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English as a Foreign Language High School Teachers' Expectations of Continuing Professional Development Activities

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Abstract: This paper investigated (1) English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' expectations of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities in a Vietnamese context, and (2) factors related to teacher demographics affecting their expectations of CPD activities. The study followed a mixed-methods approach, using a questionnaire to collect quantitative data from 224 Vietnamese EFL teachers, and individual semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data from six teachers. The results revealed that among five domains in light of the Vietnamese English Teacher Competence Framework, including subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, learner knowledge, professional attitudes and values, and knowledge of teaching practice and context, the participants desired to learn about pedagogical knowledge the most ($M=4.14$). The study also indicated that factors related to age, teaching experience, and field of study at undergraduate level differentiated the teachers' expectations of CPD activities. Basically, the younger and less experienced teachers desired to participate in the CPD activities more than their counterparts. Moreover, the teachers with degree in teaching EFL expressed their eagerness and willingness to participate in the CPD events more than those holding a degree in English Linguistics and Literature. This paper also suggested recommendations for further studies in the field of CPD.

Keywords: *Continuing professional development, the Mekong Delta of Vietnam, EFL teachers' expectations, teacher demographics.*

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Introduction

Two important reasons for this current study to be conducted include the global expansion of English and recent pedagogical reforms in Vietnam related to enhancing EFL teachers' competence. The expansion of English was approved by its importance in the national economy and education (Le et al., 2019). According to Wedell (2011), the national economy and political powers depend much on the quality of English teaching and learning. Furthermore, English is used as the working language of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries to help this community to communicate effectively and get more chances to participate in the broader international ones (ASEAN Secretariat, 2009). As a result, English has become a compulsory school subject in many Asian countries, including Vietnam, although many need more teaching resources and high-quality EFL teachers. Lacking qualified human resources in English teaching became the most significant challenge in the Vietnamese education system (Wedell, 2008).

Recent pedagogical reforms in Vietnam aiming to enhance teachers' competence is another important reason for the current study to be conducted. English is essential in the age of globalization, and Vietnam as a member of the ASEAN and the World Trade Organization (WTO) needs to further improve English teaching and learning. The new English curriculum, shifting from teaching the knowledge of the language to communicating in the target language, for general education has been implemented since 2018. The Vietnamese government approved the National Foreign Languages 2020 Project (NFLP 2020) to enhance chances for Vietnamese people in the worldwide competition (Le et al., 2019). Many English language teaching (ELT) pedagogical reforms were introduced and implemented in this project, such as teaching English as a compulsory subject in the school curriculum, employing English native speakers as EFL teachers, increasing instructional hours, using new textbooks, applying the task-based approach, maximizing learners' exposure to English in-and-outside of the classrooms, and developing a language proficiency test called Vietnamese Standardized Test of English Proficiency (VSTEP) which was adapted from the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (Le et al., 2019; Thao & Mai, 2020). However, the results of English in the annual national graduation examination of

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Vietnamese high school students could be better. In 2021, around 40% of high school students achieved the score of or above 5 out of 10 for their English exams in the graduation exam after high school. Vietnamese EFL teachers' competence could be interpreted as playing a main role in lifting up students' English learning outcomes.

This current study aims to contribute insights into what EFL teachers in the researched context expect to learn from continuing professional development activities, then EFL teacher training institutes might address teachers' expectations in the courses offered. In fact, many studies have been administered to explore Vietnamese EFL teachers' perceptions of continuing professional development programs (Le, 2002; Leong & Nguyen, 2011; Mai & Ocriciano, 2017; Nhan, 2020). However, just a few studies were done in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam where this current study was carried out, and these studies just aimed to shed light onto EFL teachers' views of their teaching methods or how to develop their teaching. Therefore, the current study was conducted to investigate EFL teachers' expectations of CPD activities.

