

Teacher Opinions on School Improvement and Professional Development

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Abstract

This study aimed to provide the administrators and teachers with insights, along with the strengths and weaknesses, of instructor evaluation via the perceptions of English instructors for school improvement. The study employed the Utilized Focused Evaluation as its framework. Data were collected through a mixed method design, including a questionnaire and interviews. The results revealed that the instructor evaluation process has a positive effect on teacher professional development and school improvement. The findings indicate that to make instructor evaluation more useful, improvements should be made to classroom observation procedures and more time should be allocated for teacher professional development by the administrators.

Keywords: *Learning Leadership, Instructor Evaluation, School Improvement, Professional Development*

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Introduction

This study proceeded from the idea that a systematic in-built professional development curriculum for instructors as well as its evaluation via trustworthy, consistent, and fair data is the sine qua non of the twenty-first century. Education at all levels is not inseparable or immune from the unprecedented pace of development and transmission of knowledge in all walks of life. In the education sector, professional development is considered an essential activity undertaken throughout a teacher's career. Continuous professional development is necessary for teachers to update their knowledge of teaching and learning (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Knight, 2002). Teachers hold the opinion that professional development activities are more beneficial if they are extended over a while (Matherson & Windle, 2017). Scholars and researchers have noted that school cultures and organizational structures have an important effect on teachers' professional development (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; James & McCormick, 2009; Scribner, 1999;). Also, Fullan (2007) argues that building a school culture that supports collaboration enables teachers to improve their practice.

Evaluation of the English language teachers' professional development program in non-native English-speaking countries especially at the university level is a must for interrelated reasons. English has overwhelmingly become the main and first foreign language chosen to be taught and learned as early as kindergarten over the years. Having a good command of English is currently described as an effective factor in the improvement of an individual's economic prosperity, contribution to national growth competitiveness, and sustainable global development (Brooker, 2018). As the demand for English education increased, more and more universities started to offer English-medium education (Başibek et al, 2014; Dearden, 2015; Earls, 2016; Kirkpatrick 2011; Knight, 2002; Lasagabaster, et. al., 2014; Yılmaz Virlan & Demirbulak, 2020; Walkinshaw, et.al., 2017;). Many studies dwell on the impact of EMI on improving students' English proficiency and content learning (Bozdoğan & Karlıdağ, 2013; Coleman, 2006; Dearden & Macaro, 2016; Earls, 2016; Khan, 2013; Yeh, 2014; Yılmaz Virlan & Demirbulak, 2020), yet, the results seem to be inconclusive for decision-making. However, the lack of professional development opportunities has been pointed out in the research carried out. Macaro et al (2018) pointed out that there was virtually either no data available or a questionable level of take up of the overall success of the programs. The aim of this study is therefore to evaluate the professional development program offered at an English-medium higher education institution for schools and provide the administrators and teachers with insights, along with the strengths and weaknesses, of instructor evaluation via the perceptions of English instructors for school improvement.

Professional Development Program and Evaluation

The rapid developments and advancements in science, trade, and technology have led to a rise in student learning and the assumption that high-quality teaching will lead to improved learning outcomes (Austin & Sorcinelli, 1992; Gow & Kember, 1993; Neuman, 2008) and thus school improvement through organizational learning (Earley & Bubb, 2004; Richards & Farrell,

2005; Watkins and Marsick, 1999) consisting of individual learning, team learning, and organizational learning. The majority of the faculty members at higher education institutions have been trained in their subject matter but not in pedagogy (Austin, 2006; Postareff, Lindblom-Ylänne, & Nevgi, 2007). The English language instructors in higher education have usually been trained in their subject matter which includes pedagogy as well. However, their training does not include adult learning and teaching English for academic purposes at large. Since, unlike language schools, English preparatory schools must focus on the language skills that students need in an academic setting. This fact emphasizes the importance of teachers' professional development in English preparatory schools intending to implement an effective language program for school improvement. Some universities have created centralized support units such as teaching excellence centers, comprehensive development programs, long-range programs, tutorials, one-on-one consulting, orientations, websites, and other tools (Austin & Sorcinelli, 1992; Elton, 2009). English preparatory schools often create their teacher professional development and systems since the job descriptions of preparatory school instructors are different from those of faculty members (Dalgıç, 2010).

