to search out information about teaching.					
11. I can find profession-related materials (i.e. books, journals, etc.) about teaching.					
12. I have the ability to develop my teaching.					
13. I am able to identify my weaknesses/strengths as a teacher.					
14. I am able to use technology to develop my teaching.					
15. I can adapt to recent developments in teaching.					
16. I have access to technology to continue my development as a teacher.					
17. I can work with my colleagues to develop my teaching.					
18. I like to learn from my colleagues to develop my teaching.					
19. I have colleagues whom I can consult when I need help about my professional development.					
20. My workload is too heavy to engage in activities to develop myself as a teacher.					

21. I find very little time outside the school for professional development activities.					
22. I want to develop myself professionally to better my financial condition.					
23. I want to develop myself professionally for a chance of getting promoted to a better position.					

Okay & Balçıklanl (2021)

Thank you for your contributions.



CURRICULUM VITAE

She graduated from Yasemin Karakaya Primary School. She finished Hasan Ali Yücel Anatolian Teacher High School. She studied English Language Teaching at Gazi University Gazi Faculty of Education from 2006 to 2010. She worked as a Comenius Language Assistant for 4 months in Stuttgart, Germany. She worked in Sürmene as an English Language Teacher for three years. She has been working in a state school in İzmir since 2013.

She is married and she has two daughters. She knows English and German.

