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## EFL TEACHERS' DEMANDS AND PREFERENCES ON IN-SERVICE TRAINING IN TURKEY

*Research Article*

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## Abstract

One of the significant means of ensuring quality instruction in language classrooms is establishing an effective program of continuing professional development for language teachers. When conducted efficiently as a part of CPD, in-service training (INSET) proves to be a key component in improving teachers' instructional skills as well as keeping their methodological knowledge up-to-date. Nonetheless, both state-led and private-held INSET efforts in Turkey receive considerable criticism regarding their inefficiency and insufficiency. One of the reasons for any ineffectiveness might be INSET program developers' negligence in taking into consideration teachers' actual needs. Thus, more empirical research that explores language teachers' demands and preferences on in-service training should be carried out in various contexts. Consequently, this study aims to investigate English teachers' demands and preferences on an INSET program. Descriptive in nature and following a quantitative research design, the present study collected data from 985 state and private school teachers via a scale developed by the researchers. Having ensured construct validity via factor analysis, the scale consisted of three sub-factorial groups: demands on INSET, preferences regarding the content and the trainers, and personal preferences. The findings displayed some statistically significant differences between state and private schools, novice and experienced teachers, and between teachers who had previous INSET experience and those who do not at different sub-factorial groups. The study has implications for policymakers, who are in the process of designing an INSET model for Foreign Language Teachers, as well as teacher trainers who carry out INSET.

*Keywords:* in-service training needs, INSET, professional development, EFL teachers, scale

## 1. Introduction

Considering the ever-changing nature of educational ecosystems, teaching is a dynamic profession that requires continuous development. Starting from the early phases of pre-service education, teaching is usually characterized by constant questioning one's own instructional knowledge and skills as it is ideally a continual pursuit of improvement. However, any theoretical pre-service course offered to teacher candidates at educational faculties principally falls short in providing the true nature of actual teaching because of two main reasons. First of all, mere theory is unable to reflect the complexities of instructional settings in general. Secondly, teacher candidates are optimistically still at the phase of discovering the necessities of many instructional challenges they will possibly face. Besides, they generally have limited view on what knowledge and skills they actually need to better operate in the classroom. It is the in-service phase of the profession that these needs become more obvious to teachers as they learn from experience and hone their teaching skills. Therefore, it is essential that teachers

participate in continuing professional development (CPD) activities during their career not only to obtain certain professional standards with an informed approach based on their needs, but also to keep up-to-date with recent advances in their field through active involvement (Çimer, Çakır & Çimer, 2010; Sokel, 2019).

When conducted efficiently as a part of CPD, in-service training (INSET) proves to be a key component in improving teachers' instructional skills as well as keeping their methodological knowledge up-to-date. In that sense, INSET programs play a critical role in ensuring quality instruction in classrooms through the development of teachers (Hustler, McNamara, Jarvis, Londra & Campbell, 2003; Saiti & Saitis, 2006). They also bring about long-term educational and institutional benefits through positive change in teacher behavior (Hayes, 1995; 2000; Richards & Farrell, 2005). This crucial function that INSET serves has led researchers investigate the effectiveness of such programs, in the course of which numerous studies have produced contradictory results. Whereas some researchers have concluded that both teachers and students benefit from INSET programs (see Gibbs & Coffey 2004; Grieve & McGinley 2010, Rajabi, Kiany & Maftoon, 2012), some other studies have reported that INSET courses may show a certain degree of inefficiency in producing the desired outcomes (see Atay 2008, Emery, 2012; Hamid 2010; Kennedy 2016).

These conflicting results put the effectiveness of INSET programs in different contexts under scrutiny. One of the reasons of ineffectiveness may be the significant discrepancy between teacher expectations and outcomes (Emery, 2012; Yan, 2005). In other words, INSET program developers' negligence in taking into consideration teachers' actual needs may be an important cause of any possible inefficiency. This issue, in particular, is the primary motivation behind the current study. Drawing attention to the premise that teachers become more aware of their actual needs after they start teaching, more empirical research that explores in-service teachers' demands and preferences on INSET should be carried out in various contexts. By accounting for teachers' stated needs, it is hoped that a deeper understanding will be built for effective INSET programs. Therefore, the present study aims at investigating English teachers' demands and preferences on INSET programs in the Turkish context.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Effectiveness of INSET Programs

Literature specifies several factors that determine the effectiveness of INSET programs. For instance, Vukelich and Wrenn (1999) provide a list of such factors maintaining that INSET programs should be subject-specific, they should focus on the teachers' needs, and they should have a continuing nature. Additionally, INSET that provides teachers real-life solutions with meaningful engagement through collaborative relationships where teachers are given reflective opportunities proves to be highly effective (Burns & Richards 2009, Uysal 2012).

