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### Factors influencing teachers' professional learning: A study of Turkish EFL teachers

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#### Abstract

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the factors influencing teachers' professional learning the most among four factors; (a) Teacher cognition and beliefs, (b) teacher emotions, (c) teacher motivation, and (d) contextual variables and find out whether or not there is a difference among teaching experience and degree in terms of teacher learning. The research sample consisted of 1015 teachers of English from different cities, teaching levels, and various ages in Turkey. In order to find out what factors influence English Teachers' professional learning the most, English Language Teacher Learning Scale (ELTLS) was used. According to the results, teacher cognition and beliefs factor influenced teacher learning the most and contextual variables were the second influencing factor. When the differences were examined it was found out that there was a significant difference only between teacher cognition and beliefs, and teacher experience. The post-hoc test revealed that there was a significant difference between 21 and above year-experienced teachers and 0-5 year-experienced in teacher cognition and beliefs factor ( $p < .05$ ).

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*Keywords:* Teacher learning, ELT scale, Teachers' professional development, English teachers

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## 1. Introduction

Teacher learning is a worldwide issue and is obviously a key to any educational change and reform (Kooy & Veen, 2012). Teachers' professional development and learning are influenced by their experiences during their careers regarding activities, attitudes, interests, assumptions, job comfort, and career perspectives (Vonk, 1989). In literature, teacher learning refers to "a process of increasing participation in the practice of teaching, and through this participation, a process of becoming knowledgeable in and about teaching" (Greeno, Collins, & Resnick, 1996, p.37). Teacher learning or professional development is also defined as, "processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the training

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of students” (Guskey, 2002, p.17). For this reason, teacher education and learning have been surveyed in many parts of the world beginning from different levels of schools (Bantwini & King-McKenzie, 2011; Doppenberg, Den Brok, & Bakx, 2012) to different branches of education such as mathematics (Goldsmith, Doerr, & Lewis, 2014), physics (Ingec, 2015) history (Mouraz & Leite, 2013; Wilson, 1988), and foreign language education (Cammarata, 2009; Dehghayedi & Bagheri, 2018; Freeman, 1996; Howatt & Widdowson, 2004).

Teachers are regarded as learners themselves, improving their teaching implementation methods and representing the students’ process of perpetual learning (Burn, Hagger, Mutton, & Brindley, 2008). Essentially, to be able to develop achievement in students’ progress, teachers must improve their professional development (McNamara, Murray & Jones 2013).

A teacher’s professional life comprises students, parents, colleagues, and administrators and so many others connected to the institutions they work in (Sakui & Cowie, 2011). There have been so many research regarding teachers’ pedagogical and cognitive developments, but much less research focus on the relationship teachers have with others while and after work which affects their improvement (Sakui & Cowie, 2011). Aliakbari & Malmir, (2017) also suggest that it is one of the basic focuses of the educational system and so many research have been done to evaluate the quality of teacher learning in many various contexts, however; The instruments used for measuring the quality of teacher learning are assessing a single element, such as motivation, emotion, cognition, etc.

Therefore, the first goal of this study is to find out which factors guide and influence teacher’s professional learning by implementing a scale developed by Aliakbari and Malmir (2017) composed of 4 components, including: “teacher cognition and beliefs, teacher emotions, teacher motivation, and contextual variables” (p. 6). The second goal of this study is to find out the underlying variables guiding and influencing the path of teacher professional learning such as teaching experience and degree level of Turkish EFL teachers.

## *1.1. Literature review*

### *1.1.1. Teacher Learning*

Teachers are generally assumed to be responsible for teaching, rather than learning (Putnam & Borko, 2000). However, the learning part is as important as the teaching part, both of which are already connected. Kelly (2006) defines teacher learning as “the process by which teachers move towards expertise”; namely, it is both an active and productive process for teachers where they have a chance to expand their experiences at the school as well as outside the school.

According to related literature, teacher learning is among the most concerning areas of all research in the last decades. Aliakbari and Malmir (2017) allege that these studies have proved the importance of teacher attitude, attention, and awareness in professional development and examined how teachers acquire, generate, and apply what they know in their teaching experience through “district-initiated, teacher-initiated, or teachers’ independent learning activities” (p.2). In fact, teachers are different from one another regarding learning patterns that they acquired during their professional learning period. If teacher learning is supported and promoted by the educational environment, learning materials supplied, opportunities provided to advance the models of their teaching and learning practices teachers’ professional development will be improved (Shaw, 2010).

Teacher learning has been constantly explored, but we have to ask ‘why teacher learning is important?’ It is significant to consider several reasons (Vermunt, 2014). First of all, it is fundamental for teachers to develop themselves both academically and generally so as to make sense of what is happening around them. Secondly, students’ learning processes will also be positively affected and they will also learn new things. If the teachers show that they are in an active learning process, the students will try to learn

more impartially and enthusiastically. In other words, it promotes the students' learning capabilities and their academic and social improvements (Vermunt, 2014). Besides, there would be increased self-confidence and awareness of the role of the community of teachers and they may form healthier bonds with their students to better understand each other since both groups have passed through the same processes (Wall & Hall, 2016). Last, of all, educational policymakers may prepare appropriate roadmaps for proficient teaching and regular learning in order for students and teachers to be more successful.