Continuing Professional Development

Voluntary learning and staff development are essential due to the demands for effective participation in contemporary, technology-based, and knowledge society (Evers et al., 2011; Maurer, 2002). For instance, the European Union highlighted the importance of life-long learning in staff's continuing development of knowledge and skills (Lisbon European Council, 2000). Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2000) defined life-long learning as all organized, systematic education and training activities which teaching staff partake in to obtain knowledge and acquire new skills for their jobs to increase their production and gain more career opportunities. People do CPD - a form of life-long learning - to maintain their knowledge and skills relevant to their professional lives. There are various forms of CPD, from formal educational courses to learning through daily work practices. In education and training, CPD is often in more or less formal classroom-based settings. Teachers today are expected to use information and communication technologies for teaching more effectively than ever before; update themselves with evolving educational methods and practice; evaluate learner profiles and needs more comprehensively; and keep up-to-date with curriculum trends, second language acquisition research, and assessment (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Thus, teachers need to maintain CPD to equip themselves with professional competences that enhance effective teaching. CPD is, therefore, assumed ever-growing importance in teachers' career advancement. CPD arguably offers a number of benefits to teachers. First and foremost, teachers gain more knowledge and skills through CPD activities (Cordingley et al., 2003). As a result, teachers can manage their own development as well as build greater confidence in practice and commitment to their profession. Moreover, by participating in CPD activities, teachers can keep up-to-date with changes and can be awarded with personal achievements such as promotion, rise in salary, and prestige (Bailey et al., 2001). Notably, CPD creates a significant effect on teachers' practice and students' performance. A number of studies report that the more professional knowledge teachers have, the higher the level of student achievement is (Falk, 2001; Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Lastly, CPD is considered a key factor in ensuring the effectiveness of educational reforms. In conclusion, CPD experiences have significant and positive effects on teachers, their practice, students' learning outcomes, and educational organizations.

Vietnamese EFL Teacher Competency Framework

Definitions of the conceptualization of competence are abundant in available literature. White (1963) defined competence as the repertoire of one's skills, knowledge, and qualities to interact effectively with the surrounding environment. Maluccio and Libassi (1984) simplified the conceptualization of competence as a person's property or traits. In this current study, competence refers to a person's ability to successfully use skills, knowledge, and qualities to complete tasks.

The Vietnamese English Teacher Competency Framework (ETCF), a working framework, has been used as a guideline that fosters ELT teacher development. The ETCF covers teachers' competencies, knowledge, skills, values, and processes to help equipped teachers with necessary knowledge, skills and values to perform their teaching. It is also served as a guide for teachers to self-develop their careers and a tool for teacher trainers to evaluate their needs and classify particular areas for training programs. Figure 1 displays the overview of the five domains in the Vietnamese ETCF.

Domains

- **Subject knowledge**
 - Language proficiency
 - Knowledge of CEFR
 - Knowledge of language as a system
 - Knowledge of learning process
 - Knowledge of cultures of English-speaking countries
 - Knowledge of academic context in English
 - Knowledge of language curriculum
- **Pedagogical knowledge**
 - Knowledge of teaching methods
 - Knowledge of lesson plans
 - Knowledge of teaching performance
 - Knowledge of assessment
 - Teaching resources
 - Technological knowledge
- **Learner knowledge**
 - Knowledge of learner progress
 - Knowledge of student differences
 - Knowledge of learner values and prior learning
 - Knowledge of learner creativity and critical thinking
- **Professional attitudes and values**
 - Knowledge of professionalism
 - Knowledge of teaching community
 - Knowledge of CPD
 - Knowledge of professional passion
- **Knowledge of teaching practice and context**
 - Knowledge of learning beyond the language classroom
 - Research-based reflective teaching

Figure 1. Vietnamese ETCF

As mentioned, the ETCF, a working framework, has been used as a reference for planning, designing and organizing CPD activities to promote the quality of Vietnamese EFL teachers. In this current study, the framework is used to investigate EFL teachers' expectations of CDP activities.

Related Studies

Hustler et al. (2003) used a survey and a case study phase to collect data from a sample of 22 schools across the United Kingdom. The authors aimed to provide a baseline and facilitate subsequent monitoring of the impact of teachers' preceding CPD, attitudes, and expectations. The study found that most teachers were satisfied with their previous CPD activities due to their relevance and applicability to their teaching in practice. However, the CPD activities with one-fits-all caused some negative feelings since they did not match the teachers' existing knowledge, experience, and needs. Most existing CPD activities mainly focused on developing teachers' teaching skills and subject knowledge. Although the teachers highly valued the following CPD activities, including research, award-bearing courses or international visits, they rarely participated in those events. Besides, the teachers seemed to prefer the traditional notions of CPD, such as courses, conferences, and in-service training days, to other CPD activities.