In a recent meta-analysis, Sokel (2019) summarizes the factors that maximize INSET effectiveness as "coherence, active participation and collaboration" (pp. 410-411). First of all, coherence can be perceived as a key factor not only at its general sense, where national objectives of a country are reflected in the program (Desimone, 2009; Desimone & Garet, 2015), but also as a more context-specific asset, where content is centered around authentic and explicit challenges that teachers face (Bayar, 2014; Ponanski, 2002; Şahin & Yıldırım 2016). Secondly, research shows that INSET sessions lose efficiency when they are delivered using traditional techniques where only theoretical knowledge is transmitted through lecturing (G kmenoğlu, 2012; Elyas & Al Grigri, 2014; Ko , 2016). Thus, successful INSET programs are recognized to include trainees in the learning process via active participation opportunities using a variety of methods such as kinesthetic practice and reflection (Joyce & Showers 1980;

Sandholtz, 2002). Finally, collaboration as a part of professional development proves to be significant in enhancing the effectiveness of INSET since collaborative work during sessions promote reflection and discovering new perspectives (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman & Yoon, 2001; Guskey, 2003; Guskey & Yoon, 2009). Besides, collaboration is one of the four C's of 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills (namely communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity). Therefore, any instructional setting that aims for active learning benefits from some form of collaborative work, such as pair or group activities, and INSET programs are no exception.

Another important consideration in increasing the effectiveness of INSET is the necessity to conduct a thorough needs analysis. Investigating what teachers actually need and want helps developers focus on teachers' actual instructional challenges (Gökmenoğlu, Clark & Kiraz, 2016; Hayes, 2000; John & Gravani 2005; Özen, 2006). Similarly, Roberts (2008) highlights that understanding teachers' needs and preferences as a part of the INSET cycle is a vital stage that increases their relevance. Thus, empirical research on teachers' demands and preferences that preferably inform INSET practices can help develop programs that are more tangible and sensitive to teachers' actual classroom needs. Otherwise, when teachers' needs and preferences are neglected in their professional development, they tend to become cynical, over-critical, demotivated and unwilling to participate (Groves, 2015; Ho & Topal, 2013; Uztosun, 2018; Yan & He, 2015).

## 2.2. INSET Programs in Turkey

INSET activities in Turkey are primarily organized by *In-service Teacher Training Unit* under the Ministry of Education (MoE). Additionally, some other private educational institutions and publishing companies offer training to in-service teachers (Özer, 2004; Şentuna, 2002). Recently, however, both state-led and private-held INSET efforts in Turkey receive considerable criticism regarding their inefficiency and insufficiency. According to Aydın and Bakan (2005), for example, INSET activities in Turkey fail to entail coordination and cooperation and they have limited emphasis on practical knowledge. Similarly, Bayrakcı (2009) asserts that in-service training in Turkey usually lacks collaboration, technology use, proper evaluation or sufficient practice. Comparably, Altun (2011) suggests that participant teachers are easily overwhelmed by the content of state-held INSET due to the fact that trainers only transfer theoretical information, failing to attach necessary emphasis on the practical aspect of instruction. Turkish language teachers would rather take part in INSET programs which focus on their specific instructional challenges and which present practical ideas via need-oriented, authentic instructional activities in an atmosphere where participants reflectively share experiences (Arslan, Mirici, & Öz, 2019).

As a reflection of the big picture, INSET programs for EFL teachers are prone to similar criticisms. One of the main problems with language teacher professional development efforts at in-service level in Turkey is the lack of an established form or framework (Balbay, Pamuk, Temir & Doğan, 2018; Daloğlu, 2004). Thus, it might be argued that this problem results from abundance rather than scarcity in quantity, where content has long been repetitive around similar and currently monotonous topics with limited quality. More importantly, Daloğlu (2004, p.677) states that "topics for in-service development programs are selected by people other than the teachers for whom the in-service is intended", resulting in the programs' inefficiency to address teachers' needs and challenges. A number of other studies in Turkish context have also pinpointed some common problems as follows: INSET efforts for EFL teachers in Turkey (a) are unsystematic, (b) mostly focus on transferring theoretical knowledge, (c) neglect teachers' needs, opinions and specific challenges, (d) are unable to sustain teachers' willingness due to dull and repetitive content, (e) employ incompetent and ill-prepared trainers, (f) conflict with teachers' schedules and routines (Küçükörsenli, 2006; Öztürk & Aydın,

