



ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATIONAL SUPERVISION IN RELATION TO THEIR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF NORTHERN CYPRUS

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Abstract: This study aims at finding out English language teachers' perceptions of educational supervision in relation to their professional development through a small-scale case study carried out in higher education context in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). It commences with the theoretical underpinnings of dual terms, educational supervision and professional development in relation to English language teaching context. It continues with the study, the results of which show that the educational supervisor highlights the strengths of the English language teachers' performance and encourages them to reflect upon their weaknesses and finds some resolutions to overcome them. The paper concludes by presenting two basic consequences from the data of the study, which are on one side the remarkable difference between language teachers' beliefs and real experiences concerning educational supervision and on the other side their expectations about effective realization of educational supervision by supervisors.

Keywords: supervision, educational supervision, professional development, assessment.

Özet: Bu çalışma Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyetindeki (KKTC) yüksek öğretim bağlamında yürütülen küçük ölçekli bir durum çalışması yoluyla İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleki gelişimleri ile ilgili olarak eğitim denetimini nasıl algıladıklarını araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. İngiliz dili öğretimi bağlamı ile ilgili olarak eğitim denetimi ve mesleki gelişim terimlerinin kuramsal alt yapıları ile başlamaktadır. Eğitim denetleyicisinin İngilizce öğretmenlerinin performansının olumlu yönlerini vurguladığını, onları zayıf oldukları noktalarda düşünmeye cesaretlendirdiğini ve zayıf olunan noktaları gidermek için çözümler bulunduğunu gösteren bir çalışma ile devam etmektedir. Çalışma bir taraftan dil öğretmenlerinin eğitim denetimi ile ilgili inanışları ve gerçek tecrübeler arasında göze çarpan farklılığı, diğer taraftan denetleyiciler tarafından gerçekleştirilecek etkili eğitim denetimi ile ilgili dil öğretmenlerinin beklentilerini sunarak bitmektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: denetim, eğitim denetimi, mesleki gelişim, değerlendirme.

Introduction

In a rapidly changing world, where knowledge, concepts, technology, philosophies, in fact, almost everything is swiftly altering, education has also been exposed to some fundamental changes. It is no longer confined to considering human needs and the requirements of the present but it is to address to reflect on the development of human skills and capacities, and the necessities of the future. In that 'global' village, the current era is shaped by a tremendous progress of knowledge, which leads to an explosion in teaching and learning (Wallace, 1991) and

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which requires the language teachers, at the level of renewed information, to maintain a continuous and sustained professional development. Teachers cannot ignore professional growth as it raises the educational standards, which revolves around the issue of providing equal and sufficient opportunities for everybody (Hargreaves AND Fullan, 1992), so the teachers need to continually equip themselves with the knowledge and skills to improve efficient opportunities for their students. Moreover, the nature of teaching demands that the teachers engage in career –long professional development (Day,1999) as teaching expertise does mature over the span of a career (Tom, 1997).

In this respect, English Language Teaching (ELT) has its own progress and is highly demanding due to several reasons, which implies that English language teachers are to keep up with the novel innovations and recent changes in this field. As Curtis suggests (cited in Bailey, Curtis and Nunan, 2001), staying abreast of the rapidly evolving field of ELT is a valid reason for participating in professional development. In the same vein, Pachier and Field (1997) proposes that being an effective foreign language teacher requires a commitment to keep up with the developments in the field and a willingness to engage in continuous professional development. Furthermore, Çoşkuner (2001) argues that English language teachers should be able to satisfy the expectations of regularly increasing number of students by using up-to-date teaching methodologies performed adeptly with dedication and enthusiasm. To achieve this purpose, they should be concerned with recent knowledge and comprehend many factors and variables that control and govern the learning and teaching in the classroom context.

To maintain ongoing professional development, English language teachers get involved in many professional activities or build up their own self-development strategies either individually or collaboratively. Peer-coaching, study groups, action research, mentoring, teaching portfolios, team teaching, and in-service training are some of the effective professional development strategies. Clark (cited in Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992, p.81) proposes that professional development is basically ‘a solitary journey’; however, almost all teachers need assistance and support during that journey from colleagues or supervisors to enhance their own development, by which they can gain an inside perspective on other teachers’ experiences and raise their awareness via reflecting on their own situation. At this point, Edge (cited in Bailey et.al.,2001) notes that working in isolation holds teachers back and subjective experience shared with no one cannot contribute to their development, but through the quality collaboration, teachers have a chance to escape from subjectivity and draw some conclusions regarding their experiences and opinions.

