



## ATTITUDES OF TIEN GIANG UNIVERSITY ELT LECTURERS TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

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### ABSTRACT

Professional development is one of the strategies for schools to enhance their teaching and learning quality. To organize professional development activities effectively, schools should consider what their teachers think of these activities as well as focus on their preferred formats. This study was conducted to explore the lecturers' attitudes toward professional development and find out which activity is preferred the most by 20 lecturers of Tien Giang University. In this study, quantitative approach was used with the questionnaire as a data collection tool. The study involved four kinds of professional development activities including workshops, training courses, action research and peer observation which help lecturers enhance their professional development. The results show that most of the lecturers have positive attitudes to professional development and workshops are organized the most frequently by Tien Giang University. In contrast, most of the lecturers give their priority to attend training courses for professional development because they can access and update new and practical knowledge and teaching methods quickly and effectively, have longer time to practice and exchange a lot of useful information and experience with their trainers and colleagues. Through the results, it is strongly recommended that Tien Giang University should organize various professional development activities for their ELT lecturers with an emphasis on training courses in order to enhance their teaching and learning quality.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

It is widely believed that teachers are one of the most important factors affecting students' achievements (Haider & Hussain, 2014). Perrot (1991) also affirms that teaching job is respectable and always plays a significant role in producing students' learning desired outcomes.

The importance and helpfulness of good teaching are emphasized when teachers can deal with different types of students and help them improve themselves with different learning opportunities (Ediger & Rao, 2005). In particular, among many factors such as teachers' experience, age, assessment periods, etc., a

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Vietnam implemented administrative restructuring on July 1, 2025, introducing significant changes to its administrative units. Nevertheless, this article continues to use the old names of provinces, cities, communes, and wards to reflect the data and context at the time of the study.

teacher's academic and professional qualification is considered the most influential factor to students' achievements (Salfi & Saeed, 2017). Moreover, academic knowledge is also mentioned as one of the four major characteristics of an effective teacher together with affective characteristics, teaching skills and classroom management (Miller, 1987). The concept of this academic knowledge consists of teachers' subject knowledge and their ability to transfer their subject knowledge to their students.

Thus, it is vital for all teachers, especially English language teaching (ELT) teachers to continuously pursue professional development for being good and effective teachers. It means that they should participate in activities which help them develop their skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a teacher (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2009). According to OECD (2009), there is a variety of professional development activities which are chosen by a large number of teachers such as informal dialogues to improve teaching, courses and workshops, reading professional literature, education conferences and seminars, professional development network, individual and collaborative research, mentoring and peer observation, observation visits to other schools and qualification programs. Depending on different teaching contexts and preferences, schools will organize different professional development activities for their teachers. Otherwise, teachers can also take part in their favorite professional development activities themselves to benefit their own profession, students and schools.

Tien Giang University (TGU) is an educational institution located in My Tho city, Tien Giang province, a province in the north of Tien River, the Mekong Delta managed by Tien Giang

People's Committee and Ministry of Education and Training. It is a public, multi-level and multi-disciplinary university taking responsibilities to train highly qualified human resources for the region in general and for the whole province in particular. One of the most important missions of the university is to provide students with international integration skills, specifically foreign language skills for communication. To fulfill that duty, English teaching and learning process has been paid much attention to and implemented to all lecturers and students as compulsory courses. English teaching staff in the university is all qualified with C1 certificate in accordance with English proficiency requirements of university lecturers according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Especially, professional development for teaching staff is always paid much attention to by the leaders of the university. Popular professional development activities which the university organizes for its ELT lecturers include workshops, training courses, action research and peer observation.

However, due to limitations of finance and time, TGU cannot organize professional development activities frequently. Besides, each ELT lecturer in the university has different points of view of their favorite professional development activities. Consequently, this activity seems appropriate with some ELT lecturers while other lecturers prefer another activity. This affects lecturers' attitude when participating in professional development activities as well as effectiveness of the activities organized for them. To solve these problems, this paper will find out the attitudes of ELT lecturers in TGU to professional development as well as determine the activity which is chosen as the most favorite activity by most of the lecturers. The results of this research will be absolutely useful for TGU

to choose the most appropriate professional development activity for its ELT lecturers. Especially, thanks to this research, TGU can optimize the effectiveness of its professional development activities following its lecturers' preference. As a result, ELT lecturers will be motivated to attend professional development activities and effectively acquire betterment for themselves, their students and the university.