2019; Uysal, 2012; Uztosun, 2018). Consequently, considering the challenges stated above, it can be argued that INSET programs for EFL teachers in Turkey rarely address their needs and concerns. Thus, this study explores Turkish EFL teachers' demands and preferences on INSET programs so that their perceptions and insights might help overcome some of the existing inefficiencies and stated problems in the Turkish context.

### 3. Method

Continuous professional development (CPD) has crucial value for all teachers. One of the ways to enhance CPD is via attending in-service trainings (INSET). Although it is one of the indispensable features of professional development, how the INSET is organized, conducted, and carried out has a role on its effectiveness. In addition to the organizational aspects, the practitioners' needs and expectations also come in sight as another determiner of INSET's success. Designed as a descriptive study, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of EFL teachers on INSET?
  - Are there any differences between groups in their perceptions according to variables such as gender, school type, teaching experience and having an INSET experience before?
2. What are the demands of practicing EFL teachers from an INSET?
  - Are there any differences between groups in their demands according to variables such as gender, school type, teaching experience and having an INSET experience before?
3. What are the EFL teachers' preferences with regards to the content and the trainers?
  - Are there any differences between groups in their content and trainer preferences according to variables such as gender, school type, teaching experience and having an INSET experience before?
4. What are EFL teachers' personal expectations from an INSET activity?
  - Are there any differences between groups in their personal preferences according to variables such as gender, school type, teaching experience and having an INSET experience before?

#### 3.1. Data Collection Instrument

The data for the study was collected quantitatively via a scale developed by the researchers. First of all, an item pool was formed to find out EFL teachers' perceptions of INSET. The item pool was prepared via extensive literature and EFL teachers' earlier feedback on INSET provided by the researchers themselves. The instrument was then sent to five experts for content validity. Experts rated each item as necessary, relevant but not necessary and unnecessary. In addition, for face validity, each expert rated each item according to the extent it represents the construct. As a result of the expert opinions, the survey items were decreased from 25 to 21 as four of the items' content validity ratios were lower than .99 (Yurdugül, 2005). The experts also evaluated the items according to their reader-friendliness. As a next step, the questionnaire was given to five English teachers to check the comprehensibility of the items. After final modifications, the questionnaire was checked for construct validity.

For construct validity, factor analysis was conducted. First, Keiser-Meier-Olkin value was found to be .86, and the Bartlett test was found to be significant (The value of the Bartlett's). Thus, factor analysis was implemented. The direct oblimin method was used for rotation. Nine items of the instrument were discarded as a result of the analysis. Remaining 12 items divided

into three factors as: demands on INSET (i6, i8, i18, i19), content and trainer preferences (i2, i3, i4, i5), and personal preferences (i1, i13, i15, i17). The scale was found to be reliable with a .80 alpha value. The reliability of the factorial groups was also acceptable with .74, .76, and .70 alpha values consecutively.

### 3.2. Participants and Data Collection

The study was carried out with 985 EFL teachers (Female  $n = 881$ ; Male  $n = 104$ ) working at different cities of Turkey. The majority of the participants worked at private schools ( $n = 827$ ), and 158 of the participants work at state schools. The EFL teaching experiences of the participants were also varied. Accordingly, 405 of the participants were novice teachers (0-5 years of experience), 339 of the teachers had an experience between 6-11 years, and finally, 241 of the teachers were experienced teachers with more than 12 years of experience.

Initially, the convenience sampling method was used to reach at participants all over Turkey. For this, the researchers posted information on the research on their social media and also sent an online link of the survey to teachers of their acquaintance. Later on, the participants were asked to share the link with other teachers as well. The purpose was to reach as many EFL teachers as possible to increase the generalizability of the results and also to have a more comprehensive understanding of teacher perceptions. The data collection phase took place between October 2018 and June 2019. Due to the sampling strategy, the groups in different variables were not homogenous. Moreover, the sample group represented the Turkish context in terms of gender since EFL teaching in Turkey is mostly carried out by females than males. Thus, the results of the study should be interpreted accordingly.