In this vein, educational supervision, a cooperative problem-solving process, can be regarded as a key concept in English language teachers’ professional development. Many studies were conducted related to the role of educational supervision in teachers’ professional development; for instance, Wallace (1991), Ur (1996), Freeman and Johnson (1998), Freeman (2001), and Richards and Farrell (2005) write about teachers’ professional development by emphasizing the vitality of self-development in their career. Moreover, Okeoforth and Poole (1992) studied on the role of educational supervision in teachers’ professional growth.

The aim of this paper is to find out how English language teachers perceive educational supervision relevant to their professional development through a small-scale case study done in higher education context in Northern Cyprus. After commencing with the theoretical

underpinnings of dual terms, educational supervision and professional development in relation to English language teaching context, the paper continues with the study, the results of which exhibit that the educational supervisor stresses the strengths of the English language teachers' performance, stimulates them to reflect upon their drawbacks and finds some resolutions to overcome them. The paper concludes by presenting two main consequences from the data of the study, which are on one side the striking difference between language teachers' beliefs and real experiences regarding educational supervision and on the other side their expectations concerning effective applications of educational supervision by supervisors.

There is no agreement on the precise definition of the term 'educational supervision' due to certain differences in orientations, perceptions, comprehension and familiarity with aspects of the framework and also analysis of its content. To illustrate that point, Allan (1990) describes 'educational supervision' as a set of duties and a comprehensive process which aim to help teachers to develop their profession to achieve their pedagogical objectives while Daresh (2001, p.25) defines this term in a more comprehensive way as a dynamic process that leads to studying and improving all factors that affect the education situation. On the other hand, according to Kilminster et. al. (2007, p.2), educational supervision is the provision of guidance and feedback on matters of personal, professional and educational development in the context of trainee's experience taking place.

From Bailey's point of view (2006), the modern educational supervision is characterized as follows:

- It is a technical process which aims to improve teaching and learning through the care, guidance and simulation of continued development for not only teachers but also any other person having an impact on the educational context.
- It is a consultation process, based on respect for the opinion of teachers who are mainly affected by the work of supervision.
- It is a collaborative process in different stages since it welcomes various views that represent the proper relationship between the supervisor and the teacher so as to address the educational problems and find appropriate solutions.
- It is an academic process which encourages research and experimentation whose results can be used to improve setting and achieving clear, observable and measurable objectives in the educational setting.
- It is a leadership process which requires the supervisor to have the ability to coordinate teachers' efforts by aiming to achieve the teaching objectives.
- It is a humanitarian process in which the supervisors recognize the value of individuals as human being so that they can build a mutual trust between themselves and the teachers and know the exact and varying capacities of each teacher they deal with.

By considering all these dimensions, a series of functions are possible to be defined (Kadushin, 1992; Salaman, 1995; Brown and Bourne, 1995; Smith, 2005), which are grouped into six main categories stated as follows:

- Development of curricula
- Supervision and organization of the educational setting
- Supervision of the teachers' professional development
- Supervision of the teaching methods and techniques
- Supervision of the novice teachers
- Evaluation of the educational process

To fulfill the forementioned functions of educational supervision as well as its general and specific objectives, some processes are suggested to be followed, which, in fact, dates back to some ideas put forward by Allan (1960) and Loomis (1960), but later these processes have been renewed and classified recently as follows (Romesh, 2005, p.163):

- Planning Process

Thinking	Scheduling
Determining objectives	Forecasting
Determining procedures	Programming

- Organizing Process

Establishing standards	Coordinating
Resource allocating	Delegating
Establishing	Designing
Relationship	Organization
Distribution Function	Structure

- Leading Process

Decision	Advising
Making	Communicating
Selecting	Encouraging
Stimulating	Suggesting
Initiating	Innovating
Demonstrating	Motivating
Facilitating	Illustrating

- Controlling Process

Directing	Corrective action
Expediting	Reprimanding
Applying	Regulating
Taking	

- Assessing Process

Judging performance	
Measuring performance	
Researching	

As has been indicated, different processes represent different ways of thinking about the same behaviour and have their place in educational supervision, which reveals what process really

means as defined to be series of events forming a recognizable pattern that recurs often enough so that one may observe the pattern over and over again till having its own place in supervision. These processes are of great vitality to achieve general objectives of educational supervision such as integrating different knowledge and skills to create a positive teaching atmosphere and to help the community to develop in terms of economical, social and cultural aspects in addition to its specific objectives as follows (MoNE, Oman, 1998):