### *1.1.2. English Teachers Learning*

Today's language teachers have a compelling and essential job. Besides, developing their communicative skills, students need to adapt to multicultural environments, gain knowledge at an international level, and strive to ensure that they are proficient in their fields, which can be possible with teachers who are open for improvement. In terms of the professional development of EFL teachers, an advanced approach that attaches importance to culture and pedagogy should be adopted (McCloskey, 2010). Additionally, what EFL teachers understand from professional development and learning, and what outcomes they expect from this process are worth to consider. Significant analysis and discussion on EFL teachers' learning were presented by Aliakbari and Malmir (2017), who posit that EFL teacher's learning, is a function of teacher cognition and beliefs, teacher emotions, teacher motivation, and contextual variables. Richard and Farrell (2005) summarized and listed the strategies for EFL teachers for their learning and professional development under 11 topics which can be listed as follows: Workshops, self-monitoring, teacher support groups, keeping a teaching journal, peer observation, teaching portfolios, analyzing critical incidents, case analysis, peer coaching, team teaching, and action research. Particularly in Turkey, to the best of our knowledge, there are not many research studies on this topic, except a few. For instance, Hişmanoğlu and Hişmanoğlu (2010) in their study with EFL teachers in Northern Cyprus revealed that EFL teachers found professional career activities as boring and inapplicable. Moreover, in another study teachers' beliefs, needs and experiences studied and the results showed that they needed government support for their needs for professional development (Özbilgin, Erkmen, & Karaman, 2016). In a study of Seferoğlu, (2001), he examined primary school teachers' available opportunities for professional development and the results showed that they need more opportunities to improve their teaching skills and there is inequality for reaching the activities for professional development between who works in rural and urban schools. Considering the methods and techniques used by EFL teachers, the current programs and tools implemented in foreign language teaching in Turkey, it is seen that the desired outcome in foreign language education has not been reached yet (Kırkgöz, 2008).

### *1.1.3. Factors Influencing Teacher Learning*

Significant analysis and discussion on EFL teachers' learning were presented by Aliakbari and Malmir (2017), who posits that ELT teacher's learning, is a function of teacher cognition and beliefs, teacher emotions, teacher motivation, and contextual variables. Therefore, in this study teacher learning was analyzed under four factors which are teacher cognition and beliefs, teacher motivation, teacher emotions and contextual variables.

Teacher cognition and beliefs are about what teachers think about, elaborate and realize including their communication and interaction with others. In Borg's (2003) words, teacher cognition is an "unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching –what teachers know, believe, and think" (p. 81). How teachers understand, organize, construct and categorize information by the help of 'scripts' and 'schemata' -which are already present intertwined and organizing structures and activated by new interactions and experiences in individuals' minds is the interest of teacher cognition. Schemata can be obtained utilizing teaching in classroom settings (Yates & Chandler, 1991).

Teachers' motivation is a harbinger of their behavior, which directly affects the students' motivation and success. In other words, the motivation of teachers and the motivation of students can be thought of as directly connected nodes in a cycle. On condition that they are both high may ensure that education is optimal in every sense (Richardson & Watt, 2010).

Turning now to the emotions in teacher learning, it was not until the late 1990s that researchers considered emotions are worthy to attract scholarly attention. After the 1990s, first student emotions, and then teacher emotions have come into vogue when there is no interactive communication provided by affective processes, neither learning nor teaching is possible (Schutz & Lee, 2014). As Golombek and Johnson (2004) assert, affective determinants are of paramount importance in teacher learning in spite of lack of interest in this topic. Hargreaves (1998) provides a valuable result that the emotional bonds of the teacher with their students made themselves empowered which in turn formed their way of teaching, planning and development. Moreover, this educational change of teachers affected their emotions in their personal relationships.

Contextual factors can be diversified and may be both facilitators and challenges in the learning of teachers. In order to capture teacher learning, we should conceive both school and more specifically classroom settings in which students and the teacher interact, and what is happening in their social worlds. Borg (1988) takes the nature of the lessons, the expertise and reflectivity of teachers in contextual factors. History and ecolé of the school, location of the school, educational regulations, and governmental policies are among the contextual factors that affect teachers' professional development (Stoll, 1999).

## 1.2. Research questions

The study aims to seek answers to the following research questions, which are centered around four perspectives: Teacher cognition and beliefs, teacher emotions, teacher motivation, contextual variables

1. Among the four dimensions what factors affect in-service EFL teachers' learning most a) Teacher cognition and beliefs, (b) Teacher emotions, (c) Teacher motivation and (d) Contextual variables?
2. Is there a statistically significant difference among teaching experiences of EFL teachers in terms of teacher learning?
3. Is there a statistically significant difference between the degree levels of EFL teachers in terms of teacher learning?