### 3.3. Ethical Considerations

Research ethics were strictly taken into consideration throughout the study. The anonymity of the participants and their workplaces were assured so as to reach at sincere responses. As the research instrument was distributed via social media only, those who responded to the online form gave their consent by participated voluntarily in the research.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used in the analysis. The data was found to be normally distributed as the skewness and kurtosis values were between -1,5 and + 1,5 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) in all factorial groups as well as the whole scale. Thus, parametric tests were used. Independent samples t-test was implemented for dual comparisons and one-way ANOVA for multiple comparisons.

## 4. Results

The current study aimed at identifying EFL teachers' perceptions on INSET via a scale which was developed by the researchers and which consisted of three factors. The findings are presented in light of the research questions asked.

The first research question (RQ) inquired about teachers' perceptions on INSET. According to the item-total mean of the instrument ( $M = 4.16$ ) it can be said that the participants ( $N = 985$ ) have positive perceptions (Factor 1  $M = 4.13$ ; Factor 2  $M = 4.54$ ; Factor 3  $M = 3.81$ ) towards INSETs. When we look at the effect of variables such as gender, school type, and having attended an INSET before, statistically significant differences are observed. Consequently, there is a statistically significant difference between males ( $M = 4.29$ ,  $SD = .59$ ) and females ( $M = 4.19$ ,  $SD = .56$ ) ( $t(983) = -2,45$ ,  $p = .014$ ) on behalf of males.

There are also statistically significant differences between teachers working in private schools ( $M = 4.12$ ,  $SD = .57$ ) and state schools ( $M = 4.35$ ,  $SD = .48$ ) ( $t(983) = -4,62$ ,  $p = .000$ )

on behalf of state schools. The third variable, having attended an INSET before or not, also indicates differences. Thus, there are statistically significant differences between teachers who have attended an INSET before ( $M = 4.12$ ,  $SD = .57$ ) and those who have not attended ( $M = 4.26$ ,  $SD = .53$ ) ( $t(983) = -2,51$ ,  $p = .012$ ). In this group, perceptions of non-attendees seem to be more positive.

In terms of the demands of teachers from an INSET as asked in RQ 2, no statistically significant differences were found in gender, school type or having an INSET experience before. Descriptive statistics of factor 1 (demands from INSET) are given in Table 1.

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics of factor 1*

Items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
I would like discussions on theoretical topics.	4.05	.97	985
I think there should be an evaluation of the training in the end.	4.16	1	985
I think in-service training should be regular.	4.06	1.04	985
I would like to attend in-service trainings.	4.25	.92	985

The third RQ looked for differences in preferences regarding the content and the trainers. Similar to the first factorial group, there were no differences in terms of gender, type of school, or former INSET experience. Descriptive statistics of factor 2 (content and trainer preferences) are given in table 2.

Table 2. *Descriptive statistics of factor 2*

Items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
I think practical information should be integrated in the content of the in-service trainings.	4.46	.76	985
I need to see examples of how theory can be implemented in the classroom.	4.52	.74	985
The instructors of the in-service trainings should be experts in their fields.	4.60	.70	985
I would like the instructors to share in-service trainings materials.	4.60	.68	985

Regarding the personal preferences in RQ four, there are differences in gender, school type and INSET experience. There is a statistically significant difference between males ( $M = 4.08$ ,  $SD = .83$ ) and females ( $M = 3.77$ ,  $SD = .90$ ) ( $t(983) = -3,30$ ,  $p = .001$ ) on males' behalf; between private school ( $M = 3.73$ ,  $SD = .93$ ) and state school ( $M = 4.21$ ,  $SD = .61$ ) teachers ( $t(983) = -6,26$ ,  $p = .000$ ) with state school teachers having more positive views, and finally between teachers who attended an INSET before ( $M = 3.74$ ,  $SD = .93$ ) and have never attended one before ( $M = 4.16$ ,  $SD = .63$ ) ( $t(983) = -5,40$ ,  $p = .000$ ) on behalf of non-attendees. Descriptive statistics of factor 3 (demands from INSET) are given in table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of factor 3

Items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
I think in-service trainings help me renew my theoretical knowledge.	3.47	1.57	985
I prefer group work in the in-service trainings.	3.71	1.20	985
I enjoy kinesthetic activities in-service trainings.	3.72	1.25	985
I think the in-service trainings are essential for professional development.	4.32	.85	985

A close look at the means of items in factor three indicates that the participants are dubious regarding the extent to which INSET helps renewing their theoretical knowledge. Moreover, perceptions regarding collaborative activities such as group work and kinesthetic activities seem to be favored at a moderate level.