Alibakhshi and Dehvari (2015) conducted their study to explore Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions of CPD and identify their preferred CPD activities. The study was designed as phenomenological research with the participation of twenty Iranian teachers. The results revealed that the teachers believed in the contributions of CPD to entailing skills development, encouraging lifelong learning, keeping up to date, learning for interest, and revitalizing the teaching profession. Besides, the teachers developed their professionals by working, participating in formal education, attending workshops/conferences, and presenting in these CPD events.

Utami et al. (2019) attempted to investigate the interaction of the CPD involvement and Indonesian EFL teachers' perceptions and practices in their teaching. Six Indonesian teachers participated in the study through interviews and observations. The study found that there was a partial relationship between the involvement in CPD and the alignment of these teachers' perceptions and practices. Teacher enthusiasm was indicated as the leading indicator for the alignment in their perceptions and practices.

Derakhshan et al. (2020) aimed to explore Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions and needs of CPD activities. The authors used three questionnaires, including the Teacher Professional Development Needs Questionnaire, an English Language

Teachers' Views of Research Questionnaire, and a Characteristics of Successful EFL Teachers Questionnaire, to collect data from 177 EFL teachers in Iran. The study revealed that the teachers' views of research and their CPD needs were positively correlated with their success in teaching. Based on the findings, the authors were supposed that the more positive attitudes towards CPD these teachers hold, the better teaching performance could be.

The previous studies have indicated the importance of CPD in EFL teachers' performances in practice. However, to the best knowledge of the researchers of this current study, none of them has been conducted and reported Vietnamese EFL high school teachers' expectations of CPD activities and the effects of their demographics, such as gender, teaching experience, age, and undergraduate major on their expectations of CPD activities. As a consequence, this study addressed two main research questions:

1. What do EFL teachers expect of CPD activities?
2. How do teacher demographics affect their expectations of CPD activities?

Methodology

Design and Instruments

The current study was designed as a descriptive study, using a mixed-methods approach to investigate EFL high school teachers' expectations of CPD and the influence of teacher demographics on their expectations. A questionnaire was designed to survey EFL teachers' expectations of CPD activities. The 23-item questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree was designed to represent the CPD activities covering five domains of the ETCF, including subject knowledge (seven items), pedagogical knowledge (six items), learner knowledge (four items), professional attitudes and values (four items), and practice and context of language teaching (two items).

Qualitative data were gathered by semi-structured interviews. Interviews aimed to gain deeper understanding of teachers' expectations of CPD activities, especially what CPD activities participants expect to participate in and why they are interested in engaging in those activities.

Participants

Two hundred twenty-four EFL high school teachers working in the central city of the Mekong Delta in Vietnam participated in the current survey. The summary of participant demographics is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants for the survey

| Variables | | N | Percentage |
|---------------------|--|-----|------------|
| Gender | Male | 51 | 22.8% |
| | Female | 173 | 77.2% |
| Age | Young (20~39) | 107 | 47.7% |
| | Middle-aged (40~59) | 117 | 52.3% |
| Teaching experience | <10 | 74 | 33% |
| | >=10 | 150 | 67% |
| Undergraduate major | Teaching English as a foreign language | 208 | 92.9% |
| | English linguistics and literature | 16 | 7.1% |

As can be seen from Table 1, the number of female participants is around three times bigger than that of the male ones. It is popular in the Vietnamese context that more females get involved in English teaching job. The distribution of participants regarding age range is somehow equal. In terms of teaching experience, two thirds of the participants have served as English teachers for ten or more than ten years. The majority of participants attended ELT programs as their undergraduate field of study.

Six out of 224 participants volunteered to partake in the individual semi-structured interviews. These interviewees were invited according to the average mean scores of their expectations in the survey results. Specifically, three teachers, named A, B, and C, gained the highest mean scores, and three others, named D, E, and F, earned the lowest means. Table 2 summarizes the information of the interviewees.

Table 2. Participants for interviews

| Variables | A | B | C | D | E | F |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Gender | Female | Female | Male | Female | Male | Male |
| Age | 20s | 30s | 20s | 40s | 50s | 50s |
| Years of teaching experience | <10 | <10 | <10 | >10 | >10 | >10 |
| Undergraduate major | Teaching EFL | Teaching EFL | English Linguistics and Literature | Teaching EFL | English Linguistics and Literature | English Linguistics and Literature |
| Mean scores | 5 | 4.96 | 4.93 | 1.04 | 1.02 | 1 |

Table 2 showed that out of the six participants who gained the highest mean scores in expectations of CPD activities were teachers with fewer than ten years of teaching experience. On the other hand, those who obtained the lowest mean scores in expecting CPD activities were middle-aged and experienced ones. Regarding undergraduate major, those holding degrees in English Linguistics and Literature expressed less expectations of CPD activities.