## 2. Method

The research fits into the category of descriptive research design and this is a quantitative study as it includes a set of numeric data, in which data are analyzed by using mathematically based methods in order to find out the answers to research questions. Also, the present study is descriptive and exploratory. Descriptive and exploratory studies are the types of quantitative design that are defined as describing personal portraits, conditions, or groups and the frequency with which psychological, psychosocial or cultural phenomenon occurs systematically (Dulock, 1993). This study has also adopted a survey type research method.

### 2.1. Sample / Participants

In order to carry out the study, the convenience sampling method was used. It was reached to 1015 English teachers who work all around Turkey for this study. 1015 English Teacher working all around Turkey from primary school to high school was asked to fill in the questionnaire voluntarily online or

given out personally. Participants' ages differ from 20 to 45 and above and their native language was Turkish. Table 1 displays the data related to the demographics of the participants.

**Table 1.** Demographic variables of the participants

		F	%
Age	20-25	150	14.8%
	26-30	356	35.1%
	31-35	319	31.4%
	36-40	114	11.2%
	41-45	49	4.8%
	45 and above	27	2.7%
Gender	Male	132	13.0%
	Female	883	87.0%
Experience	0-5	403	39.7%
	6-10	307	30.2%
	11-15	189	18.6%
	16-20	85	8.4%
	21 and above	31	3.1%
Degree	Bachelor's degree	836	82.4%
	Master's degree	140	13.8%
	PhD	39	3.8%
Teaching Level	Primary school	198	19.5%
	Secondary school	640	63.1%
	High school	177	17.4%

There were 150 (14.8%) teachers whose ages ranged between 20 and 25, 356 (35.1%) between 26 and 30, 319 (31.4%) between 31 and 35, 114 (11.2%) between 36 and 40, 49 (4.8%) between 41 and 45, 27 (2.7%) teachers whose ages 45 and above. Furthermore, 132 (13%) teachers were male, and 883 (87.0%) were female. Also, 403 (39.7%) of teachers had between 0 and 5 years of experience, 307 (30.2%) had between 6 and 10 years of experience, 189 (18.6%) had between 11 and 15 years of experience, 85 (8.4%) had between 16 and 20 years of experience and 31 (3.1%) had 21 and above years of experience. Additionally, 836 (82.4%) of teachers had a Bachelor's degree, 140 (13.8%) had a Master's degree, and 39 (3.8%) had a Ph.D. As mentioned before teachers were working at primary school to the high school level. There were 198 (19.5%) teachers working at primary school, 640 (63.1%) teachers at secondary school and 177 (17.4%) teachers in high school.

## 2.2. Instrument(s)

Aliakbari and Malmir's (2017) primary aim was to develop a measurement instrument for teacher learning in ELT contexts and they claimed that even if there are a considerable number of tools to examine teacher learning, there is no instrument to examine only English teachers' learning in ELT contexts. On account of this aim, they relied on Kubanyiova's (2012) Language Teacher Conceptual Change (LTCC) model, which provides a useful account of 'intentional conceptual change', 'deep-level cognitive engagement as a mediator of intentional conceptual change', 'affective and motivational factors as an inherent part of language teachers' cognitive development', and 'possible language teacher selves'.

Aliakbari and Malmir's (2017) first identified the factors influencing teacher learning. Then these factors were combined with components provided by Kubanyiova (2012). According to Aliakbari, and Malmir (2017) in ELT contexts, teacher learning is supposed to be examined by a number of variables, including 'teacher cognition and beliefs', 'teacher emotions', 'teacher motivation' and 'contextual variables' (see figure 1). Regarding these variables, Aliakbari and Malmir (2017) constructed a scale consisting of 45 items and is a 5-point Likert scale.

Components of the ELTLS	N	Mean	SD
Teacher cognition and beliefs	9	51.58	4.51
Teacher emotions	9	29.93	8.37
Teacher motivation	9	30.02	6.33
Contextual variables	18	14.32	2.64
Total	45	134.66	18.94

**Figure 1.** Descriptive statistics of items

➤ Teacher Cognition and beliefs

(Prior teacher education programs, classroom practice, language learning experience, pedagogical knowledge, subject matter knowledge, values, beliefs, problem-solving strategies, schooling, etc.) (Item numbers: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,19, and 37).

➤ Teacher emotions

(Job satisfactions, “emotional freedom, emotional exhaustion, teacher burnout, social working environment, emotional intelligence, cognitive self-regulation” etc.) (Item numbers: 8,10,11,15,20,22,27,28, and 31).

➤ Teacher motivation

(Working conditions, salary, job security, autonomous motivation, social prestige, social expectancy, self-efficacy etc.) (Item numbers: 9,12,16,18,21,24,25,32, and 39).

➤ Contextual variables

(Teacher learning strategies, time and resources, relations with colleagues and parents, discipline problems, time pressure, program flexibility, teacher evaluation, teacher education programs, material and resources, job satisfaction, classroom observations etc.) (Item numbers: 13,14,17,23,26,29,30,33,34,35,36,38,39,40,41,42,43,44, and 45).