- stimulate teachers' attentions and get them actively involved in teaching process and its improvement, which will provide the teachers with continuous professional development.
- help teachers to realize the real objectives of education at the school where they work and use effective teaching methods to achieve these goals.
- assist teachers to better understand the needs and expectations of the students and to spend more effort to satisfy these desires.
- improve the school atmosphere and strengthen the relationship among teachers and encourage cooperation and academic unity.
- make sure of teachers' continuous progress and professional success.
- encourage teachers' enthusiasm and increase their competitive but friendly behaviour.
- create an appropriate atmosphere for new teachers and make them appertained in the teaching.
- evaluate the results that lead to increase in teachers' effort and success in the direction of the principles of the school.
- support teachers to diagnose the difficulties in the teaching process and to make strategic plans for overcoming or avoiding them.

When it comes to modern educational supervision, it has been viewed to be a complicated task requiring keen and penetrating work of supervisors thereby teachers can learn, grow, and improve in a planned way, which truly aims to affect improvement in the total educational program. Also, modern supervision is taken for coordination and integration of an educational effort. As another major emphasis in modern supervision, it is essential to note that it centres around the relationship between supervision and curriculum development by paying attention to harnessing and harmonising of theoretical learning and work experience, balancing, relating, integrating the general education in language, literature and social sciences with diversified courses. Moreover, it gives prominence to curricular problems such as the development of materials, the fullest use of resources, the capitalization upon parental resources and the advancement of curriculum planning procedures (Romes, 2005, p.170). In the final line, the current nature of modern educational supervision can be defined as a democratic, strategic, resourceful, and coordinating process during which supervisors and teachers come together to stimulate discussions and suggestions, provoke reflective thoughts and weed out deficiencies in the educational setting.

Methodology

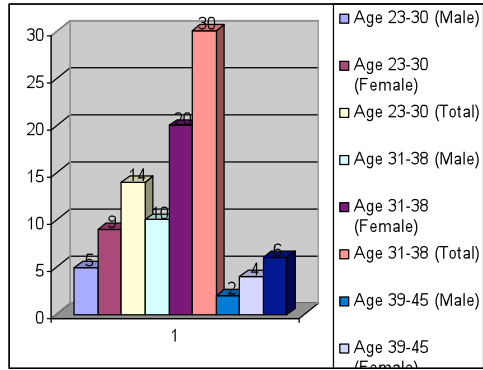
The aim of this study is to find out through qualitative and quantitative analysis of collected data whether the educational supervision plays a minor or major role in English language teachers' professional development and also what language teachers' perceptions are concerning educational supervision.

Participants

42 non-native (Turkish and Cypriot) and 8 native (English, American and Australian) teachers working at English Preparatory Schools at three different universities in North Cyprus

participated in this study. Teachers' ages ranged from 23-45 -years-old with an average age of 34. The number of female teachers was higher than that of male teachers as seen in the graphic below.

Graphic 1. Sex and age distribution of the learners surveyed



At English Preparatory Schools (EPS) of these three universities, there are mainly two units, which are intensive English programs and faculty English programs. In the former unit, instructors are required to teach minimum 20 hours per week which can sometimes exceed up to 22 hours. Two language teachers, called ‘partners’ share one class, the level of which can vary from A1 and A2 (breakthrough and way stage) to B1 and B2 (threshold and vantage). In the latter unit, the instructors teach English for Specific Purposes to a number of departments such as computer engineering, architecture, tourism, accounting, economics and finance, and so on.

Language teachers at EPS are to have 7.00 points from IELTS examination or a certificate from CELTA courses in the application process. When accepted to the EPS, they have a three-day orientation, and then attend the regular meetings held by EPS administrators as to weekly announcements, schedules, materials, problems and solutions. Furthermore, one or two, respectively, more experienced teachers come to the classrooms and observe the less experienced ones and provide them with slight feedback, which is done, generally, once a semester. Relevant to the other activities that will support teachers professionally, it can be pointed out that seminars and teacher training programs are very rarely organized to which attendance is not obligatory.

Research Instruments

Pre-Questionnaire

A pre-questionnaire consisting of two sections was administered to the teachers before they started answering the post-questionnaire. The first section asked the subjects their age, gender, previous experience in the related field. The second section asked them what types of activities were used, how often, and for what purpose. The data included in this section was expounded in the previous part.