Data Analysis

For the quantitative data analysis, all data were subjected to SPSS version 20.0. First, a Descriptive Statistics test was employed to examine the average mean score of the EFL teachers' expectations of CPD activities. A Descriptive Statistics Frequencies test was then computed to check whether participants' responses to the questionnaire were normally distributed. The result identified a normal distribution of participants' responses collected from the questionnaire ($M=3.98$; $Median=4.01$; $Skewness=-.14$). A One-Sample T-test was analyzed to determine whether any significant difference between the mean score showing EFL teachers' expectations of CPD activities and a critical value in Oxford (1990)'s scale could be found. In light of Oxford (1990), the keys to understanding one's perception of a variable under exploration, in a five-point Likert scale, include four levels such as low (ranging from 1.0 to 2.4), medium (ranging from 2.5 to 3.5), high (ranging from 3.6 to 4.4), and very high (ranging from 4.5 to 5.0). Finally, One-Way ANOVA tests were administered to test the influence of teachers' demographics on their expectations of CPD activities. For all analyses, differences were considered significant if $p < .05$ and vice versa. Finally, effect size was considered if $p < .05$. According to Cohen (2013), if Eta-squared value (η^2) is from .01 to <.06, the effect size is small and from 0.6 to <.14, medium. If the Eta-squared is >.14, the effect is large.

To ensure the reliability of qualitative data, Vietnamese as the mother tongue was used throughout all interviews to avoid ambiguity and enabled participants to express their ideas clearly and comprehensively. All interviews were recorded and note-taken under the participants' consent, which allowed the researchers to review data later. Any unclear information arising from reviewing the interview data was clarified via emails and/or directed phone calls with the interviewees. The researchers analyzed the data according to themes, following these steps. First, interview transcripts were read through to improve the researchers' familiarity with the data. Then, all excerpts of similar codes relevant to the interviewees' expectations of CPD activities were differently colored. Based on the codes, results on themes and sub-themes were identified. The two researchers coded interview data, deduced themes and sub-themes independently and then compared the results of analyzing qualitative data. Where differences in data coding and themes deduction between the two researchers existed, the researchers asked for consultancy and assistance from a colleague who is experienced in studies on EFL teacher professional development. All excerpts which were used as direct quotes in presenting the study results were translated from Vietnamese into English and cross-checked by the two English instructors whose Vietnamese and English are fluent.

Results

EFL Teachers' Expectations of CPD Activities

First, a Descriptive Statistics test was run to investigate the average level of participants' expectations of CPD activities. Table 3 displays the results of the test.

Table 3. Participants' expectations of contents of training courses (N=224)

| Clusters | Min. | Max. | Mean | SD |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| Subject knowledge | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.12 | .74 |
| Pedagogical knowledge | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.14 | .72 |
| Learner knowledge | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.80 | .83 |
| Professional attitudes and values | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.03 | .72 |
| Practice and context of language teaching | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.80 | .87 |
| Total | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.98 | .69 |

The mean score of participants' expectations was high ($M=3.98$). Then, a One-Sample T-Test was administered to check whether there was any difference between the mean score ($M=3.98$) and the test value 3.5, the accepted mean score for

a medium level (Oxford, 1990). A significant difference the two means was found ($t=11.26$; $df=223$; $p=.00$). In conclusion, the participants highly expected CPD activities. Also, the interviews indicated that participants were highly aware of the important role of CPD activities in their teaching profession. Teachers A and E said,

"CPD is extremely important to me because I do not have much teaching experience. Therefore, I want to participate in CPD to improve my teaching knowledge and performance." (A; Female; 20s; Less than ten years of teaching experience; TEFL degree; $M=5.00$)

"Sure. I have no doubt about the value of CPD activities because they keep me updated with new knowledge and skills for my teaching." (E; Male; 50s; More than ten years of teaching experience; English linguistics and literature degree; $M=1.02$)

As clearly seen in the excerpts, participants acknowledged the undeniable role of CPD activities in updating pedagogical knowledge and practices of those methods or techniques in their teaching contexts.