To investigate the attitudes of ELT lecturers to professional development activities organized by TGU, the current study focuses on three main aims. First, it will define professional development and its importance based on theories from different sources of literature. Second, it will explore advantages and disadvantages of professional development in general. Finally, it will introduce an overview of popular professional development activities, including their definition as well as their benefits and drawbacks to ELT lecturers, which are usually organized in Mekong Delta universities and colleges, especially in TGU.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH METHOD**

### ***2.1. Literature review***

It is undeniable that professional development is an important factor which contributes to the success of teachers in general and ELT teachers in particular. Many researchers and scholars have worked on this research area with different findings in various settings. In this section, a review of literature in the field of professional development is conducted to define professional development under a theoretical construct as well as explore benefits and drawbacks of popular professional development activities.

#### ***2.1.1. Professional development and its importance***

As mentioned previously, professional development includes activities which are

related to the development of teachers' skills, knowledge, expertise and other abilities (OECD, 2009). In addition, according to Bailey and his colleagues (1998), professional development is defined as a process in which teachers continuously develop their intellect, experience and attitudes. It also includes teachers' feeling, manner, behaviors, understanding and awareness of a situation or a cause during their working process. Similarly, professional development is also considered any formal training activities implemented by the government with the purposes to update and improve teachers' content knowledge and teaching methodology (Bayar, 2013).

Regarding its importance, professional development is very necessary for all employees in general and teachers in particular to develop themselves in their career (Muzaffar & Malik, 2012). It is considered a vital component in teachers' lives and teaching process when they are in the environment with the rapid growth of technology, science, concepts, philosophies and almost everything (Karaasilan, 2003). Likewise, professional development for teachers plays a role as a major mechanism for classroom instruction and students' achievement improvement (Ball & Cohen, 1999). Cambridge Assessment International Education (CAIE, 2017) also affirms the great importance of professional development in teachers' professional thinking and practice development and teaching and learning quality enhancement. These purposes can be achieved through a variety of activities which support and reflect teachers' development. In addition, to ensure the quality of English teaching, teachers need to approach new research and knowledge in teaching, language development and curriculum, update their qualifications in both their subjects and teaching methods, share their expertise and experience with other teachers and educators.

Obviously, professional development plays a crucial role in helping all teachers, especially ELT teachers, fulfill those tasks. This could be because professional development creates favorable conditions for teachers to improve their students' achievements, build and refine existing curricula, develop excellent teaching practices, participate in teaching practice and program evaluation and take part in implementing local and national curriculum initiatives (AATE, 2012).

### *2.1.2. Benefits and drawbacks of professional development to ELT teachers*

It is believed that professional development brings a wide range of benefits for teachers, their students and working institutions. For teachers themselves, OCED (1998) presents a various number of objectives of professional development program which also benefits teachers including updating their own knowledge of the teaching subject under the latest advances in the area, applying some changes to their curricula and other issues related to their teaching practices, learning and exchanging their expertise, information and experience with their colleagues and people in other areas and helping weak teachers become better in their career. Additionally, professional development is also beneficial for teachers to reflect their knowledge and experience, create connections of various kinds of knowledge and establish appropriate theoretical constructs to interpret it (Padfield & Schaufelberger, 1998). Muzaffar and Malik (2012) also add that professional development can change teachers' practices, attitudes and beliefs on their teaching career. After joining professional development activities, teachers can apply what they have acquired from those activities into their teaching contexts including adjusting their lesson plans, changing their teaching methodology, improving the relationship with their students.

Moreover, in her research, Yoo (2016) found that professional development positively affects teachers' self-efficacy which is defined as a person's beliefs and evaluations of his or her abilities to control and implement necessary courses of action (Bandura, 1997). Also, Rokhyati (2015) suggested in her study that professional development helps teachers recognize their strengths and weaknesses in their teaching performance. As a result, they become more confident in teaching their students with more interesting lessons.