Post-Questionnaire

A post-questionnaire was administered to the teachers after their last English lesson in 2008- 2009 Academic Year. The purpose of the post-questionnaire was to find out English language teachers' perceptions of educational supervision in relation to their professional development, which was investigated in seven subcategories:

1. Teachers' experience
2. Educational leadership and humane relations
3. The curriculum and teaching methods / techniques
4. The students
5. Teaching materials and activities
6. Classroom management
7. Assessment

The content validity of this questionnaire was established through a review of five professors working in universities in North Cyprus, and then some slight changes were made based on their recommendations. Later, the questionnaire was piloted in a group of 10 English language teachers, who were also asked for their comments on thoroughness, appropriateness and ease of the survey instrument, which necessitated simplifying the wording of some items. After all revisions, to make sure of the reliability, the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was used and the reliability was (0.88) for the questionnaire.

Interviews

The researchers interviewed with each teacher to cross-check teachers' responses to the post-questionnaire and to find out more information on their responses which was not possible in the post-questionnaire.

Hence, interview questions contained three items:

1. *Do you give enough importance to your professional development? If no, what impedes you from keeping your continuous professional development?*
2. *Do you think that educational supervision is significant for your professional development?*
3. *Which ways of educational supervision are you familiar with?*

Data Analysis

Fifty copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the targeted sample at the end of 2008- 2009 Academic Year to choose the suitable statement given five point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD) and the return rate was 100% and the data was tabulated and analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Office Excel.

Results

Post-questionnaire

Table 1. Teachers' perceptions about the effect of educational supervision on English language teachers' professional development in terms of developing experiences in the field

No	The main fields and their sections	SA	A	N	D	SD
	1) Developing the teacher's experience					
1	Prepare the teacher's mind to accept the development by explaining the importance of the latest educational issues.	32.8%	58.8%	5.9%	2.5%	--
2	Encourage teachers to be aware of the latest educational issues in order to exchange successful experience with their colleagues.	47.1%	42%	6.7%	3.4%	0.8%
3	Guide the teachers to the books, research papers, and educational journals which may help them with professional development.	17.5%	38.8%	34.5%	8.4%	0.8%
4	Hold meetings with the teachers to study and discuss the educational circulars sent by the Ministry of Education	37%	47.9%	11.8%	--	3.4%
5	Encourage the teachers to the self-learning to update profession experiences.	32.8%	42.9%	20.2%	3.4%	0.8%
6	Encourage the teachers to conduct case-studies to solve some problems that they encounter.	21.5%	44.8%	25.2%	6.7%	1.7%
7	Encourage the teachers to continue their post-graduate studies to raise their professional and academic levels.	14.3%	35.3%	40.3%	9.2%	0.8%
9	Direct the teachers to benefit from TV and radio computer programs, and the Internet.	51.3%	34.5%	12.6%	0.8%	0.8%
10	Participate in organizing educational workshops, conferences, and symposiums and invite specialists in education to give lectures.	27.7%	40.3%	27.7%	3.4%	0.8%
11	Participate in organizing educational workshops, conferences, and symposiums and encourage teachers to give lectures.	36.1%	42.9%	16%	4.2%	0.8%
12	Nominate the teachers to attend educational workshops to encourage them to develop professionally.	46.2%	42.9%	8.4%	0.8%	1.7%
14	Specify the teachers' professional development needs.	47.1%	45.4%	5%	1.7%	0.8%
15	Advise the teachers to participate in different courses which help them to update their educational experiences.	42%	42. %9	11.8%	2.5%	0.8%

As can be seen from table 1, for most of the statements, the majority of the responses are on the agree side, which implies that most of the teachers contend the positive effect of educational supervision on developing their experiences in their field. Moreover, when looking specifically at the second item, it appears that 89% of teachers believe that supervisors encourage the teachers to be aware of the latest issues in the field. On the other hand, for statement seven, many neutral answers appear, which shows the lack of encouragement for post-graduate studies. Also, they perceive the supervisor as a professional who specifies teachers' needs and accordingly plans professional development activities.