The reliability of the scale is a must; therefore, reliability was analyzed and the alpha score of the inventory is found .85 which is acceptable (see table 2).

**Table 2.** Reliability Statistics of the data collection tool

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.852	45

### 2.3. Data collection procedures

Data collected from every reachable and voluntary Turkish EFL Teachers in Turkey. The participants were given information about the purpose and content of the study. They were made sure that the

information would be kept confidential and they were free to participate in the study. The questionnaire was online and social media was the prominent helper to reach out as many participants as possible. Also, EFL teachers' groups in WhatsApp were useful as well. The questionnaire was administered at different times so as not to overload the participants and reach more participants as much as possible.

#### 2.4. Data analysis

The data collected through the questionnaire was analyzed by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 21.0). The frequencies, means, percentages and standard deviations of the items in the questionnaire were calculated. The data were analyzed in order to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference based on the variables such as teaching experience, and degree of education. Shapiro-Wilk normality test was implemented to the data tool to decide which tests were supposed to be implemented; parametric or non-parametric tests.

According to the results, the significant value of the total items is .115 which means that the population was distributed normally ( $p > .05$ ). That's why parametric tests were implemented. The data were analyzed by descriptive statistics tools including frequencies, standard deviation and mean. Frequencies and descriptive statistics were utilized for research question one which aims to find which factor affects the most teachers' learning and for the research questions two and three which aim to find if there is a statistically significant difference among teaching experiences and degree levels of EFL teachers in terms of teacher learning, normality tests were implemented and according to the results, the population was distributed normally ( $p > .05$ ). Therefore, one of the types of parametric tests, one way ANOVA was performed.

### 3. Results

Descriptive statistics were implemented to these factors in order to represent the means and standard deviations of factors in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Descriptive Statistics of four factors

	N	M	SD
Teacher Cognition and beliefs	1015	3.98	.477
Contextual Variables	1015	3.52	.423
Teacher Emotions	1015	3.40	.455
Teacher Motivations	1015	3.35	.472

According to the results of the descriptive statistics the most influencing factor, which affects in-service EFL teachers, is Teacher cognition and beliefs with a 3,98 mean and followed by contextual variables ( $M=3.52$ ). Most of the participants believe that teacher cognition and beliefs are affecting their learning most amongst other factors. However, the means of the other factors are moderately high. When considered that the highest mean is 5.00, Teacher emotions and Teacher motivation factors' means are above 2.50, which indicate that all factors affect teachers' learning in a manner.

In order to find out whether there is a significant difference between teaching experiences of EFL Teachers in terms of teacher learning or not one-way ANOVA was conducted as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4.** One way ANOVA according to Experience

	Experience	n	M	SD	F	P
Teacher Cognition and beliefs	0-5	403	3.91	.480	4.693	.001
	6-10	307	4.01	.458		
	11-15	189	4.03	.464		
	16-20	85	4.01	.506		
	21 and above	31	4.19	.497		
Teacher Emotions	0-5	403	3.41	.461	.785	.535
	6-10	307	3.40	.476		
	11-15	189	3.40	.447		
	16-20	85	3.33	.352		
	21 and above	31	3.48	.456		
Teacher Motivations	0-5	403	3.36	.453	.406	.804
	6-10	307	3.33	.491		
	11-15	189	3.36	.474		
	16-20	85	3.32	.482		
	21 and above	31	3.32	.494		
Contextual Variables	0-5	403	3.51	.405	.371	.830
	6-10	307	3.53	.443		
	11-15	189	3.55	.435		
	16-20	85	3.54	.403		
	21 and above	31	3.56	.464		

According to the analysis of variance, the p-value of experience and teacher emotions factor is .53, the p-value of experience and teacher motivation factor is .80, experience and contextual variables factor is .83. For these factors, there is no statistically significant difference ( $p > .05$ ). However, the p-value of experience and teacher cognition and beliefs factor is .01, which means there is a statistically significant difference ( $p < .05$ ). The number of 0-5 year experienced teachers is 403 which is the biggest part of the population and the mean is 3.91, yet, the number of 21 years and above experienced teachers is 31 which is the smallest part of the population and the mean is 4.19 which shows that although 21 years and above experienced teachers outnumbered they have a higher mean, which shows that elders are affected more than the young ones. Teacher motivation factors show almost no difference according to the means of the experience groups.

According to p-values, to find out where the difference is, post-hoc test was implemented as in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Post-Hoc test for Teacher Cognition and Beliefs

(I) Experience	(J) Experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
0-5	6-10	-.099	.110
	11-15	-.122	.075
	16-20	-.104	.498
	21 and above	-.281*	.039

According to post-hoc test comparing experience and teacher cognition and beliefs revealed that there was a statistical significance between 0-5 years of experienced teachers and 21 and above years of experienced teachers ( $p = .03$ ).

To find out if there is a statistically significant difference between degree levels of EFL teachers in terms of teacher learning one way ANOVA was implemented in Table 6.