In terms of students' benefits from teachers' professional development, it is believed that professional development is directly linked to students' learning. Particularly, it both updates teachers' knowledge and skills and enhances teachers' performance and students' achievements (Muzaffar & Malik, 2012). Similarly, according to Yoon and his colleagues (2007), professional development is helpful in guiding teachers to increase students' learning outcomes. Its effects on students' achievements are conducted through three stages including enhancing teachers' knowledge and skills first, then making classroom teaching better and finally raising students' learning outcomes.

Regarding educational institutions, professional development is also advantageous for the development and application of new strategies related to curricula and teaching practice (OCED, 1998). After attending professional development programs, teachers will have new ideas and initiatives to apply in their teaching practice. As a result, teaching and learning quality of the school will be improved with students' better achievements. At Oklahoma Panhandle State University (OPSU) (2012), professional development is believed to engage their administrative and teaching staff in academic fields and increase their interests and expertise. Besides, it can also make sure that

they will continuously study, spread and enhance their abilities and skills to achieve the best achievements in education.

Despite benefits for teachers, students and schools, professional development also contains drawbacks, especially for the teachers. First, teachers can become passive in taking part in professional development activities themselves. This could be because most professional development activities are usually organized by the schools. Then, teachers just wait for their working institution to request them to attend professional development activities without looking for opportunities for professional development themselves. Second, due to the too much important attachment to professional development, teachers can undervalue their knowledge, teaching methodology and experience. As a result, they have a tendency to believe that what they learn from professional development activities taught by famous professors and experts is more important than what they have already accumulated during their teaching process (Borg, 2015). Third, Park and So (2014) also found one more challenge for teachers to join professional development which is time constraint. As an employee of a school, the teacher has to take charge of a lot of duties including administrative duties, participating in workshops, conferences and seminars and staff meetings. Additionally, they have to deal with their personal issues related to their family, friends, extra-business, etc. As a result, it is very challenging for them to follow fixed schedules of professional development opportunities.

### *2.1.3. An overview of a few popular professional development activities to ELT teachers*

Teachers' professional development activities are considered one of strategies to enhance the quality of teaching and learning process. In order to ensure that English language teachers are

responsible for maintaining ongoing professional development, many professional activities suspected of involvement in or own self-development strategies are built up both individually and collaboratively. Such four professional development activities as workshops, training courses, action research and peer observation are mentioned in the following section.

#### *2.1.3.1. Workshops*

During teaching careers, Alibakhshi and Dehviri (2015) suggested that EFL teachers conduct professional development, through participating in workshops. Similarly, according to Alfaki (2014), workshop attendance is supposed to be one of opportunities to facilitate career development. Furthermore, one of professional development activities that most teachers have experienced is participation in a workshop. Workshops are designed in order to offer participants an opportunity to make practical applications about the topic being presented as well as make adaptations of elements of activity to their own classrooms (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

Regarding its importance, workshops are conducted in order to provide teachers with the opportunity to learn more about a specific area or skill in relation to teaching and learning process within a certain set amount of time. Another benefit of participating in workshops is that it is an excellent way for teachers to generate more confidence and demonstrate their expertise spontaneously. It is also beneficial to take part in such workshops. Although knowledge is transmitted to teachers by specialists or experts in the field through workshops or training courses, the content of training is irrelevant to the practicability of their classrooms (Agbayahoun, 2016).

### *2.1.3.2. Training courses*

According to Kennedy (2005), training usually pays much attention to skills, with expert supervision, and theoretical focus. Training refers to activities directly focusing on a teacher's present responsibilities and typically aims at short term and immediate goals. Moreover, training also gets involved in trying out new strategies in the classroom, usually with supervision, and monitoring and getting feedback from others on one's practice (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Furthermore, training is often considered as a top-down delivery of professional development, where teaching methods are delivered to teachers in order that they can implement these methods in their practical classroom (Kennedy, 2005).