Table 2. Teachers' perceptions about the effect of educational supervision on English language teachers' professional development in terms of educational leadership and humane relations

No	The main fields and their sections	SA	A	N	D	SD
	2) Educational leadership and humane relations					
16	Allow the teachers to act freely towards their duties to be accustomed to carrying out responsibilities.	31.9%	42%	19.3%	5%	1.7%
17	Distribute the responsibilities among the teachers in a suitable way relevant to their knowledge and professional abilities.	36.1%	46.2%	9.2%	6.7%	1.7%
18	Give opportunity to the teachers to express their professional opinions to gain benefit from them.	47.9%	36.1%	14.3%	1.7%	--

Table 2 suggests that almost all teachers agree the positive effect of the educational supervision in terms of educational leadership and humane relations. However, in statements sixteen and seventeen, some answers are on the disagree side. Although the percentage is low (6.7% and

8.4%), it seems that some problems are implied as to the case in which some supervisors do not let the teachers act freely, instead, use controlled supervision and imposed contacts.

Table 3. Teachers' perceptions about the effect of educational supervision on English language teachers' professional development in terms of the curriculum and teaching methods/techniques

No	The main fields and their sections	SA	A	N	D	SD
19	Train the teachers to use modern teaching techniques.	29.4%	41.2%	20.2%	8.4%	0.8%
20	Train the teachers to develop students' thinking skills.	43.7%	41.2%	11.8%	3.4%	--
21	Train the teachers to develop students' communication skills.	44.5%	28.6%	16.8%	10.1%	--
22	Direct the teachers to learn about the results of educational researches done on teaching techniques to use the most appropriate ones in their teaching.	25.2%	54.6%	14.3%	5.9%	--
23	Give opportunity to the teachers to use suitable teaching techniques for their students.	42.9%	43.7%	10.1%	3.4%	--
24	Conduct workshops, seminars, or micro-teaching to the English teachers in the school.	41.2%	37%	19.3%	1.7%	0.8%
25	Make the teachers familiar with the latest updated issues about the curriculum.	34.5%	42.9%	17.6%	5%	--
26	Let teachers discuss ways of solving any problem with the curriculum.	40.3%	47.1%	11.8%	0.8%	--
27	Involve teachers in the curriculum development process.	28.6%	39.5%	26.9%	4.2%	0.8%
28	Help the teachers with preparing their teaching plans.	40.3%	36.1%	17.6%	5.9%	--

It is very vivid in table 3 that nearly all responses are on the agree side by indicating the belief on positive impact of educational supervisor in terms of the curriculum and teaching methods and techniques. The majority of the teachers expect the supervisors to create opportunities for the development of curriculum and teaching methods and techniques but provide them with the freedom of selecting their own teaching techniques according to the students' level and the type of the lesson.

Table 4. Teachers' perceptions about the effect of educational supervision on English language teachers' professional development in terms of the students

No	The main fields and their sections	SA	A	N	D	SD
	4) The students					
29	Guide teachers to identify the students' developing characteristics to create positive learner attitudes towards learning.	30.3%	45.4%	21%	3.4%	--
30	Direct teachers to develop their skills in dealing with the students' varied behaviors.	30.3%	51.3%	16%	2.5%	--
31	Guide teachers to use effective methods to help students to overcome the difficulties that they face in learning.	29.4%	52.1%	12.6%	5.9%	--
32	Help teachers how to deal with the outstanding students.	21%	61.3%	15.1%	2.5%	--
33	Discuss the ways of treating the learners' weaknesses	37%	42.9%	14.3%	5%	0.8%

The positive perception of educational supervision also continues in that section. What is put forward here is that the teachers really expect the supervisors to collaborate with them in order to solve the problems related to the students through discussions, which will help their professional development to a great extent. What is striking in this section is that there is no strongly disagree response in the first four items, which absolutely proves the previous perceptions.

Table 5. Teachers' perceptions about the effect of educational supervision on English language teachers' professional development in terms of teaching materials and activities

No	The main fields and their sections	SA	A	N	D	SD
	5) Teaching materials and activities					
34	Direct teachers to use the classroom activities which develop the learners' thinking skills.	42	43.7	13.4	--	0.8
35	Encourage the teachers to carry out extra-activities (e.g. English club, magazines, competitions....).	41.2	39.5	15.1	4.2	--

Table 5 reveals that 85.7% for item thirty-four and 80.7% for item thirty-five of the population agree about the positive role of supervisor in teachers' professional development. They believe that the supervisors encourage them to use extra and new classroom activities and carry out some organizations thereby the students will receive novel information and improve their thinking skills.