The test results also showed that the teachers expected to learn more about *pedagogical knowledge*, receiving the highest mean score among the five domains ($M=4.14$). On the other hand, they seemed to lack willingness to have training on learner knowledge ($M=3.80$) and practice and context of language teaching ($M=3.80$).

Participants in the interviews indicated that they desired to learn more about teaching methods, testing and assessment, and using ICT in language teaching. Sharing his wish to further study about teaching methods, Teacher C reckoned,

"I want to be involved in training on teaching methods the most since I want to be able to use an array of teaching techniques and activities to meet my students' needs, who have different learning styles." (C; Male; 20s; Less than ten years of teaching experience; English linguistics and literature; $M=4.39$)

Teaching methods comprise the principles and techniques which aim to enable students to achieve higher learning outcomes. As a consequence, the teachers' high expectations of training on teaching methods in this current study were explainable.

Teacher D showing her interest in being trained on how to use formative assessment as an alternative or an addition in EFL classes said,

"There have been several innovations in English teaching in our country. One of them is assessing learners' language performances, using both summative and formative assessment. I want to learn more about it." (D; Female; 40s; More than ten years of teaching experience; TEFL degree; $M=1.04$)

Vietnamese educational system has witnessed an innovation in testing and assessment in English teaching and learning, which is the use both summative and formative assessment instead of just focusing on summative type. To realize the innovation, Vietnamese teachers should be ready for assessing EFL students' language learning formatively. Consequently, that could explain for teachers' high expectation of CPD activities related to testing and assessment.

Finally, Teacher B, who was interested in the interaction between ICT and English teaching and learning since she was intensely aware of the potential effects of using ICT on English teaching practices, remarked,

"The present era is very different from what I experienced in the past due to the presence of ICT. ICT brings many benefits to English teaching and learning. Therefore, I want to have more chances to improve my capacities in using ICT in teaching." (B; Female; 30s; Less than ten years of teaching experience; TEFL degree; $M=4.96$)

Participants' expectations of improving their ICT skills is a means to realizing the government policy on using blended learning in foreign language classes in Vietnam.

Regarding trainings on knowledge of learners, some teachers, especially novice ones, seemed to under-evaluate their practical contributions to enhancing their teaching practices. Teachers C and D stated,

"...I am not sure about the practical values of trainings on knowledge of learners. I am highly aware of the differences among my students and their effects on my teaching in practice. However, the high awareness has not helped me much as I indeed do not have enough time to pay attention to individual students due to the big amount of teaching contents I need to cover..." (C; Male; 20s; Less than ten years of teaching experience; English linguistics and literature; $M=4.39$)

"Class-size is a problem; some classes accommodate over 45 students... I even do not have enough time to run after all teaching contents set in the curriculum, let alone catering students' differences." (D; Female; 40s; More than ten years of teaching experience; TEFL degree; $M=1.04$)

Besides, waste of time and lack of interest were the main reasons the teachers resisted conducting their action research, which increases practitioners' understanding of teaching practices and contexts. As a result, they were unwilling to participate in the CPD events or trainings on research skills. Teachers E and F shared,

"It takes a lot of time to complete action research. As you know, teachers have several things to do, such as lesson planning, marking, writing reports, etc... Therefore, I do not like doing research at all." (*E; Male; 50s; More than ten years of teaching experience; English linguistics and literature degree; M=1.02*)

"I am not interested in doing research. It takes a lot of my time to be in class and take care of my students, even when they are out of the classrooms. Therefore, doing research is something unpractical to me. To be honest, it is just a waste of time to me." (*F; Male; 50s; More than ten years of teaching experience; English linguistics and literature degree; M=1.00*)

According to the presented excerpts, a working day of a teacher is almost fully occupied with lesson planning, taking care of students' learning, completing school paperwork, and so on. In addition to such a hectic schedule, a lack of understanding of the essential role of action research in teaching could explain for teachers' under-assessment of the role of doing action research in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning.

In summary, this current study showed that the EFL teachers highly expected the CPD activities due to its contributions to their teaching profession. Among different types of CPD activities, the teachers significantly desired to participate in trainings on enhancing their pedagogical knowledge, especially teaching methods, student learning assessment, and technological innovations. Trainings on knowledge of learners and research skills were perceived as time-consuming and unpractical to teacher development by some teachers who lacked expectations of CPD activities.