Designing an inbuilt systematic professional development is not an end itself unless it encompasses its assessment and evaluation (APA, 2014; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Noell & Burns, 2006). It is the professional and ethical responsibility of these programs, as well as the administrators to provide evidence of its impact via formal and systematic evaluation to increase the awareness of the instructors. The planned evaluation of the effectiveness of the professional development curriculum would enable all parties to make use of it rather than just its developers. So the "ninety-nine rule" (the first 90 percent of the task takes 90 percent of the time, and the last ten percent takes the other 90 percent) (Wulf & Schave, 1984) would not become true. When the literature is reviewed, it is seen that some studies measure the effect of professional development systems (Chang, Lin & Song, 2011; Gibbs & Coffey, 2004; Sorcinelli et.al., 2006) yet the ones that evaluate the professional development program from various dimensions seem to be fairly limited for reasons such as complexity of the evaluation, and the lack of academic consensus on criteria for measuring the effectiveness of professional development programs (Guskey, 2000).

The data and feedback gathered are means to changes in teacher practices, educational leadership, student learning, and impact on economic and educational foundations. Since the professional development of teachers is the biggest investment in education for better school environments, that leads to the initiation of the change in teachers' classroom implementations, their attitudes, beliefs, or in student learning. It is essential for effective and efficient teaching which requires using proper instructional practices, content understanding, and the effective integration of content and pedagogy in teaching (Ball, 2000). Evaluation of the professional development curriculum or program is also partially the evaluation of the teachers or instructors. The data and feedback collected from teacher evaluation align with professional growth opportunities over time, both for individual teachers and for institutions. Evaluation provides exploratory evidence on measures that are meaningful to stakeholders to prove that their professional development program makes a difference. Curriculum evaluation models could be effective in evaluating the professional development program to figure out whether or not a

program or a curriculum has met its objectives for school improvement. The models aim to gather both exploratory and conclusive data in terms of concepts such as adequacy, effectiveness, efficiency, value, and competency.

Utilization-Focused Evaluation

Among the models of curriculum, the evaluation utilization-focused one was used for this study. Although earlier evaluation approaches provided administrators with a guide to follow to gather data, there was no insurance of the usability of the data. This naturally resulted in a persistent challenge for program evaluation (Kieyle & Rea-Dickens, 2005; Norris & Ortega, 2006; Patton, 2008). Utilization-focused evaluation (UFE) aims to provide a guide to gathering data that could be of *use* at once (Patton, 1997). The insurance of *usability* of all the data gathered throughout the evaluation process by the primary intended user, to the extent possible, is achieved by putting them in the driver's seat to make the decisions from the very beginning (Patton, 2008; Stufflebeam & Cory, 2004). The intended users of the evaluation are identified and specified, the focus of the evaluation is decided, data collection methods are determined, and findings are interpreted (Patton, 1997).

Equally important for the present evaluation, the versatile and adaptive approach of UFE makes it appropriate for all evaluations, including professional development program systematic design. For example, a published collection of evaluations modeling UFE approaches included evaluation for curriculum development, program redirection, impact evaluation, program assessment, and outcomes evaluation (Norris et al., 2009). There are limited published models of evaluation in professional development; however, their recent examples help illustrate the appropriateness of a UFE approach for development within professional development programs.

Utilization-Focused Evaluation Process

The Process of the Utilization-Focused Evaluation applied the following steps:

Step 1 – Assess and build program and organizational readiness for utilization-focused evaluation. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the school director. The director was informed that the evaluation procedures were developed considering the needs of the English Preparatory School. Instructors in the English Preparatory School were informed about the nature of the study and the level of their participation. Instructors were ready and receptive to the evaluation.

Step 2 – Assess and enhance evaluator readiness and competence to undertake a utilization-focused evaluation. The researcher was the single evaluator in this utilization-focused evaluation. He looked into the teacher evaluation models and the properties of effective systems. The researcher held the position of deputy director of the Preparatory School when the instructor evaluation process first started. He experienced all instructor evaluation processes and participated in two appraisal interviews as a viewer. As a result, the researcher had knowledge about instructors' expectations and attitudes towards the instructor evaluation, the professional

development of teachers, and the procedures and outcomes of the instructor evaluation. One of the weaknesses was that he had not carried out a utilization-focused evaluation before.

Step 3 – Identify, organize, and engage primary intended users. In the context of the Preparatory School, the school director and English instructors are the stakeholders of the instructor evaluation. The school director is a qualified educator and holds a Ph.D. degree in Curriculum and Instruction. She was identified as the primary intended user for 2 reasons. First, she is the person who designed the instructor evaluation process and is responsible for all aspects of the evaluation. Second, she has the authority to implement the changes suggested as a result of the work done through the evaluation of the instructor evaluation process. Hence, the researcher worked closely with the director of the preparatory school from the start of the study. Research questions, intended uses of the evaluation, and methods and design decisions were discussed in a meeting with the primary intended user. Throughout the evaluation process, the director was informed about the progress.