**Table 6.** One way ANOVA according to Degree Level

		N	M	STD	F	P
Teacher Cognition and beliefs	Bachelor's degree	836	3.96	.481	2.744	.65
	Master's degree	140	4.06	.416		
	PhD	39	4.05	.562		
Teacher Emotions	Bachelor's degree	836	3.40	.462	.048	.953
	Master's degree	140	3.40	.422		
	PhD	39	3.38	.419		
Teacher Motivations	Bachelor's degree	836	3.33	.474	1.479	.228
	Master's degree	140	3.40	.440		
	PhD	39	3.39	.520		
Contextual Variables	Bachelor's degree	836	3.52	.424	.009	.991
	Master's degree	140	3.53	.393		
	PhD	39	3.53	.523		

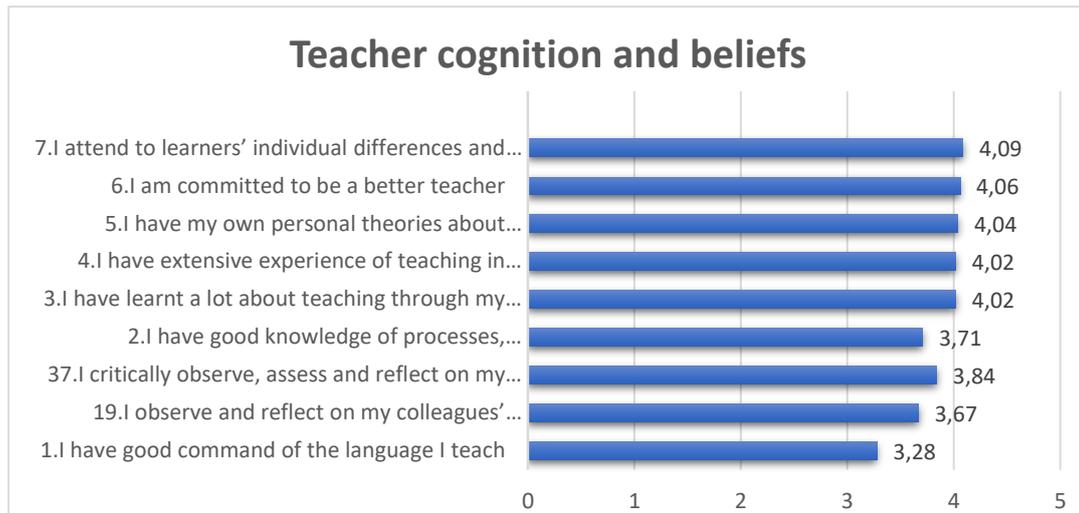
According to the results of one-way ANOVA, the p values of degrees and teacher cognition and beliefs it is .06, for teacher emotions, it is .95, for teacher motivation, it is .22, for contextual variables it is .99. According to the results of one-way ANOVA, there is no statistical significance among the degree levels of EFL teachers in terms of teacher learning, according to four factors of teacher cognition and beliefs, teacher motivation, teacher emotions and contextual variables ( $p > .05$ )

Even though there is no statistical significance, there are some differences among participants according to means. In all factors, teachers who have a master's degree have the highest means despite their number ( $N=140$ ). Teachers who have a bachelor's degree have the majority in number ( $N=836$ ) but they have the least mean values among all factors but for teacher emotions. Considering teacher cognition and beliefs factor and teacher motivations factor, teachers with a Ph.D. degree who have the least participants ( $N=39$ ) have higher means than teachers who have a bachelor's degree ( $N=836$ ). For the contextual variables, the means are almost equal.

## 4. Discussion

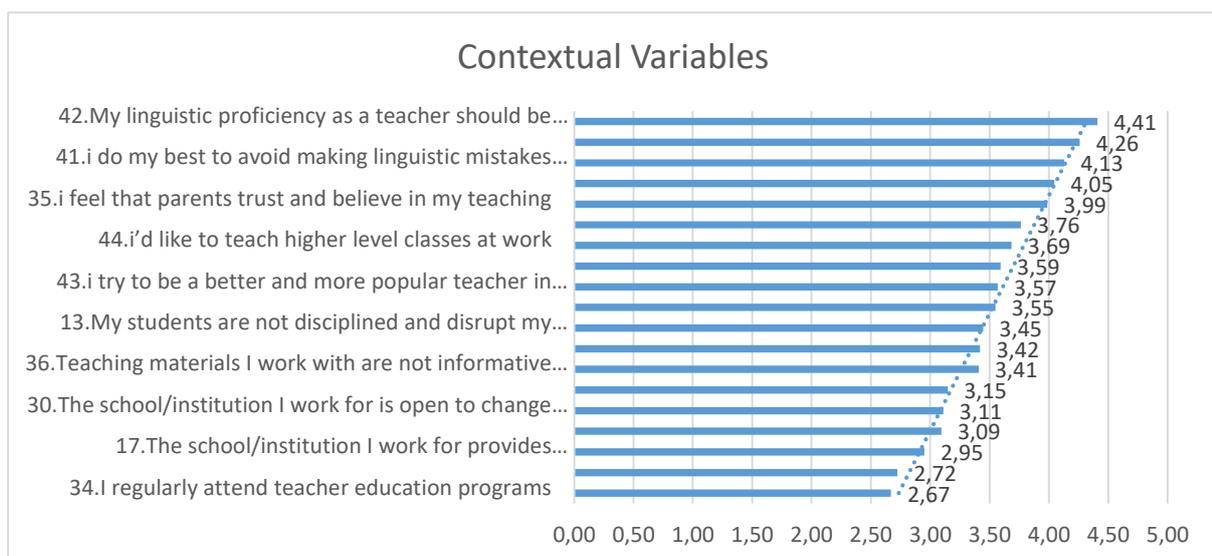
### 4.1. What factors affect in-service EFL teachers' learning most?