Multiple comparisons were also made via one-way ANOVA when comparing groups with different teaching experiences. Except for the first factor (demand on INSET), there are statistically significant differences between groups with regards to their perceptions in general [ $F(2, 982) = 6.98, p = .001$ ] as well as their content and trainer preferences (factor 2) [ $F(2, 982) = 5.24, p = .005$ ] and personal preferences (factor 3) [ $F(2, 982) = 7.83, p = .000$ ]. Post Hoc comparisons were made by using the Bonferroni test.

In factor 2 the difference is between novice teachers (0-5 years of experience) ( $M = 4.51, SD = .56$ ) and experienced teachers (12+ years of experience) ( $M = 4.64, SD = .54$ ) and between less experienced teachers (6-11 years of experience) ( $M = 4.51, SD = .53$ ) and experienced teachers (12+ years of experience) ( $M = 4.64, SD = .54$ ). In factor 3, the difference is between novice teachers ( $M = 3.71, SD = .94$ ) and experienced teachers ( $M = 4.00, SD = .78$ ) and between less experienced teachers ( $M = 3.78, SD = .92$ ) and experienced teachers ( $M = 4.00, SD = .78$ ).

When the total scale is concerned, we see differences with the same groups as well. Likewise, there are statistically significant differences between novice teachers ( $M = 4.12, SD = .56$ ) and experienced teachers ( $M = 4.28, SD = .53$ ) and between less experienced teachers ( $M = 4.13, SD = .57$ ) and experienced teachers ( $M = 4.28, SD = .53$ ).

## 5. Discussion

The study aimed to identify the INSET needs and preferences of EFL teachers working in private and state schools. The results pointed out some important considerations that might be a result of the educational context. The findings, in general, show that males, state school teachers, and experienced teachers have stronger needs and more positive perceptions regarding INSETs. However, some of the indicated needs and perceptions also seem to fall apart from the previous literature. The results will be discussed according to the RQs posed.

The first RQ aimed to find out the needs and views of teachers on INSET. Although the first two factors: demands on INSET and views regarding the content and trainers showed high agreement, teachers' personal preferences as listed in factor three were only moderately accepted. In dual and multiple comparisons, the differences were between genders, state and private school teachers as well as participants with previous INSET experiences. It can be argued that males, state school teachers and participants without any INSET experience have more positive views than their counterparts. One interesting issue in this finding is that of the teachers without any INSET experience. Considering the fact that INSETs in Turkey created a

considerable depreciation on the trainees in terms of their outcomes (see K ksleymanođlu, 2006; ztrk & Aydın, 2019; Uysal, 2012; Uztosun, 2018), it is quite meaningful that teachers who lack such a negative experience have more positive views on such trainings.

The second RQ was concerned with the participants' views and demands from an INSET. Lack of differences between groups is an indication that the participants have a common understanding of their demands. One positive result is that the participants agree that INSETs should be provided regularly for their professional development and that they would like to attend those trainings despite the criticism towards the INSETs in Turkey. However, considering that the majority of the participants worked at private institutions and that the INSETs they attend to are organized by parties other than the state, their experiences might be different from those who only received state-organized INSETs. Thus, the results need to be interpreted according to the participants' profiles in the present study. Another promising view coming from the teachers is that they think that there should be an evaluation of the training program. This demand is related to the outcomes of the learning. In order for any instruction to be successful, the participants need to be actively involved in the learning process, there should be clear outcomes, and the trainer and the trainee should be able to evaluate the extent the outcomes are met. Thus, it can be argued that the participants pay attention to the content objectives and outcomes of the training for evaluation and assessment. Considering that assessment is a form of feedback both for the trainer and the trainees, with appropriate methods of assessment, not only the trainees' success but also the training can be evaluated. Self and peer assessment, as well as the trainer assessment, can provide valuable feedback to increase cognitive engagement as well as to build a bridge between the intended theoretical content and practical implementation. In relation to this, teachers also stated that they would like discussions on theoretical topics, which is another indication of the desire to become an active learner to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

The third RQ was related with the teachers' views on the content of the training and the qualifications of the trainers. Regarding these views, there were no statistically significant differences between the groups. The participants showed high agreement on their need for practical information provided in INSETs as well as their demand to integrate theory and practice. This has been stated by other researchers (see, Altun, 2011; Aydın & Bakan 2005), in the Turkish context earlier. These studies showed that there is an overwhelming amount of theoretical information, which lack a practical component. Hence, it is compulsory that any INSET program should diverge from a one-way dissemination of information that considers participants as "empty buckets" to be filled and enhance active participation by helping teachers find their own ways to integrate theory in their classroom practice (Joyce & Showers 1980; Sandholtz, 2002).