Step 4 – Conduct situation analysis with primary intended users. Procedures and outcomes of the previous instructor evaluation processes were reviewed, with emphasis given to areas for improvement. Resistance to and criticism of previous instructor evaluations were also discussed with the school director. Being the deputy director brought both advantages and disadvantages to the researcher. One of the challenges of this utilization-focused evaluation was that instructors might not be willing to share their honest opinions about the instructor evaluation system because the researcher was an internal evaluator. Therefore, one of the researcher's objectives was to make sure that instructors understand that the outcomes of this study would be only used for the improvement of the current instructor evaluation system. On the other hand, due to his position, the researcher had experience in the instructor evaluation process and its procedures and had detailed knowledge about instructors.

Step 5 – Identify primary intended uses by establishing the evaluation's priority purposes. The primary intended use of the evaluative case study was decided to be a formative evaluation following the needs of the school director. The priority of the preparatory school director was to improve the instructor evaluation model based on the feedback from instructors.

Step 6 – Consider and build in the process uses if and as appropriate. This evaluative case study will facilitate program and organizational development in the future because it focused on the aspects of the instructor evaluation that could be improved according to the instructors' beliefs. Because the target group of the study was the instructors working at the English Preparatory School, the evaluation processes were collaborative and inclusive.

Step 7 – Focus on priority evaluation questions. Research questions were discussed with the school director, making her a part of the process. Because the questionnaire and interview questions were structured according to the case study research problems, research questions were answered with the data obtained from the research tools.

Step 8 – Check those fundamental areas for evaluation inquiry are being adequately addressed. Research questions were designed and discussed with the school director. As stated in the purpose, the study identifies English instructors' beliefs about the instructor evaluation process at the Preparatory School for school improvement.

Step 9 – Determine what intervention model or theory of change is being evaluated. There is no intervention model or theory of change to be evaluated.

Step 10 – Negotiate appropriate methods to generate credible findings that support intended use by intended users. The utilization-focused evaluation model is the framework of this evaluative case study and a mixed methodology design has been selected. The school director was informed about the questionnaire and interview questions. She supported the methods that were used in this evaluative case study.

Step 11 – Make sure intended users understand potential controversies about methods and their implications. A mixed methodology design was used to gather quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data of the study was gathered through a teacher questionnaire, the "Teacher Evaluation Profile Questionnaire" (Stiggins & Duke, 1987). The questionnaire was revised to be appropriate for the study. As for the qualitative data, two open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were conducted with the instructors who went through the instructor evaluation process.

Step 12 – Simulate the use of findings. The questionnaire and interview were piloted with a group of instructors teaching in the English Preparatory School to check for reliability and validity.

Step 13 – Gather data with ongoing attention to use. The school director was informed about the details of the data collection process.

Step 14 – Organize and present the data for use by primary intended users. Descriptive analyses were conducted to analyze the quantitative data gathered through the questionnaire. As for the qualitative data, two open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were conducted with the instructors who went through the instructor evaluation process. The data gathered through the open-ended questions in the questionnaire were analyzed by content-analysis techniques and the data obtained through interviews were analyzed both by content-analysis techniques and by the Nvivo software program.

Step 15 – Prepare an evaluation report to facilitate the use and disseminate significant findings to expand influence. Results and Conclusions sections of the case study lead to meaningful use of the outcomes.

Step 16 – Follow up with primary intended users to facilitate and enhance use. As the researcher holds the position of deputy director of the English Preparatory School, he has a

chance to work with the school director for any improvements in the instructor evaluation process after the case study is completed.

Step 17 – Meta-evaluation of use: Be accountable, learn, and improve. As the utilization-focused evaluation is part of a case study research, there is no meta-evaluation after the evaluation.

Background to the Study

This study was conducted in the context of the instructor evaluation system implemented to pave the way for school improvement. The school provides its students with the skills to increase their English language proficiency to assist them in their academic studies. English instructors responsible for teaching English courses are assigned to teach a load of twenty class periods per week.