The first goal of this study was to find out which factors guide and influence teacher's professional learning according to the factors of (a) Teacher cognition and beliefs, (b) Teacher emotions, (c) Teacher motivation and (d) Contextual variables. Teacher cognition and beliefs factor affects the most among other factors. There are a lot of variables that affect teachers, but it is not possible to mention all of them in this study, yet; teachers seem to be affected by these factors almost equally. According to the given answers, the means of the factors are close to one another.



**Figure 2.** Descriptive of the items related to Teacher cognition and beliefs factor

Teacher cognition and beliefs factor has some sub-dimensions (see figure 2). According to the results, subject matter knowledge is important for teachers and they want to have good command of the language. Supportively, in the study of Tran (2013), he examined the factors that affect teaching and learning in Vietnamese universities and found out that teachers' subject matter knowledge has a great deal of effect on teaching and learning. Teachers want to have good knowledge of process, practices and methods of teaching and learning which is related to pedagogical knowledge. Prior learning experiences contributed a lot to teachers learning. Most of the teachers participated in the study have their own personal theories about teaching and learning and they believe that it affects their learning somehow. Teachers' commitment to be a better teacher is what teachers want generally according to the results. To be able to understand learner differences and needs influence teachers. Teachers think that observing and reflecting on colleagues' and their teaching practices have an important impact on their learning. Bell and Mladenovic (2015) in their study based on several data sets within a three-year period in Australia, teachers had seen peer-observation process as encouraging and improving in relation to teaching, which in turn fostered professional growth.



**Figure 3.** Descriptive of the items related to Contextual variables factor

The contextual variables factor is the second most influencing factor, which is related to linguistic proficiency, relationships with students, parents, administrators, and colleagues, resources and materials, discipline problems, teacher education programs, job satisfaction, and learners’ questions (see figure 3). In Van Droogenbroeck, Spruyt, and Vanroelen’s (2014) study, senior teachers’ burn-out was resulted from their interpersonal relationships with their students, colleagues, supervisors, and parents; and teaching-related and non-teaching-related workload which corresponds to this study results showing that contextual variables may cause burn out and is found to be the most affecting factor. Likewise, teaching materials are worthwhile for teacher learning and professional development, as Petrie (2012) affirmed that teachers found ready to-use materials and pre-packaged curriculum resources precious. In a similar study, Carless (2003) also tried to find out the factors that affect teacher learning and found out that teacher cognition and beliefs and contextual variables were the most influencing factors.