With regards to the qualifications of the trainers, the participants claimed that they give importance to the expertise of the person providing the training. Similarly, the previous literature also underlined the importance of qualified trainers as one of the prerequisites of success. It has been emphasized that in the Turkish context trainers are sometimes incompetent and/or ill-prepared (ztrk & Aydın, 2019). As learning is a way of forming new experiences and it is a mutual process between the trainer and the trainee, it is essential that there is a relationship built on trust. Unless the learner believes in the expertise and qualifications of the trainer, their engagement in the process will decrease. Thus, in addition to the content of the training that is prepared according to the needs of the learners with relation to classroom implementation, how this is communicated, and who communicates it also matter.

The results from the last factor related to the participants' personal views and preferences are noteworthy. For one, this factorial group had the lowest means and some of the participants'

views were contradictory to what they claimed earlier. For instance, although they claimed that they would like discussions on theoretical topics in factor 1, they were not sure whether INSETs help them to renew their theoretical knowledge. Moreover, earlier literature in the Turkish context also claimed that INSETs primarily focus on transferring theoretical knowledge (G kmenoğlu, 2012; Ko , 2016). The situation points out an irony that, although the INSETs primarily focus on theoretical information, the participants of the study seem to be dubious about the positive effects of this information for the renewal of their existing knowledge. Moreover, the earlier literature claims that the theory is shared as a way of “transfer” of knowledge coming from one direction, “the trainer”. However, the participants stated that they would like to discuss theoretical concepts, which shows willingness to share information as happens in a “mutual give and take” during discussions. Thus, traditional methods used during trainings do not help the participants to reach the desired outcomes.

There were differences between the groups (gender, school type, INSET experience and teaching experience) with regards to their personal preferences. These differences were in favor of males, state school teachers, experienced teachers and those with no INSET experience. The male participants in this study constitute nearly 1/8<sup>th</sup> of the sample group. The result proves to be interesting because although males are fewer in number than the females, they are inclined towards more positive views regarding the effectiveness of the theoretical content, activity types and organization suggested in the instrument. Similarly, more experienced teachers favored these more than the in-experienced and less experienced teachers. This might be due to the fact that we tend to appreciate the importance and value of professional development as we develop our experiences in our profession. Thus, it is meaningful that experienced teachers have more positive views regarding INSETs. Moreover, lack of INSET experience may also result in a willingness to participate and having positive views. On the other hand, private school teachers may have more opportunities for focused and frequent INSETs. Hence state school teachers’ stronger views might be a result of irregular trainings and their need for professional development.

Another issue that is worth discussing is the participants’ preferences for collaborative group work and kinesthetic activities. The agreement with these items was only at a moderate level and the results may have several interpretations. First of all, the hesitance to be involved in group work and kinesthetic activities might be an outcome of the educational context that these teachers were brought up. In traditional educational environments, learning is a passive process in which learners are passive recipients of knowledge, where the interaction is usually from the teacher to the student. There are multiple factors that affect the learning environment, such as teacher’s skills and qualifications, physical conditions of the classroom (e.g., population, fixed desks, lack of technology), expectations of the administration and the parents. Turkey, trying to move away from an oriental and traditional education system, fell behind the needs of the teachers and students for a long time. Thus, it is possible that these teachers experienced traditional learning. Studies related to teacher cognition (Borg, 2003; Gürsoy, 2013) claim that teachers tend to teach the way they have learned since experiences are stronger than newly learned information. Secondly, 21st-century skills (communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity) offer a new set of skills in addition to those of the language skills to survive in this century. Teachers are asked to integrate these skills to their lessons to prepare their students. However, as with any other skill, the transfer of 21st-century skills to the classroom is dependent on the teacher’s use of these skills themselves. The participants’ moderate agreement with group work and kinesthetic activities might be considered as an indication of the limited use of such activities in their classes. Consequently, the results are two folds: (a) Teachers, consciously or unconsciously, are still in favor of activities that they feel comfortable with that are not in line with contemporary approaches; (b) Teachers may not

possess the 21st-century skills and may not feel comfortable with being engaged in activities that require them. At either extreme, an indirect result of the study might be that teachers need effective, focused, needs-based, systematic INSET to compensate their professional development.