Table 6. Teachers' perceptions about the effect of educational supervision on English language teachers' professional development in terms of classroom management

No	The main fields and their sections	SA	A	N	D	SD
	6) Classroom management					
36	Make the teachers familiar with different techniques of classroom management.	26.1%	48.7%	21%	4.2%	--
37	Guide the teachers in encouraging their students to express their ideas.	39.5%	38.7%	17.6%	4.2%	--
38	Direct teachers to establish a positive relationship with the students.	34.5%	49.6%	15.1%	0.8%	--
39	Explain to the teachers the ways of considering and teaching students with mixed abilities.	33.6%	46.2%	17.6%	2.5%	--

As can be seen from table 6, the supervisors are expected to hold meetings where the teachers can learn recent ways of classroom management and reflect upon their own practices. Also, the supervisors are desired to encourage the teachers to have a positive relationship with the students and endure the active and total participation of the learners during the lesson, which is agreed by the majority of the teachers.

Table 7. Teachers' perceptions about the effect of educational supervision on English language teachers' professional development in terms of assessment

No	The main fields and their sections	SA	A	N	D	SD
	7) Assessment					
40	Make the teachers familiar with the assessment techniques (i.e. continuous assessment, formal testing...).	31.9%	45.4%	18.5%	3.4%	0.8%
41	Encourage the teachers to take notes about students' in-class performance and use them as assessment record.	28.6%	41.2%	21%	9.2%	--
42	Train the teachers to design effective exams to be used in their classes.	26.1%	49.6%	19.3%	4.2%	0.8%
43	Provide the teachers with recent assessment techniques.	37.8%	42.9%	16.8%	2.5%	--
44	Train the teachers to ask students variety of oral questions that are more suitable to the teaching-learning situation.	29.4%	49.6%	14.3%	6.7%	--
45	Guide the teachers to use practical ways of diagnosing the strengths and weaknesses of students.	37.8%	46.2%	15.1%	0.8%	--
46	Encourage teachers to benefit from the assessment results to suggest ways and solutions for the difficulties that the students face.	31.9%	42.9%	20.2%	4.2%	0.8%

Table 7 shows that the great number of the teachers agreed that the supervisors are to update the teachers' knowledge about the techniques used for assessment since they have been changed recently as being based on more oral tests and continuous assessment. The supervisors are

believed to help the teachers diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of test types and modify them according to the teaching and learning situation. Furthermore, as the item forty-six points out, the supervisors should make recommendations about how to use the assessment results to suggest solutions for the challenges.

Interviews

The researchers interviewed with each teacher to reveal their specific ideas regarding the effect of educational supervision on their professional development. As stated earlier, interview questions contained three items. Interview questions were posed to each teacher. The researchers transcribed language teachers' responses to the questions as they heard from their utterances.

In response to Question 1 regarding whether they give enough importance to their professional development or not, only 7 (14%) teachers responded positively, yet 43 (86%) expressed that they are not able to think of their professional lives due to many reasons in both their personal and professional lives. To illustrate,

...It is rather difficult to spend some time on my professional development while I am teaching English many hours a week and also doing extra work like preparing for exams, invigilating during the exams and, of course, evaluating the papers. (Teacher, 3)

...It would be really nice to attend the conferences held all around the world if I could find enough financial support or earn more and more but it seems almost impossible. (Teacher, 7)

...Before starting to do something for my professional life, I need to learn anything that I can do, otherwise the only thing I can do is just to read some articles or books on English Language teaching. (Teacher, 17)

...I believe that I must learn newer things as I realize day by day that my students are getting bored because of learning English with the same or similar methods; otherwise, the failure is inescapable but what should be done is not clear in my mind. (Teacher, 21)

We attend some seminars lasting for only one day and this is possible only once or twice during an academic year. Do you really think that one day seminars will affect whole year? I think, for sure, no. (Teacher, 38)

Professional development makes me feel renewed but opportunities are very limited and not long lasting. In my viewpoint, if opportunities become continuous, professional development will be effective. (Teacher, 50)

In relation to Question 2 regarding the significance of educational supervision in their professional lives, teachers displayed controversial ideas, which reflects the diversity between what they believe in and what they actually experience. Almost all of the teachers noted that they consider educational supervision as a concept that can contribute to their professional progress, whereas the method used in the educational setting where they are teaching is completely different from the way it should be, which is expressed as follows:

...Until I experienced the first classroom visit by an educational supervisor, I considered this process as a fruitful phenomenon but I was surprised because I wasn't provided any feedback by the educational supervisor after the observation. (Teacher, 9)