Another point of view about training courses is that teacher training is encouraged not only to help to shape and modify teacher's attitude but also make development of certain teaching skills which plays a necessary role for teaching profession (Muzaffar & Malik, 2012). Gibbs and Coffey (2004) reported that training courses and programs positively bring the increase of the knowledge and skills of teachers. Leithwood (1992) also supposed that professional development training plays an essential part in facilitating teaching career as well as developing the teaching skills of teachers. This means it also makes contributions towards professional development and increases participation in decision making.

### *2.1.3.3. Action research*

Action research is defined as a process which researchers study their own practice to deal with the problems in relation to their daily practice (Corey, 1953). Besides, action research is also one of techniques that motivate teachers to ask questions about theory and practice and make evaluation of their teaching through systematic

inquiry (Bullough & Gitlin, 1995). According to Kennedy (2005), action research is of relevance to the classroom and enables teachers to carry out experiments with different practices, especially if the action research is a collaborative activity. The main purpose of action research is that practitioners are expected to explore what they are implementing, why they are carrying out it and what the impact has been after doing it (Mertler, 2012). According to Kemmis and McTaggart (2001), action research refers to the research conducted by practitioners to improve practice. This means that teachers are in relation to establish the relationship between the theories of learning, teaching and their practices in the classroom. In the light of action research, teachers are mainly engaged in the process of thoroughly exploring their own classroom contexts and working toward established classroom-driven goals.

Regarding the role of action research, an increasing number of studies on the impact of action research in teacher education also present considerable benefits. An important point of action research is that it encourages to create personally relevant and meaningful competence (Kennedy, 2005). Furthermore, it contributes to meeting the demands of teachers' understanding of their own practices (Kincheloe, 2003). The result is that teachers become more reflective, critical and analytical about their practices in the classrooms. Therefore, they recognize and become better equipped to make adaptation to their personal theories of teaching, explaining what they are doing and why.

### *2.1.3.4. Peer observation*

Thanks to a teacher's own personal initiative, teacher development can appear. However, collaboration with others both supports individual learning and reaches the collective goals of institutions. Tasks and responsibilities are permitted to be shared through collaborative

professional development. Teachers need to be provided with opportunities to work and learn together through participation in group activities (Brody & Davidson, 1998). Peer observation is defined as an opportunity to observe other teachers, and to be observed which has long been acknowledged as a beneficial process, and observation is now considered as an integral activity of coaching and sustained learning (Da Costa, 1993; Joyce & Showers, 2002). Peer observation is also regarded as an opportunity to make discussions and conduct experiments with new ideas, and feedback is seen as a useful part (Gersten et al., 1995)

Many teachers seem to be more comfortable discussing their practice with peers than with their senior management because honesty and free discussion about issues can be prevented by the management appearance (Kennedy, 2005). With a supportive, blame-free environment, professional development is encouraged and facilitated, and the benefits of peer collaboration and support are to provide opportunities to extend and experiment with new practice (Eraut, 2001).

In consideration of advantages and disadvantages of professional development and a few popular professional development activities, this research aims to investigate attitudes of lecturers in TGU to professional development and find out the professional development activity which most of the lecturers prefer to participate in. Hence, some suggestions for the university are proposed to enhance the quality of its lecturers' professional development. Specific research questions include:

1. What are TGU lecturers' attitudes to professional development?

2. Which professional development activity is preferred the most by the participants?

## **2.2. Research methodology**

### *2.2.1. Research design*

In this study, a descriptive research design was used in order to investigate the current attitudes regarding their professional development of the lecturers in TGU as well as make a decision about an activity which is chosen as the most favorite activity by most of the lecturers. The quantitative approach was utilized to achieve the objectives of the study.

### *2.2.2. Participants*

The participants of this research were 20 TGU English lecturers. Their ages vary from 31 to 50 years old. Especially, most of them have been working from 05 to 10 years at the university and have more than 10 years of experiences in teaching English language. With regards to the professional qualifications, most of the lecturers have got Master's degrees in TESOL and are looking forward to higher professional development opportunities.

### *2.2.3. Instruments*

In order to answer the research questions, the instrument used to collect data was questionnaire. It was a combination of closed and open-ended questions, divided in 03 sections.

Section 1 was about lecturers' background information including age, gender, professional qualifications, working institutions, and teaching experience.