Influence of Teacher Demographics on Their Expectations of CPD Activities

One-Way ANOVA tests were run to check whether the participants' backgrounds affected their expectations of CPD activities. Table 4 displays the results of the tests.

Table 4. The effects of participants' background on their CPD expectations

| Variables | | N | Means | SD | p | η^2 |
|---------------------|--|-----|-------|-----|-----|----------|
| Gender | Male | 51 | 3.96 | .66 | .84 | .01 |
| | Female | 173 | 3.99 | .70 | | |
| Age | Young (20~39) | 107 | 4.25 | .51 | .00 | .14 |
| | Middle-aged (40~59) | 117 | 3.74 | .74 | | |
| Teaching experience | <10 | 74 | 4.28 | .46 | .00 | .09 |
| | >=10 | 150 | 3.84 | .73 | | |
| Undergraduate major | Teaching English as a foreign language | 208 | 4.01 | .68 | .03 | .02 |
| | English linguistics and literature | 16 | 3.62 | .73 | | |

According to the test results, the variables of *age*, *teaching experience*, and *undergraduate major*, with p-values <.05, had significant effects on the participants' expectations of CPD activities. The effect size of variables such as *age*, *teaching experience*, and *undergraduate major* on expectations of CPD activities was determined by the Eta-squared. As can be seen from Table 4, the large effect size could be observed in the variable of *age* ($\eta^2=.80$), the medium effect size, in the variable of *teaching experience* ($\eta^2=.09$), and the small effect size, in the variable of *undergraduate major* ($\eta^2=.02$). In other words, teachers' expectations of CPD activities were strongly affected by their age. The Eta-squared value indicated a medium effect of teachers' teaching experience on their expectations of CPD activities. The influence of teachers' undergraduate major on their willingness to pursue CPD activities was small.

Regarding age, the youngsters wanted to take part in CPD more than their counterparts ($M_{\text{Young}}=4.25$; $M_{\text{middle-aged}}=3.74$). To explain age-related factors on teacher expectations of CPD, Teacher B said,

"In my opinion, the novice teachers like me need to participate in a lot of CPD activities in order to enrich our teaching experience and improve our teaching performance as well. As a consequence, I would like to engage in CPD activities whenever I have chance. I have many experienced colleagues, and they encouraged me to partake in these activities when I am still young and healthy." (*B; Female; 30s; Less than ten years of teaching experience; TEFL degree; Rural; M=4.96*)

Teacher F, who was in the 50s, shared his ideas about teacher motivation for English teaching when they become older. Moreover, he added age-related issues like health problems, which reduced his desire to participate in CPD activities. He said,

"I have some age-related issues, specifically health problems. which have not allowed me to participate in CPD activities. Therefore, it is a bit stressful to me when some announce the coming activities." (*F; Male; 50s; More than ten years of teaching experience; English linguistics and literature degree; Rural; M=1.00*)

As observed, the interaction between teacher's age and expectations of CPD activities was strong in this current study. Senior teachers tend to less expect of CPD activities.

In terms of teaching experience, the veteran teachers expected from CPD less than those under ten years in the teaching profession ($M < 10 = 4.28$; $M \geq 10 = 3.84$). According to Teacher E, a veteran teacher, most other veteran teachers seemed to mistrust the values of CPD in their further teaching practices. He remarked,

"Have been working in this profession for more than 20 years, I am strongly confident in my teaching knowledge and skills. Consequently, it seemed a bit meaningless to me when partaking in CPD activities. I have not gained much useful knowledge from them." (E; Male; 50s; More than ten years of teaching experience; English linguistics and literature degree; Rural; $M = 1.02$)

On the other hand, the less experienced teachers were aware that lacking teaching experience was a significant barrier in their successful teaching practices. The high awareness of CPD importance increased their willingness to join in these events. Teacher A stated,

"CPD is extremely important to me because I do not have much teaching experience. Therefore, I want to participate in CPD to improve my teaching knowledge and performance." (A; Female; 20s; Less than ten years of teaching experience; TEFL degree; Urban; $M = 5.00$)

Being in the career of teaching for a long time enables experienced teachers to examine procedures and impacts of different teaching methods or techniques on student learning. The combination of trials and errors helps experienced teachers figure out which teaching methods or techniques work best for students. On the other hand, novice teachers show to be more eager to engage in CPD activities in order to offset the lack of teaching experience. The interaction between teachers' teaching experience and their expectations of CPD activities was remarkable in this current study.