Professional development forms the basis of the culture of the aforementioned prep school. According to Colquitt (2009), organizational culture might have a positive effect on teacher performance and professional development. As asserted by Pambudi & Gunawan (2020) learning leadership of the principal also plays a significant role in teacher performance, as the administrator can provide assistance as well as guidance for teachers for effective performance. By improving the school environment, thereby administrators can help teachers create a better learning environment (Eggen & Kauchak, 2004; Wahyudi, et al., 2019, as cited in Pambudi & Gunawan, 2020). Keeping this notion in mind, the mission of the preparatory school is to maintain program consistency and excellence through a continuous commitment to the professional development of the instructors for school improvement. The preparatory school recognizes that the development of its staff is an essential component of meeting its vision. English instructors working at the preparatory school are in an environment rich with professional development opportunities and all teachers are strongly encouraged to develop specialized areas of interest in the field, conduct research in the classroom, publish articles on that research, to help service training sessions, and to present at national and international conferences.

The English preparatory school has been conducting instructor evaluations for four years. The evaluation model is similar to the standards-based teacher evaluation systems used in elementary, secondary, and high schools in the United States and some other countries in Europe. In the English preparatory school, instructor evaluation is carried out for all the instructors as a tool to give feedback on their teaching and as a resource for professional development. The evaluation is carried out once a year for all English instructors. At the beginning of the academic year, performance standards for the instructors are established and communicated. During the academic year, instructors' performance is monitored and measured through multiple sources of information. At the end of the academic year, the director of the preparatory school holds a formal appraisal interview with the English instructors to share the evaluation results. The key objectives of the appraisal interview are sharing the instructor evaluation results, identifying the impact of each stage of the evaluation on teacher satisfaction with the process, understanding

teachers' perceptions of the fairness of performance ratings, increasing teachers' motivation to improve performance, and setting academic goals for the teachers.

Table 1

Overall Instructor Evaluation Stages in the English Preparatory School

| Instructor evaluation stage | Time period | Procedure | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| 1. Performance standards for the instructors are established and communicated | At the beginning of the academic year | Performance standards are shared with the instructors in the first general staff meeting of the academic year | |
| 2. Instructors' performance is monitored and measured | During the academic year | <i>Measures of teacher performance for experienced instructors</i> | <i>Measures of teacher performance for novice instructors</i> |
| | | a. The professional development the scheme proposed by the instructor from the previous year b. Midterm and module-end-test class averages c. Student surveys d. Professionalism | a. Evaluative classroom observation b. Student surveys c. Professionalism |
| 3. Instructor evaluation results are shared with the instructors | At the end of the academic year | Instructor evaluation results are shared with the instructors in the appraisal interview | |

Research Questions

This study addressed the following research questions:

- (1) To what extent do the instructors believe instructor evaluation is necessary for school improvement?
- (2) What are the instructors' opinions about the impact of the instructor evaluation process on their professional development and school improvement?
- (3) What are the instructors' opinions about the impact of the instructor evaluation process on their emotions?
- (4) How do the instructors view the school director as the evaluator in the instructor evaluation process?

Methodology

Design of the study

The present study was designed as a case study. It includes a single case instructor evaluation process at an English preparatory school of a foundation university in Turkey and investigates English instructors' perceptions of the evaluation process regarding school improvement. Using a mixed methods approach, the study obtained quantitative data through a revised version of the Teacher Evaluation Profile Questionnaire (Stiggins & Duke, 1987). Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Interview questions were designed considering the data that emerged from the questionnaire and were analyzed both by content-analysis techniques and by the Nvivo software program.

Participants

Participants in this study included English instructors who worked at the English preparatory school. Of the 52 English instructors, 10 participated in the pilot study; therefore, they were taken out of the target population. Of the remaining 42 English instructors, 36 instructors participated in the study, yielding a return rate of 86%.

Instruments

Questionnaire

The Teacher Evaluation Profile Questionnaire developed by Stiggins and Duke (1987) was adapted to be used in this study. The first section of the questionnaire contained demographic information such as gender, years of teaching experience, and degree level. The rest of the questionnaire explored English instructors' perceptions of the instructor evaluation process and was divided into four sections: Impact on Professional Development and School Improvement, Impact on Teacher Emotions, School Director as the Evaluator, and Overall Rating. There were 21 items in the last four sections of the questionnaire designed as a five-point Likert scale.

The questionnaire was pilot-tested with ten English instructors who worked under similar conditions in a different prep school to ensure reliability and validity as suggested by Oppenheim (1992). Cronbach's alpha value was calculated for the questionnaire with 21 items. One reverse-coded item was removed from the questionnaire to improve reliability. The overall reliability of the revised questionnaire was high ($\alpha=.95$).