Section 2, including 16 items, was designed to investigate the lecturers' attitudes to professional development. The initial cluster in this section was about the benefits of professional development toward teachers, learners, and institutions, including item 1 to items 13. Additionally, the drawbacks of professional development were explored thanks to item 14 to item 16. All items in this section

was designed in different scales (five-point Likert scales ranging from -1-Strongly Agree to - 5 -Strongly Disagree). All the items in this section were extracted from the literature review section to examine to what extent TGU lecturers agree or disagree with the viewpoints in prior studies.

Section 3 required the participants’ answers on their priority to professional development activities with open and closed-end questions.

*2.2.4. Procedure*

The process of data collection and analysis of this research involved 04 stages:

First, the questionnaire was designed on Google Forms.

Second, the pilot questionnaire was sent to 10 lecturers through emails for feedback and adjustments.

Third, the repaired questionnaire was sent to 20 lecturers (including the 10 piloted lecturers) through emails under a Google Form link for data collection

Finally, the data collected were analyzed.

**3. FINDINGS**

Based on the data collected from the questionnaire, the results were analyzed following two major sections in response to the two research questions including teachers’ attitudes to professional development and their choice of the most favorite professional development activity among workshops, training courses, peer observation and action research. Responses were analyzed quantitatively by counting the percentage thanks to the statistics of Google Forms.

**3.1. Teachers’ attitudes to professional development**

As mentioned in the literature review, professional development has both advantages and disadvantages for teachers, students and schools. Therefore, the data were also analyzed in accordance with that order to clarify teachers’ attitudes to professional development.

First, there are 08 items in the questionnaire about benefits of professional development for teachers. The results are summarized in the following table.

**Table 1. Benefits of professional development for teachers**

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Professional development is essential to teachers.	80,0%	20,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
2. Professional development updates teachers’ professional knowledge and skills to keep track of latest advances in the area.	70,0%	30,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
3. Professional development is a reflection of teachers’ knowledge, an establishment of connections between a variety of knowledge, and a	50,0%	50,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
formulation of relevant theoretical constructs to interpret it.					
4. Professional development can change different aspects of teachers' practices, attitudes and beliefs.	55,0%	25,0%	20,0%	0,0%	0,0%
5. Professional development facilitates teachers to adjust curricula or other aspects of teaching practice.	55,0%	40,0%	5,0%	0,0%	0,0%
6. Professional development facilitates the exchanges of information and expertise among teachers and others, <i>e.g.</i> academics, industrialists, etc.	50,0%	40,0%	10,0%	0,0%	0,0%
7. Professional development helps teachers to enhance their self-confidence and self-efficacy.	45,0%	50,0%	5,0%	0,0%	3,6%
8. Professional development strengthen weak teachers to become better.	35,0%	55,0%	10,0%	0,0%	0,0%

As it can be seen from the table that most lecturers at TGU strongly agreed that professional development is necessary for them. For the following statements in the questionnaire, they mostly strongly agreed or agreed with the benefits of professional development for teachers. The majority of the participants strongly agreed that professional development helps them update their knowledge and skills, change their practices, attitudes and beliefs, adjust their curricula, give them opportunities to learn and exchange with other colleagues and experts and increase their confidence and self-efficacy. Likewise, most

lecturers agreed that professional development helps them reflect on their knowledge and acquire new knowledge as well as strengthen the abilities for weak teachers. Very few participants disagreed with the benefits of professional development for teachers which is inconsiderable. Thus, it is clear that almost all participants believed that professional development is beneficial for them and their teaching careers.

Second, other 02 items in the questionnaire are to investigate teachers' attitudes to benefits of professional development for students.

Responses of the participants are showed in the following table.

**Table 2. Benefits of professional development for students**

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
9. Professional development increases the capacity and potential of the teachers and students' achievements.	40,0%	55,0%	5,0%	0,0%	0,0%
10. Professional development helps teachers to enhance students' learning outcomes.	30,0%	65,0%	5,0%	0,0%	0,0%

It is obvious that most participants chose strongly agree or agree with the statements about the benefits of professional development for students. They shared the same belief that professional development can support students in improving their learning outcomes or achievements. There were still very few participants showed a neutral point of view on those statements, but with more agreements

from other participants, it is believed that professional development is definitely advantageous for students to enhance their performance.