Another difference was found in the *undergraduate major* variable. Specifically, the participants who graduated with TEFL degrees expected CPD activities more than those with English Linguistics and Literature degrees ($M_{\text{TeachingEFL}} = 4.01$; $M_{\text{Linguistics\&Literature}} = 3.62$). It could be explained in terms of the more one knows, the more one needs to learn more to know more. In this case, teachers who graduated from TEFL degrees tended to expect to learn more about the field. Both Teacher B, graduating with the TEFL degree, and Teacher E, obtaining the English linguistics and literature degree, agreed that pre-service training played an essential role in the teachers' teaching passion. They said,

"During my learning time at the university, I was trained to become an English teacher. I think this time made a significant impact on my perspectives about the nobleness of this job. As a result, it also fostered my motivation for teaching and becoming an effective teacher." (B; Female; 30s; Less than ten years of teaching experience; TEFL degree; Rural; $M = 4.96$)

"I know that becoming a teacher is interesting. However, I used to dream about becoming an entrepreneur. That is why I chose English Linguistics and Literature for my undergraduate program. [...] Most of instructional strategies I have used in my teaching are from my own learning from observation and learning by doing, not from what I learned in the university..." (E; Male; 50s; More than ten years of teaching experience; English linguistics and literature degree; Rural; $M = 1.02$).

Pre-service EFL teacher education programs not only provide future teachers with opportunities to get exposed to theories and methods in TEFL, but also professional learning experiences in both university halls and school settings. Therefore, those who graduated from the ELT major were well-informed of what teaching English means and what the job requires them of, so they expressed more expectations of further CPD activities than those in English linguistics and culture major. Therefore, the interaction between teacher's undergraduate major and expectations of CPD activities was slightly observable in this current study.

In short, except for teachers' gender, other demographics, including age, teaching experience, and undergraduate major, did significantly affect the teachers' expectations of CPD activities. It clearly emerged from the results that elderly and experienced teachers seemed to have less desire to participate in CPD activities compared to those early in their teaching career. Besides, the teachers graduating with TEFL degrees displayed higher expectations of CPD activities than those with English linguistics and literature degrees.

Discussions

EFL Teachers' Expectations of CPD Programs

Participants' general level of expectations of CPD activities was high ($M = 3.98$; $SD = 0.69$), which indicated EFL teachers' strong awareness of the role of CPD during their professional lives. The result of this current study aligned with what was found in previous studies have confirming the contributions of CPD activities to developing teacher competencies (e.g., Bailey et al., 2001; Cordingley et al., 2003; Derakhshan et al., 2020; Falk, 2001; Richards & Farrell, 2005; Villegas-Reimers, 2003). As teachers' readiness for participating in CPD activities increases, a promising effect of teaching will be observed.

Of the five domains of knowledge and skills indicated in the Vietnamese ETCF, the teachers showed to be interested in attending CPD activities on pedagogical knowledge most. In the study by Shishavan and Sadeghi (2009), Iranian EFL teachers also agreed with the idea that good knowledge of pedagogy and teaching techniques and methods is a prominent characteristic of an effective teacher. Results from interviews showed that the EFL teachers expressed their learning need in using formative assessment as reforming how to assess students' learning outcomes in English classes. From summative to formative assessment, is an educational innovation in Vietnam (Thao & Mai, 2020). Therefore, such an innovation made higher demands on EFL teachers' understanding and using formative assessment.

This current study unpacked one important learning expectation of EFL teachers, which was improving their knowledge and skills in using technology in teaching. According to Azmi (2017) and Ilter (2009), using technology in EFL teaching and learning brings uncountable benefits, such as motivating, providing opportunities to develop and create different, enjoyable tasks, and offering an active learning environment for EFL students. However, the implementation of ICT in Vietnam is relatively new (Dinh, 2015). Therefore, participating in the training on using ICT in EFL classrooms was significantly crucial to EFL teachers.