Interviews

Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews. One advantage of semi-structured interviews is that while there are pre-set, open-ended questions, the interview may also use probes to obtain more information about particular topics in the interview (Gillham, 2005). Interviews were conducted with eight volunteer instructors. All interviews were recorded

on tape. Since the study used a sequential mixed methods design, interview questions were designed based on questionnaire findings. There were five open-ended questions in the interview (See Figure 1):

Do you believe instructor evaluation is necessary? Why? Why not?

What effect does the instructor evaluation process in your school have on your professional development?

What effect does the instructor evaluation process in your school have on school improvement?

How does the instructor evaluation process in your school affect your emotions?

Do you think the school director is successful as the evaluator in the instructor evaluation process in your school?

Figure 1. Open-ended questions of the teacher- interview.

Findings

The necessity of Instructor Evaluation

The data obtained from this study first addressed the following research question: To what extent do instructors believe instructor evaluation is necessary? Quantitative data for this research question were obtained from questionnaire item 21.

The majority of the thirty-six instructors believe that instructor evaluation is necessary for professional development and school improvement. Table 1 presents instructors' beliefs about the necessity of instructor evaluation by frequencies and percentages.

Table 2

Instructors' beliefs about the necessity of teacher evaluation

| Item | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|----------|-------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 21. Teacher evaluation is necessary for my professional development and school improvement | 2.8 % | 2.8 % | 22.2 % | 52.8 % | 19.4 % |

Of the thirty-six respondents, 52.8 % agreed and 19.4 % strongly agreed that instructor evaluation is necessary for their professional development and school improvement.

In the interviews, eight instructors shared their opinions about the necessity of instructor evaluation. All participants agreed that instructor evaluation is necessary for general. Four of the eight participants added that instructor evaluation is especially necessary for professional development. One instructor focused on classroom observations and stated:

I think the evaluation is very positive feedback. For instance, the feedback that I receive from the school director after she observes my class or my performance is very valuable to me because I can see what I should change and how I should improve myself in the future.

Impact of instructor evaluation on professional development and school improvement

The data collected from this study addressed also tried to identify the instructors' opinions about the impact of the teacher evaluation process on their professional development and school improvement. The frequencies and percentages are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Instructors' beliefs about the impact of teacher evaluation on their professional development and school improvement

| Item | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. The teacher evaluation process provides me with opportunities to participate in professional development activities. | - | 5.6 % | 33.3 % | 50.0 % | 11.1 % |
| 2. Sufficient time is allotted for professional development outside of class hours during the teaching day. | - | 30.6 % | 19.4 % | 41.7 % | 8.3 % |
| 3. The feedback I receive during the teacher evaluation process has a positive effect on my professional development. | - | 8.3 % | 25.0 % | 61.1 % | 5.6 % |
| 4. I have improved my teaching practices as a result of the teacher evaluation process. | 2.8 % | 13.9 % | 13.9 % | 66.7 % | 2.8 % |
| 5. The teacher evaluation process encourages collaborative action and group learning in the preparatory school. | 2.8 % | 16.7 % | 27.8 % | 52.8 % | - |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| 6. The teacher evaluation process supports positive organizational change in the preparatory school. | - | 16.7 % | 36.1 % | 44.4 % | 2.8 % |
| 7. The preparatory school has increased its effectiveness as a result of the teacher evaluation process. | - | 8.3 % | 47.2 % | 38.9 % | 5.6 % |

Of the thirty-six respondents, 50% agreed and 11.1% strongly agreed that the instructor evaluation process provides them with opportunities to participate in professional development activities (Item 1), and 41.7% agreed and 8.3% strongly agreed that sufficient time is allotted for professional development outside of class hours (Item 2). However, 30.6% of the respondents disagreed with this item. In Item 7, it is also important to note that a large number (47.2%) of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that the preparatory school has increased its effectiveness because of instructor evaluation.

In the interviews, eight instructors shared their opinions about the impact of instructor evaluation on their professional development and school improvement. The following themes emerged from interview questions 2 and 3.

Classroom observation: Seven of the eight participants stated that classroom observations as part of instructor evaluation create an opportunity for professional development. Focusing on the feedback aspect of classroom observations, one instructor reported:

In a classroom observation, for example, when it is said that teacher talking time should be reduced a bit, he [the instructor] can think about it along the lines of 'How can I achieve this?' and 'It can be reduced in this way, let me try it'. Then, if you see that it worked out for you, at the end of the following year you can report it by saying 'I have achieved this'. It [feedback from the school director] also contributes in that manner.