Third, the next 03 items in the questionnaire are used to survey teachers' attitudes to benefits of professional development for schools. The results are outlined as follows:

**Table 3. Benefits of professional development for educational institutions**

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
11. Professional development supports schools with the development and application of new strategies related to the curriculum and other aspects of teaching practice.	45,0%	35,0%	15,0%	5,0%	0,0%
12. Professional development engages faculty and staff to different academic fields and areas of interest, and expertise.	30,0%	50,0%	15,0%	5,0%	0,0%

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
13. Professional development facilitates faculty and staff members to continuously learn, spread and increase their capabilities and skills to become the best educators.	40,0%	45,0%	10,0%	5,0%	0,0%

From the table, it is evident that a greater number of the participants strongly agreed or agreed that professional development facilitates educational institutions to develop their curricula and teaching practice as well as helps their faculty and staff members communicate with people from different academic fields and expertise and then enhance their abilities and skills to have better performance in their career. However, a small number of the participants still had neutral responses or disagreed with these statements.

Anyway, benefits of professional development for educational developments are strongly confirmed by the agreement of most participants in the research.

Fourth, there are also 03 items concerning drawbacks of professional development. The responses of lecturers from TGU are summarized in the table below.

**Table 4. Drawbacks of professional development**

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
14. Teachers may depend on others for their professional development, rather than trying to take charge of it themselves.	0,0%	30,0%	25,0%	40,0%	5,0%
15. Teachers may also undervalue both their existing knowledge and experience, believing that what they receive externally (e.g. from trainers) is more significant.	5,0%	10,0%	35,0%	40,0%	10,0%
16. Teachers may encounter time problem in participating professional development activities because they have to deal with a lot of responsibilities	25,0%	60,0%	10,0%	0,0%	5,0%

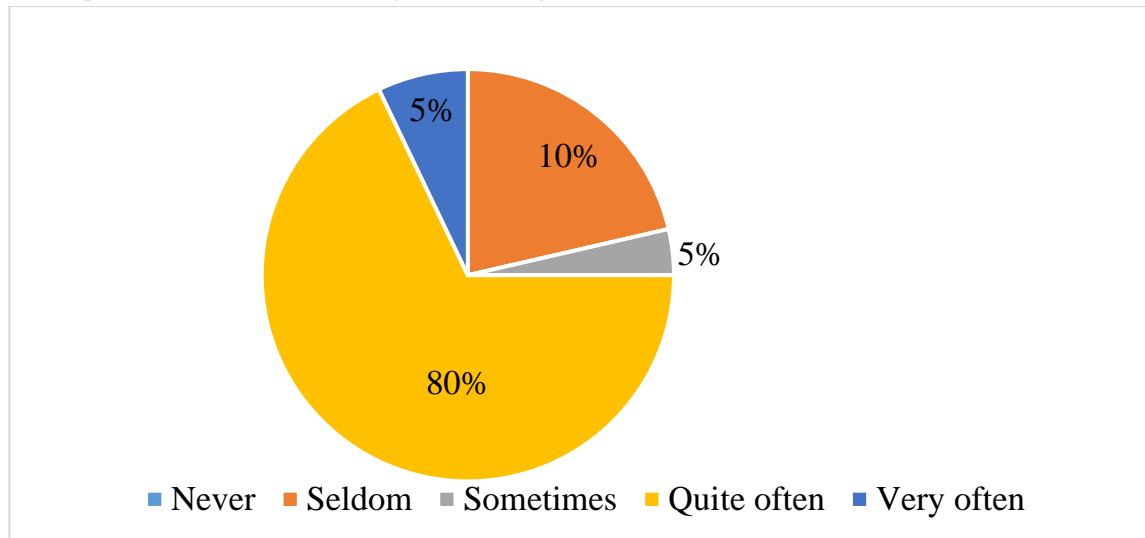
Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
such as administrative duties, attending workshops, and staff meetings.					