## 6. Conclusion and Implications

INSETs are, no doubt, an indispensable component of professional development. As teachers develop their expertise in their field, they need continuous support that involves new practical information blended with theory, alternative and effective ways of teaching that would match with their classroom reality, developing experiences with new ideas and form beliefs, or change older beliefs. Although sustainability is the key issue, it is hardly possible to argue that the INSETs provided in the Turkish context are regular or structured toward a bigger and wider goal. It is because of this reason that academic studies conducted in the Turkish content pointed out to the many features of the process as ineffective such as the delivery method of the training, expertise of the trainers, content (whether needs-based or not) of the training, organization of the process. According to the Higher Education Council's (HEC) database, there is not another topic more studied that INSET in Turkey in M.A or Ph.D. theses. The situation highlights the concerns of academia on the issue. Upon the concerns of the government, teachers and teacher trainers, Teacher Training and Development Unit of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) signed an agreement with the British Council (BC) in September 2019. The agreement involves the planning and organization of INSETs on the professional needs of English language teachers and the development of four language skills (British Council, 2019; NTV, 2019). Accordingly, the organization of 'train the trainer' INSETs, practice, and activity-based trainings in Edinburgh, Scotland, for teachers to develop four language skills, preparing print and visual educational content and distance education opportunities will be provided (British Council, 2019). As an initial step, 22 English teachers were sent to Edinburgh for a two-week training. As the second step, 150 teachers will take an INSET in Ankara in November. In relation with this, the contribution of 2400 English teachers in 422 schools in Ankara in INSETs was planned. As stated in the agreement, these trainings will be provided by language teachers themselves with academic and expert support. Although the content of the trainings and the model to be implemented during these trainings were not released, it is hoped that this incentive meets the needs of the teachers to reach the governmentally stated goals necessary for teacher development.

The findings from the study strongly suggest that the aforementioned or other INSET opportunities are regular and consistently provided by field experts with practical content related to theory. The higher demands and more positive perceptions coming from state school teachers and experienced teachers suggest that such professional support is needed, especially for these groups. Although organized with good intentions, it is clear that the irregular, inconsistent, theory-based INSETs do not meet the needs of the teachers. It appears that experienced teachers need support more than the inexperienced, which is sound because as we gain experience, we fall apart from the theory that we learned during our initial professional education. Thus, teachers might need new theories and ideas in relation to classroom implementation. State school teachers, on the other hand, might need INSET more than private school teachers since they have fewer opportunities as these are provided randomly in terms of their content and time.

Another conclusion from the study is the teachers' reluctance in being a part of kinesthetic and collaborative group activities. Such activities are usually what is required from the teachers to be used in the classroom as they provide communicative opportunities, increased cognitive involvement, apply with young students' characteristics, are a part of 21st-century skills. In

order for teachers to be able to use non-traditional activities, it is not adequate to tell them how much they are effective but help them see the effects by actually experiencing them while learning themselves. Traditional classroom environments, which quite a lot of teachers might have experienced in the past, play a role in their beliefs about teaching and learning. Therefore, it emphasizes the need for non-traditional content and application in INSETs.

In conclusion, as MoNE is in the process of developing INSETs for foreign language teachers, it seems that desired outcomes can be reached on condition that the organization is needs-specific, localized, providing applicable content, encouraging active participation and cognitive involvement, supported with activities aiming to develop experiences with the new ideas, providing opportunities for reflection and evaluation, but at the heart of it all, provided by field experts who have the knowledge and skills themselves.

The study is not without its limitations. Due to the data collection method, groupings of participants were not homogenous. Hence the results of the study should be interpreted accordingly. Moreover, for generalizability issues, the study used a quantitative methodology to reach as many participants as possible. Yet, future studies might focus on qualitative research designs to have an in-depth understanding of teachers' needs, perceptions, demands, and preferences.

### **7. Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

### **8. Ethics Committee Approval**

The authors confirm that the study does not need ethics committee approval according to the research integrity rules in their country.

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