Appraisal interview: The appraisal interview was another emerging theme. Six of the eight participants stated that appraisal interviews have a positive effect on their professional development. One instructor emphasized the goal-setting component of appraisal interviews and explained:

In the process [instructor evaluation], the school director wants us to set a 12-month goal during the appraisal interview. It is very difficult for a person to say to himself 'Let me set a goal for myself and achieve it'. 'What are you planning to do in the next 12 months?' At that point, the person all of sudden starts the process of setting a goal. Even a person who never thinks about a goal starts the process of setting an academic goal. He says, 'I have done

this and that so far' and after receiving the feedback he says, 'I can achieve these things as well'.

Time for professional development: Six of the eight participants reported that there is not enough time for professional development due to the intensity of the program. One instructor commented:

I wish we had more time for it [professional development] because, on top of our teaching duties, there are other factors such as lesson preparation, photocopying... and grading papers... we need more time to improve ourselves.

Knowledge sharing: Five of the eight participants reported that knowledge sharing encouraged by the instructor evaluation leads to school improvement. One instructor explained:

First of all, during this process [instructor evaluation] teachers... including me... are provided with opportunities to share their knowledge and skills on different platforms. Workshops are one of them... and Special Interest Groups. Regarding school improvement, be it the curriculum or the operation of the system, individuals both improve themselves and come together to share what they have learned. After sharing the knowledge, even while we are sharing, we ask, 'How can we improve this system?'

Impact of instructor evaluation on teacher emotions

The frequencies and percentages of instructors' beliefs about the impact of instructor evaluation on their emotions are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Instructors' beliefs about the impact of teacher evaluation on their emotions

| Item | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 8. I feel pleased when I receive positive evaluation comments. | - | 2.8% | - | 38.9% | 58.3% |
| 9. I feel relaxed during the appraisal interview with the school director. | - | 19.4% | 19.4% | 50.0% | 11.1% |
| 10. I feel calm before classroom observations. | 13.9% | 41.7% | 11.1% | 25.0% | 8.3% |

| | | | | | |
|--|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 11. I gain personal satisfaction as a result of participating in the teacher evaluation process. | 2.8% | 13.9% | 38.9% | 36.1% | 8.3% |
| 12. The overall teacher evaluation process makes me nervous. | 5.6% | 36.1% | 22.2% | 25.0% | 11.1% |

It is important to note that a large number of instructors responded negatively to Item 10, with 41.7% disagreeing and 13.9% strongly disagreeing that they feel calm before classroom observations.

In the interviews, eight participants stated their opinions about the impact of instructor evaluation on their emotions. The following themes emerged from interview question 4. *Positive emotions:* Five of the eight participants mentioned positive emotions about the instructor evaluation process. One instructor commented on appraisal interviews:

I always feel appreciated... For example, I have always felt like that during appraisal interviews. Because it is a good feeling to see that your director appreciates you when you strive to be better in your work.

Another instructor stated that the evaluation process made him feel self-confident:

My feelings about this evaluation are positive in general. I mean it works in terms of self-esteem. That is when a person achieves something it shows that he can do something. The evaluation gives a feeling of self-confidence about one's abilities.

Negative emotions: Six of the eight participants mentioned negative emotions about the instructor evaluation process, specifically regarding classroom observations. One instructor expressed strong feelings about classroom observations; however, she also highlighted the necessity of having them:

I feel stressed during classroom observations. Maybe you always teach your classes effectively, but when things like scoring and the decision process are involved... people could be stressed while teaching. Because evaluation is not something that everybody likes... but is it necessary? Yes, it is. Some things are both stressful and necessary. There is nothing to be done.

Another instructor stated that a certain level of nervousness is beneficial and indicated:

Nervousness is a feeling that I experience during classroom observations. A certain level of nervousness is always proportional to success. I can say that there is a relationship between nervousness and success.