...Of course, educational supervision can be very beneficial for my professional growth provided that it is not exploited but used correctly. (Teacher, 28)

...When I think of educational supervision, I wish to be exposed to much more different methods than I have ever experienced in my professional life till today. If educational supervision consists of merely the supervisor's coming to the classroom unexpectedly and leave as soon as the lesson is over, I don't prefer it even if it is useful. (Teacher, 1)

...I need a supervisor who can help me or guide me to start building up my professional life... Well, I hope that supervisors become friendly. (Teacher, 17)

As to Question 3 related to which methods of educational supervision they are familiar with and whether they want these methods to be a regular part of their professional lives, they indicated that they experienced classroom visits but nothing else and they pointed out that they never want to experience them regularly. For instance, teacher 17 stressed:

...The only thing known as educational supervision is the supervisor's coming to the classroom unexpectedly, observing what I am doing and taking some notes that I really don't know. (Teacher, 17)

I feel anxious about when I will be exposed to supervision (classroom visit) as I am a new teacher. I get excited more than the experienced ones and I am very curious about what they are writing about me. (Teacher, 46)

I wish to have collaboration and friendly discussions after the observations and also I really want to observe my colleagues' classes so that I can have some insights for my own teaching. (Teacher, 24)

I would love to attend seminars and conferences but I don't feel motivated enough. Maybe, I can present a paper at one of these conferences. (Teacher, 43)

Discussion

The findings of the research reveal that English language teachers seem to show a very positive attitude towards professional development whereby they are able to build on previous activities by learning new trends in the field, discuss classroom experiences with other teachers, reflect upon their own teaching, and become aware of other opportunities encouraging their ongoing professional development, which is the actual case in the recent educational literature that accepts the significance of effective and continuous professional development (CPD). (Birman et al., 2000; Borko, 1995; Ingvarson et al., 2005; Lowden, 2006). However, two major impediments have been recognised on the way of teachers' desired professional development, which are allocated time and financial resources. In particular, the teachers need time both to make professional development a continuous part of their work (Bush, 1999) and to see the outcomes of their efforts (Dorph and Holtz, 2000), which clearly indicates that lack of time is one of the greatest challenges to implementing effective professional development (Abdal-Haqq, 1996). As to the financial resources, it is possible to note that funding is essential in any reform or effective professional development, yet it is usually quite low even though its vitality in teachers' professional development was reported in many studies conducted all around the world (Lewis, 1998; Applewhite, 1999; Haycock, 1999).

On the other hand, the nature of professional development activities appears to be a matter of fact as they consist of 'one-shot' workshops aiming at teacher mastery of prescribed skills and knowledge (Clarke and Hollingsworth, 2002), which is regarded as a deficit approach (Fullan and Stiegelbauer, 1991; Miller, 1998; Robb, 2000) since teachers find these so-called workshops boring and irrelevant and claim to forget more than ninety percent of what they learn (Robb, 2000, p.5) but, as Sandholdz (2002) reports, this type of approach is precisely adopted in the majority of professional development programs.

However, as Bush (1999) points out, overcoming these impediments or problems is not enough to provide effective professional development opportunities for teachers. What is needed by many teachers is ongoing support and guidance (Lind, 2007). To put it differently, the main professional need for many teachers is to obtain practical ideas, strategies, and resources that can be applied in or outside the classroom (Beale, 2003). It is the educational supervisor who can help the teachers to develop themselves professionally. Similarly, several studies report the leadership of supervisors is of utmost importance to support teachers' professional development in schools (Fernandez, 2000; Moore, 2000; Clement and Vandenberghe, 2001; Marshall et al., 2001). As for the characteristics of a supervisor, Robbins (1999) stresses that a supervisor is to provide the teachers with support, guidance, feedback, problem-solving skills, and a network of colleagues who share resources, insights, practices, and materials. These characteristics of a supervisor are totally in line with how English language teachers conceive educational supervision. However, certain misinterpretations have been noticed in the light of interviewed teachers' perspectives when going beyond their perceptions and considering their experiences in a virtual setting.

In particular, the language teachers believe that educational supervisors attempt to detect teachers' mistakes in classrooms, focusing mainly on control, as in the first stage of supervision lasting till 1860s (Daresh, 2001). Also, they regard the supervisors as people who look at their job performance in a judgemental way. This situation shows that educational supervision does not extend beyond the traditional notion of supervision that evokes the sense of forcing them to prescribe to a specific educational philosophy which will lead to a less desirable effect on the teaching process. Instead, educational supervision should provide the teachers with adequate support to encourage them to develop their own ways and means for using their own capabilities that will create a culture of collaboration or community of practice (Sergiovanni, 2005).