In terms of disadvantages of professional development, the participants’ responses vary from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The majority of the participants showed neutral points of view or disagreed that professional development make them depend on others or undervalue their knowledge and experience. In contrast, most of them agreed or strongly agreed that they encounter time constraint in taking part in professional development activities due to loads of responsibilities they have to deal with in their life and career. Other responses were also chosen by a small quantity of the participants, but they are insignificant. To conclude, most lecturers in TGU agreed that they have difficulties in time arrangements for professional development, but not the thought of being

dependent on trainers or undervaluing their own knowledge and experience.

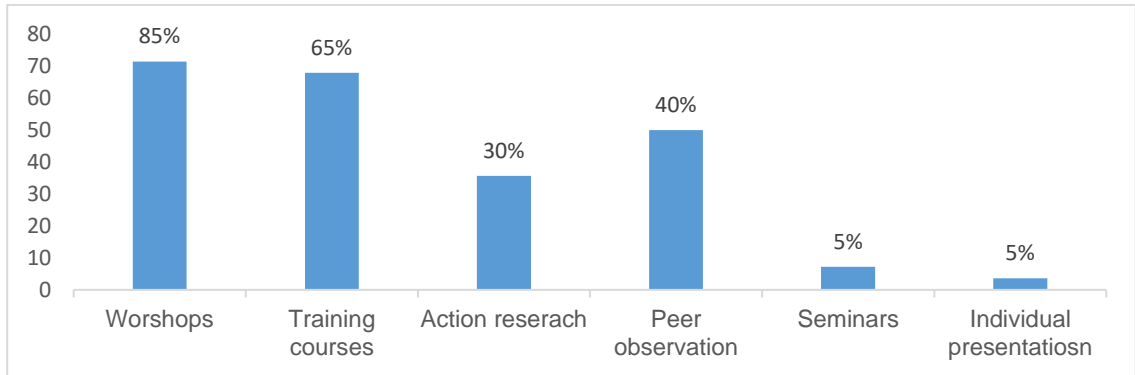
**3.2. Teachers’ most favorite professional development activity**

It is evident that organizing professional activities for teachers is absolutely necessary. Therefore, TGU always try their best to provide its lecturers with opportunities of professional development. This was confirmed through the data in the questionnaire that 80% of lecturers participated in professional development activities organized by TGU quite often. Especially, 5% of them even joined these activities very often. The frequency of professional development activities is shown in the following chart.



**Chart 1. Frequency of professional development activities organized by TGU**

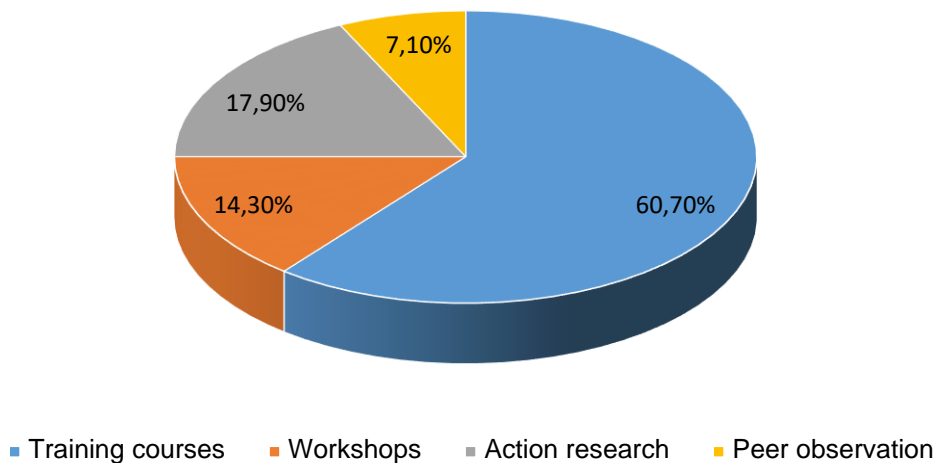
Regarding types of professional development activities organized by TGU, the data are described in the chart below



**Chart 2. Professional development activities organized by TGU**

It is clear from the chart that TGU has organized a variety of professional development activities including workshops, training courses, action research, peer observation, seminars and individual presentations for its lecturers. Especially, with 85%, workshops were the most popular activity which TGU lecturers have participated in during their teaching career.