School director as the evaluator

The results of the fourth research question about how instructors view the school director as the evaluator in the instructor evaluation process are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Instructors' opinions about the school director as the evaluator in the teacher evaluation process

| Item | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 13. The evaluator is credible as a source of feedback. | - | 2.8% | 13.9% | 55.6% | 27.8% |
| 14. The evaluator knows a variety of teaching and learning methods. | - | 2.8% | 2.8% | 52.8% | 41.7% |
| 15. The evaluator is well-trained in the teacher evaluation system. | - | 2.8% | 16.7% | 55.6% | 25.0% |
| 16. The evaluator has a good working relationship with me. | - | 2.8% | 11.1% | 52.8% | 33.3% |
| 17. The evaluator is able to manage her emotions. | 2.8% | 8.3% | 33.3% | 33.3% | 22.2% |
| 18. The evaluator is able to manage my emotions. | 2.8% | 13.9% | 33.3% | 47.2% | 2.8% |
| 19. The evaluator conducts the teacher evaluation process in a non-threatening manner. | 2.8% | 11.1% | 8.3% | 50.0% | 27.8% |
| 20. The evaluator carries out the appraisal interview fairly. | - | 8.3% | 11.1% | 61.1% | 19.4% |

Of the thirty-six respondents, 55.6% agreed and 27.8% strongly agreed that the evaluator is credible as a source of feedback (Item 13). In Item 15, 55.6% agreed or 25.0% strongly agreed that the evaluator is well trained in the teacher evaluation system. In Item 16, 52.8% agreed and 33.3% strongly agreed that the evaluator has a good working relationship with them.

In the interviews, seven participants stated that the school director is successful as the evaluator in the evaluation process. The following themes emerged from interview question 5.

Support for professional development: Four of the eight instructors reported that they believe the school director is successful because she supports instructors' professional development in the evaluation process.

Ability to manage instructors' emotions: Seven of the eight participants agreed that the school director is able to manage instructors' emotions. One instructor stated that “*she [the school director] is very aware of my emotions and clearly, she reads those signals and emotions. She addresses me in a way where both myself and the school are winners*”.

Ability to manage her own emotions: Three participants stated that the school director can manage her own emotions whereas two participants reported that she might not manage her own emotions from time to time. One instructor stated that “*in some situations... the intensity of the program and number of people are the major factors here... As a result, in some situations, together with tiredness and stress, she [the school director] is not able to manage [her emotions]. It is not very easy.*”

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to identify English instructors' perceptions about the instructor evaluation process at the English preparatory school and the findings indicate that the English instructors believe in the necessity of instructor evaluation for school improvement. In the interviews, half of the participant instructors reported that instructor evaluation is necessary for their professional development. In the literature, teacher professional development is associated with the formative purpose of teacher evaluation (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Marzano, 2012; Stiggins & Duke, 1987). The findings on instructors' beliefs about the relationship between teacher evaluation and professional development seem to concur with those of Delvaux et al. (2013), who reported that teachers believe that some aspects of teacher evaluation have a positive effect on professional development, which, in return, leads to school improvement. It can be concluded that the English instructors in the English preparatory school strongly believe that instructor evaluation is necessary in that sense.

According to the findings, instructors believe that the instructor evaluation process has a positive impact on their professional development. One area that could be considered a weakness is the time allotted for professional development in the English preparatory school. This finding is consistent with the report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2009). According to the Teacher and Learning International Survey (TALIS), 47% of the teachers from participating countries stated that conflict with the work schedule was the reason why they cannot engage in professional development (OECD, 2009). The other major themes that emerged from the interviews regarding professional development were classroom observations and the appraisal interview. The importance of feedback from classroom

observations is widely recognized in the literature. Structured classroom observation models consisting of a pre-conference, an observation, and a post-conference are efficient in collecting evidence about teaching (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Teachers going through a teacher evaluation process value post-observation conferences with feedback because they help them improve their teaching skills (Ritter & Barnett, 2016). In conclusion, instructors in the English preparatory school believe that the instructor evaluation process has a positive effect on their professional development. According to the quantitative findings, English instructors slightly agree that the instructor evaluation process has a positive impact on school improvement. In the interviews, five of the eight participants stated that knowledge sharing encouraged by instructor evaluation leads to school improvement. The instructors support the use of collaborative learning arrangements, such as workshops and teacher support groups, in the English preparatory school. The findings on instructors' beliefs about the relationship between instructor evaluation and school improvement are in agreement with the literature. Earley and Bubb (2004) argue that efficient teacher evaluation processes establish a connection between individual professional development and school improvement. We can conclude that the instructors in the English preparatory school believe that the instructor evaluation process has a positive effect on school improvement.