Results triangulated from the questionnaire and interviews indicated a medium level of EFL teachers' expectation of trainings on knowledge of learners and knowledge of teaching contexts (i.e., doing action research). Both of these types of knowledge and skills should have been highly needed by in-service teachers as they function as keys to understanding learners and trying different methods and techniques to improve teaching and learning. However, class-size and heavy teaching curriculum prevented teachers from expressing their wants and needs to get involved in these professional development events. Forty or fifty students per class becomes a considerable problem for Vietnamese instructors (Bock, 2000; Duong & Nguyen, 2021). Consequently, even though the teachers might have well recognized the role of knowledge of educational psychology or skills in conducting classroom-based research, possible CPD activities on these contents might not work well in school settings, given class-size and packed teaching contents. This result in this study is in line with Pham and Hayden (2019)'s research concluding that research productivity in humanities and social science, including language teaching and learning, is low.

The Effects of EFL Teachers' Demographics on Their Expectations of CPD Activities

Gender was not observed to have an effect on teachers' professional development in this study. In general, both male or female teachers were quite keen on CPD activities ($M=3.99$ and $M=3.66$, respectively). The results were similar to Torff and Sessions's (2008) study, which indicated that gender did not affect teacher perceptions of the CPD importance. This result of the current study could be understood as teachers regardless of their gender need to continue learning through their professional lives.

This current study found a significant interaction between participants' age, teaching experience and undergraduate major and expectations of CPD activities. In terms of age and teaching experience, the younger teachers tended to expect more of CPD activities. As acknowledged well, the experienced teachers who have been in their teaching job long enough face fewer challenges in teaching than the novice ones. As a result, they do not need many CPD activities the new teachers expect of. These findings are similar and different from Torff and Sessions (2008)'s study which found out that teaching experience differentiated teacher attitudes towards CPD, not age. In the early stage of the teaching profession, young and less experienced teachers were supportive of CPD.

Pre-service teacher education plays an essential role in informing teachers' judgments and beliefs of a type of teacher they will become in their teaching profession (Castellanos Jaimes, 2013; Clark & Newberry, 2019). Though teachers holding TEFL degrees or English linguistics and literature degrees perform the same task of teaching, their educational background, perceptions of what teaching job encompasses and perspectives about the role CPD activities play in promoting teachers' expertise and effectiveness are distinctive. In this study, a remarkable difference in teachers' expectations of CPD activities was caused by their undergraduate majors, in which the teachers with TEFL degrees desired to engage in CPD activities more than their counterparts, those with English linguistics and literature degrees.

Conclusions

CPD is undoubtedly critical to developing teacher competencies. Therefore, it is essential to enhance teachers' willingness to participate in the CPD events by making teachers aware of the values of CPD activities in their teaching performances and students' learning outcomes. Teaching requires teachers' on-going learning; therefore, regardless of how long teachers have been in the job and what educational background teachers held, teachers need to update their knowledge and skills via CPD activities.

Limitations

Although the study achieved its aims, limitations were unavoidable. First, the number of the participants volunteered to take part in the interviews was meager and inequivalent to the sample size. Therefore, in-depth understandings about teachers' expectations of CPD activities were not possibly representative of the study sample, which more or less threatened the external validity of the study. Next, the study just focused on collecting self-reported data from EFL teachers as a recall survey or interviews and did not observe teachers at work, which hindered the researchers from

triangulating data on and subsequently the results of teachers' expectations of CPD activities. The study should have evaluated the impact of participants' attending previous CDP activities on their expectations of learning to develop their teaching profession found in this study.

Recommendations

Further research should consider increasing the number of interviewees, at least ten percent compared to the sample size. Sampling technique should consider balancing teachers' demographics, including gender, age, teaching experience, and undergraduate major to enhance the external validity of the study. Regarding the research topic, an evaluation of impact and sustainability of CPD activities EFL teachers have ever attended could be a worth-doing investigation, in which data could be collected from a survey and classroom observations. This current study also showed that EFL teachers did not highly expect trainings on knowledge of learners and action research. Studies exploring factors affecting the teachers' under-expectation of these domains in the English Teacher Competency Framework is therefore recommended. Better insights into why and what EFL teachers are keen on certain CPD activities certainly contribute to improving the quality of teachers and English teaching and learning accordingly.

Authorship Contribution Statement

Trinh: Conceptualizing the study, monitoring the study, ensuring the quality, editing the report. Le: Reviewing literature, collecting data, analyzing data and drafting the report.

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