As mentioned previously, one of the most important aims of this research is to find out the activity chosen by most participants as their favorite activity among workshops, training courses, action research and peer observation. The following chart summarizes the results of this issue.



**Chart 3. The most favorite professional development activity of TGU lecturers**

It is shown from the chart that training courses were chosen by 60,7% of the participants in this study as their most favorite professional development activity while other activities accounted for smaller proportions with 17,9% for action research, 14,3% for workshops and 7,1% for peer observation respectively. Thus, it can be concluded that training courses (including English language proficiency courses, teaching method courses, classroom management courses, creative teaching courses, etc.) are the most favorite professional development activity of TGU lecturers. The reasons for their choice are various, but mostly because training courses help them access and update new and practical knowledge and teaching method quickly and effectively which they can apply in their teaching contexts as well as motivates them to adjust their lessons for students' benefits. Another reason is that training courses give teachers longer time to practice what they are trained in the courses. Finally, TGU lecturers chose training courses because they can have opportunities to meet trainers and other colleagues and exchange a lot of useful information and experience.

#### **4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Professional development plays a significant role in teachers' career since it encourages curiosity, motivation, and new way of thinking. Professional development is also an ongoing process, evolving from assessing and evaluating teachers' beliefs and practices. The current survey study was conducted to investigate the attitudes of ELT lecturers in TGU toward professional development as well as to determine which activity is most preferred for implementation in the university by most of the teachers, and the results were used to propose some suggestions for the university in order that the leaders of this institution can choose the most appropriate professional development activity

for their ELT lecturers. When lecturers can take part in the activities they are interested in, it is obvious that they will be more motivated and enthusiastic during their involvement. As a result, the effectiveness of professional development for teachers of the university will be much improved.

The results show that most lecturers at TGU are interested in professional development because they think it is very beneficial for themselves, their students and their schools. It helps the lecturers update and acquire new knowledge, skills, teaching methods and experience as well as widen their academic network. It also facilitates students to enhance their learning achievements and contributes to improve teaching and learning quality of their schools. In terms of drawbacks of professional development, most of the participants confirmed that they only encountered time problems when attending professional development because they have to take a lot of responsibilities of their job and family.

Through the questionnaire, it is revealed that at present, TGU quite often organizes many professional development activities for their lecturers and the most popular activity is workshops. However, the data show that most of the lecturers prefer to take part in training courses for professional development because this activity gives them a chance to access and update new and authentic knowledge, skills and teaching method, a longer time to acquire and apply new knowledge and an opportunity to network with other colleagues in the same field of expertise. The finding is identical with Muzaffar and Malik (2012)'s research where training courses are most preferred by Indian teachers, but incompatible with Alibakhshi and Dehviri (2015)'s and Agbayahoun (2016)'s with workshop as the teachers' most favorite professional development activity and Gersten et

al. (1995)'s with peer observation chosen by the most teachers for their professional development. This can be seen as a reminder for TGU to organize more training courses for its lecturers as a strategy of personal development since thanks to the passion for this activity, lecturers' attitudes to professional development can be positively changed which can motivate them to get over difficulties to join professional development activities. Additionally, organizing favorite professional development activities for its lecturers, the university can boost teachers' enthusiasm and encourage them to teach better because attending their favorite activities, lecturers will absolutely concentrate on acquiring new knowledge and skills as well as spend time researching and learning from their trainers and colleagues to accumulate necessary experiences for their teaching. As a result, they can facilitate students to learn better and the high quality of teaching and learning will be an obvious reward.

In conclusion, professional development is absolutely advantageous for teachers, students and educational institutions, specifically in the context of TGU. The results of this study are considered as recommendations for the institution in improving the quality of professional development for its lecturers. With positive attitudes to professional development, TGU should create favorable conditions for its ELT lecturers to join a variety of professional development activities with the emphasis on training courses, the activity is preferred by most of the participants in the study. Consequently, lecturers' motivation for participating professional development will be enhanced and the teaching and learning quality of the university will be much augmented.

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