According to the findings, the instructors have mixed opinions about the impact of instructor evaluation on their emotions. In the context of appraisal interviews, we can suggest that English instructors value one-to-one time spent with the school director. Regarding negative emotions about the instructor evaluation process, six instructors expressed negative feelings specifically towards classroom observations. Given the comments that the instructors made, we can deduce that although English instructors may have negative emotions about classroom observations, they still believe in their necessity. Teachers' mixed emotions about teacher evaluation have been discussed to some extent in the literature. In their study on a new standards-based evaluation, Heneman and Milanowski (2003) concluded that teachers have both positive and negative attitudes toward the evaluation system. Zepeda and Ponticell (1998) investigated teacher perceptions related to classroom observations and reported that the majority of the participant teachers felt validated and empowered thanks to the support of the school director. In other studies, teachers reported that they feel stressed in classroom observations (Anna, Kristin, & Gisela, 2016; Wang & Day, 2002). We can conclude that the instructors have mixed opinions about the impact of the instructor evaluation process on their emotions.

The findings also indicate that the instructors strongly believe the school director is successful at managing the instructor evaluation process. The findings are consistent with the literature, which emphasizes the role of the school director in teacher evaluation. One of the important duties of school leaders is to foster professional development by establishing unthreatening relationships with teachers (DiPaola & Hoy, 2014). In a similar vein, Douglas, Chad, and Joyce (2002) underscore the importance of school leadership in effective teacher evaluation systems. Blase and Blase (1999) and Zimmermann and Deckert-Pelton (2003) explored teachers' perceptions of feedback and concluded that feedback received from the school director in teacher evaluation has positive effects on teachers' professional development.

Participant instructors also commented on the school director's ability to manage emotions. Seven of the eight participants stated that the director is able to manage their emotions and three participants stated that she can manage her own emotions. On this basis, we can infer that the school director's ability to manage her and others' emotions could be one of the reasons why she is considered successful as an evaluator in the instructor evaluation process. The role of emotions in leadership has also received attention in the literature. Successful leaders can manage their own emotions by discovering negative emotions before displaying them and they can manage others' emotions by establishing empathy and developing good relationships (Morton, 2012). Cherniss (1998) and George (2000) assert that one of the essential characteristics of good leaders with high emotional intelligence is that they can build positive relationships with their subordinates. We can conclude that instructors have a positive opinion of the school director's ability to manage the instructor evaluation process as a part of school culture. This might also mean that the school principal has been performing her role as the leader who can support the professional development of the staff, in "fairness, equity, and inclusiveness in all practices across the school community" as also suggested by Lárusdóttir and O'Connor (2021).

Conclusion and Suggestions

This study provides implications for the English preparatory school administration on the implementation of instructor evaluation. The findings indicate that English instructors have improved their teaching practices because of the professional development opportunities offered by the instructor evaluation process. However, instructors also reported that there is not sufficient time for professional development due to the hectic work schedule. Therefore, we can suggest that more time is allowed in the instructors' schedules so that they can take part in more professional development activities. The instructors reported that there is a strong relationship between the feedback from classroom observations and their professional development. However, it was found that classroom observations create anxiety in some instructors. In this respect, it is suggested that the preparatory school director put in more effort to make classroom observation a less stressful experience for instructors. This could be achieved by focusing more on its formative aspects, such as professional development and improved teaching practice, rather than on its summative outcomes in terms of school improvement and professional development of teachers. Additionally, the present study reveals instructors' perceptions about the leadership qualities of the school director's ability of management. In conclusion, English instructors have a positive attitude towards instructor evaluation conducted in the preparatory school for an improved school environment. Further studies can adopt a multiple-case study approach to better understand how key elements such as individual values, perceptions and attitudes, and so forth should be taken into consideration by the school leaders to develop the school community. In this way, it might also be possible to compare teacher opinions within different contexts.

Limitations

The main limitation of the study is the convenience sampling method that was applied to collect data. The case study examined 52 English instructors' views on a university English

Preparatory School's instructor assessment process. Therefore, the results of this study may not be generalized to other English preparatory schools or universities in Turkey. Furthermore, an internal evaluator, who holds the position of deputy director at the English Preparatory School, conducted the study. This fact might have affected the objectivity of the results in two ways. First, some instructors might not have been honest with the researcher for fear that the administrative staff of the preparatory school would not welcome their opinions. Second, the researcher, despite being in the natural context of the study, might not have had a critical perspective on the issues covered in the study. Finally, English is not the native language of either the researcher or the majority of the sample population. This might have interfered with the expression of some ideas or caused the misinterpretation of some facts during the interviews.

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Authorship Contribution Statement

Demirbulak: Conceptualization, design, supervision, final approval **Bayraktar:** design, data acquisition, data analysis / interpretation, statistical analysis, writing **Virlan:** Editing/reviewing, supervision, drafting manuscript, critical revision of manuscript

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