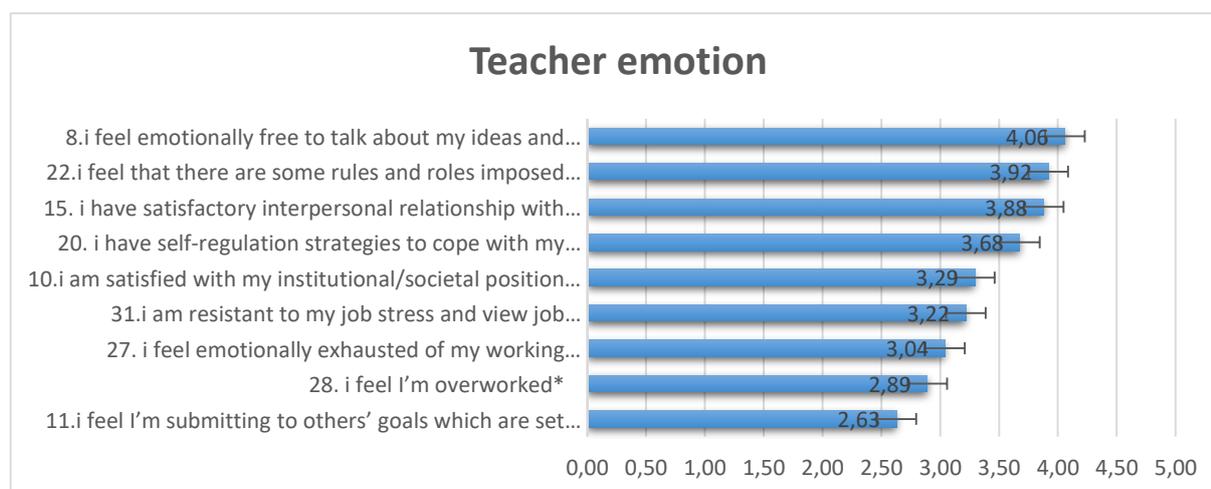
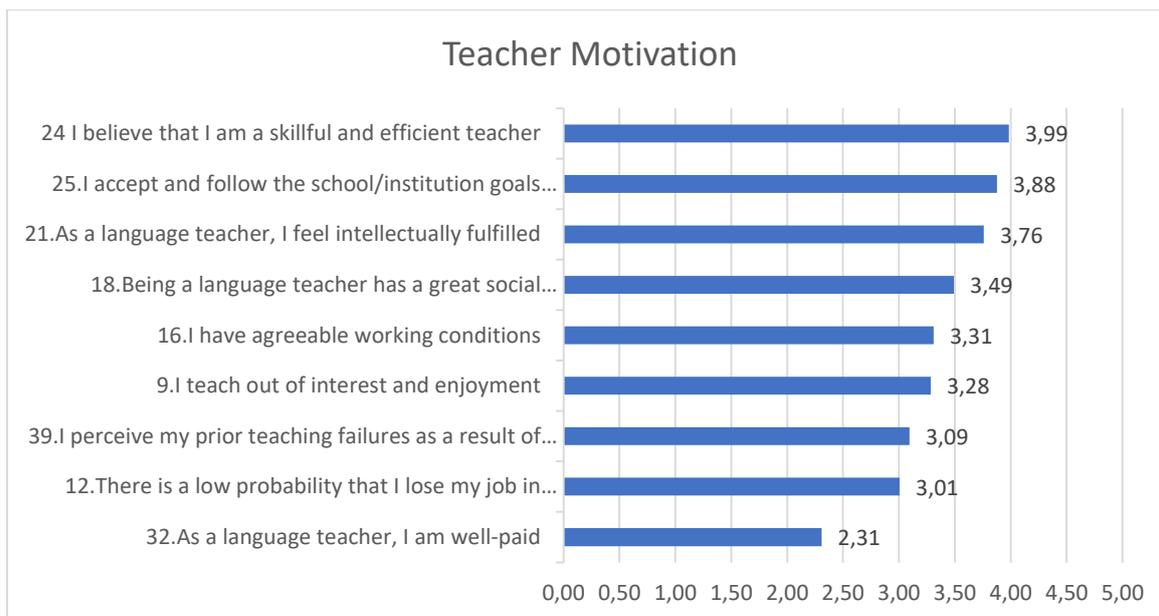


Figure 4. Descriptive of the items related to Teacher emotion

The teacher emotions factor is the third influencing factor, which is related to job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, workload, hardiness and emotional freedom (see figure 4). Kwakman (2003) in his study to find out what factors affect teacher learning the most at workplace, he implemented a scale including items related to reading, experimenting, reflecting and collaborating and the results showed that collaborating and reflecting had the most impact on teacher learning at workplace which are related to teacher cognition and beliefs and contextual variables and he found out that emotional factors have the least effect on teacher learning as it was found in this study. Unlike this study, some researchers who stressed that teacher emotions have more effect like Zembylas in his study (2005) addresses with the role of emotions in teacher learning and development. He showed the importance of emotional ecology, teachers’ emotional knowledge in teaching and learning, emotional suffering, and emotional freedom with case studies and ethnographic research. For example, in Zembylas’ study (2005) emotional suffering occurred because the teacher’s and the school’s priorities in teaching science interfere with each other, shame and guilt have arisen. After 15 years of experience, the teacher in the case study indicated that she was able to do whatever she wishes without being under any pressure, which is called as emotional freedom



**Figure 5.** Descriptive of the items related to Teacher motivation

The teacher motivations factor is the last influencing factor, which is related to job security, working conditions, social prestige, self-efficacy, salary and success expectancy according to the results.

#### 4.2. *Is there a statistically significant difference among teaching experiences of EFL teachers in terms of teacher learning?*

The findings of the study revealed that there is no significant difference between teaching experiences of EFL teachers in terms of teacher learning in the factors of teacher emotions, teacher motivations, and contextual variables but there is a statistically significant difference for teacher cognition and beliefs factor. When analyzed it was found out that the difference is between novice (0-5 years of experience) teachers and experienced teachers (21 and above years of experience). Although experienced teachers were outnumbered by novice teachers, they were affected more than them in teacher cognition and beliefs, teacher emotions and contextual variables factors while teacher motivations factor showed no difference. Compared to this study, Klassen and Chiu (2010) found out the relationships among teachers' years of experience, teacher characteristics, teacher motivation showed out that teachers' years of experience were nonlinear with these factors. Also, a study conducted by İpek, Akçay, Atay, Berber, Karalık, and Yılmaz (2018) revealed that there is no significant difference in terms of experience for teachers' emotional stress. Unlike this study's results, to find out if there is a difference between novice and experienced teachers' beliefs about instructing grammar Önalın (2018) conducted a study and found out that there was no statistically significant difference between them but as it was found out in this study as a part of contextual variables, flexibility, was a significant factor affecting experienced teachers more than novice teachers. In Önalın's (2018) study the results also revealed that experienced teachers were more flexible in instructing grammar than novice teachers. Moreover, Al-Mekhlafi and Nagarathnam, (2011) in their study found out that there were no significant differences in perception of the difficulties in teaching and learning grammar in terms of the experience.