Furthermore, they consider that some severe problems are involved in this control-based applications of educational supervision (Sullivan and Glanz, 2000) such as the method used for supervision and the way it is carried out. During the interviewing process, it is pointed out that classroom observation is assumed to be the mere method followed by educational supervisors; however, such methods of educational supervision as individual interview, group meetings, exchange visits between teachers, model lesson, educational research, educational circulars, educational training, and so forth, can be applied according to the goal of educational improvement, requirements of the educational supervisor, the surrounding environmental conditions, and the characteristics of the teachers (Bailey, 2006; Richards et al. 2005; Alhabeeb, 2004; Richards et al., 2001; MoNE, 1998; Wallace, 1991). In fact, classroom visits can extremely be beneficial for the teacher on condition that they are conducted in an appropriate way; otherwise, some adverse effects may emerge on the teachers' classroom performance that can be

far from being observable, comprehensive and distinguishing in nature and there may be great differences between the results of supervisors' observations on the same teacher at different times, which can yield a decline in the teachers' trust and respect towards supervision (Memduhoglu et al. 2007).

At this juncture, the huge importance of communication and collaboration becomes very clear, so the unpredictable nature of classroom visits or other methods of educational supervision needs certain changes. Before supervision takes place, supervisors are expected to have a brief conference with the teacher to be observed and inform her/him about the style and the form of the supervision, then enter the classroom together with the teacher, not during the lesson (MoNE, 2001); however, this happens in an unexpected fashion in practice. Moreover, the supervisors are supposed to hold a meeting including the staff, during which observations and evaluations are shared and, additionally, they think that a supervision report should be written about observations, defects, improper and desirable practices so as to make some suggestions and provide future insights for the coming supervisions (Açıkgöz, 2001; Taymaz, 2001). In brief, supervision is to be regarded as a process of interpersonal relationships whereby people would listen to each other, bring alike problems, come together with resources to find solutions and feel secure in the educational process (Wiles and Bondi, 1996), which is, according to Sergiovanni and Starratt (1993), very important in achieving school goals at school.

The perspectives discussed above briefly suggest that a great number of teachers are of the opinion that educational supervision brings about emergent outcomes to the overall teaching and learning community in case it provides a continuum of collaborative relationship where teaching experiences are reflected upon and shared with other staff in building a community of practice (Glickman et al. 2007; Downey et al. 2004). In this respect, the term, reflection, begins to appear as a vital phenomenon to be encouraged and promoted during the supervision process (Clarke, 1995) by which the teacher:

- becomes curious about certain aspect of practice setting;
- frames that aspect in terms of the particulars of the setting;
- reframes that aspect in the light of past knowledge and previous experience;
- develops a plan for future action.

In the same line, it seems clear that the dual terms, innovation and change, are needed as much as reflection as being a long term objective of educational supervision, which is stated by Hamilton (1996) as a driving force enhancing a career and making it constantly renewing and worthwhile and which, as Karavas- Doukas (1998, p.28) suggests, involves the following levels

- revision of teaching materials, syllabi or curricula,
- changes in teachers' behaviours like adopting new techniques, approaches and methods,
- changes in principles underlying the new materials and approaches.

Conclusion

Considered together, these feedbacks from English language teachers reveal that educational supervision is still grounded more on a traditional basis in North Cyprus, which is based on

solely classroom observations occurring in a controlled and directive way. However, rather than these old-fashioned ideas, supervisors should be able to devote their time, experience and effort to improve the teachers' professional development (Kayıkçı, 2005) and help schools meet the required standards of education by, if necessary, taking special measures in collaboration with all related people and institutions.

The following two consequences can be drawn from the data of this study, which are on one side the great difference between English language teachers' beliefs and actual experiences about educational supervision and on the other side their expectations concerning effective applications of educational supervision to be managed by effective supervisors who are able to (Memduhoğlu et al., 2007):

- observe and reflect on practice
- give constructive feedback
- teach
- identify alternatives
- solve problems
- motivate
- foster autonomy
- provide information
- appraise self and others
- manage a service
- create a supportative climate
- negotiate
- manage time
- organize

Lastly, it is essential to note that although important progress has been made in most educational supervision systems today, further reforms are necessary to renew the purpose, function, method and structure of educational supervision.

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