### 4.3. *Is there a statistically significant difference between the degree levels of EFL teachers in terms of teacher learning?*

As to degree level, the results of the analysis indicated that there is no statistically significance among EFL teachers in terms of teacher learning, according to four factors of teacher cognition and beliefs, teacher motivation, teacher emotions and contextual variables. As indicated in this study, Huang and Shih, (2017) in their study aimed to find out the primary school teachers' attitudes toward teacher evaluation for professional development and to find if there is a difference according to gender, age, highest academic degree, post, and seniority and no difference was observed on teachers' various backgrounds. However according to the means, teachers who have bachelor's degree were affected less than other teachers by factors. Teachers with PhD degree had the highest means for the factors of teacher cognition and beliefs and teacher motivations. As to contextual variables all of the teachers were in agreement.

## 5. Conclusions

The first goal of this study was to find out which factors guide and influence teacher's professional learning according to the factors of (a) Teacher cognition and beliefs, (b) Teacher emotions, (c) Teacher motivation and (d) Contextual variables. Teacher cognition and beliefs factor affects the most among other factors, however; all factors affect teachers somehow. In Turkey context, there are a lot of variables affect teachers but it is not possible to mention all of them in this study, yet; teachers seem to be affected by these factors almost equally. According to given answers, the means of the factors are close to one another.

Teacher cognition and beliefs factor has some sub-dimensions which were asked to teachers in data collection tool (see Appendix B). According to the answers of the scale, subject matter knowledge is important for teachers and they want to have good command of the language. They might think that if they are good at subject matter knowledge this might help their students achieve meaningful understanding and influence their efforts to teach. Also, teachers may agree on that if they don't have accurate knowledge of English, they may fail on transferring what they need to teach. Teachers want to have good knowledge of process, practices and methods of teaching and learning which is related to pedagogical knowledge.

Prior learning experiences contributed a lot to teachers learning. It may affect teachers' thinking and may connect the new information to prior learning experiences. Learning never ends and teachers are one of the most important part of the teaching and learning system. They reflect how they learnt on their next teaching and learning experiences. Most of the teachers participated in the study have their own personal theories about teaching and learning and they believe that it affects their learning somehow. In this case practicing as much as possible may help teachers create their own theories. School practice lessons at universities take place at the last year of the education program, however starting school practice earlier might give a chance to teachers practice and create their own learning theories this would lead teachers to be more experienced and self-confident. Teachers' commitment to be a better teacher is what teachers want generally according to the results.

Another fact according to the results is that teachers want to understand learner's differences and their needs. Especially English teachers in Turkey have 2 hours of teaching at primary schools, 3 hours of teaching at the 5th and 6th grades and 4 hours of teaching at 7th and 8th grades at secondary schools. To be able to recognize their students and identify their needs and differences for teachers is almost not possible. For this reason, teaching hours can be increased. Also, teachers think that observing and reflecting on colleagues' and their teaching practices have an important impact on their learning. According to the results it can be stated that, observing and reflecting on their colleagues may help

teachers to improve their professional development. Moreover, it might give a chance to teachers to evaluate why and what happened, and foster teachers to find out new ideas and may cause some changes in their way of learning.

Contextual variables factor is the second most influencing factor which is related to relationships with students, parents, administrators, and colleagues, resources and materials, discipline problems, teacher education programs, job satisfaction, and learners' questions (see appendix B). As teacher-student relationships improve, the development of teachers and students may get better. Also, this could create a safe and a reliable classroom environment. School administrators' communication seems to be important for teachers, according to the results, which may affect their motivations and emotions as well in a manner. Teachers indicate that discipline problems affect their learning and at schools in Turkey unfortunately discipline problems have been increasing recently for this reason a new arrangement can be made. The results also indicate that teachers are not happy enough at their jobs. The reason could be the salary, administrators' approach to teachers and idle documentation tasks. Moreover, the appointment system causes teachers to work at places where they are far from their families, in difficult conditioned environments so teachers might be affected negatively because most of them are not happy in places where they work.

Teacher emotions factor is the third influencing factor which is related to job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, workload, hardiness and emotional freedom according to the results (see appendix B). There could be so many things affecting teachers' emotions. Working conditions of the schools are so different from one another. Some schools are mandatory service schools which have hard working conditions, low socio-economic environments, low education leveled families and these all may affect teachers somehow. These places are less preferred by teachers and this results in a smaller number of teachers at these schools. Therefore, teachers may overwork and they may feel emotional exhaustion too.

Teacher motivations factor is the last influencing factor which is related to job security, working condition, social prestige, self-efficacy, salary and success expectancy according to the results.

When the results analyzed according to experience, a difference found only between 0-5 years of experienced teachers and 21 and above years experienced teachers for the factor of teacher cognition and beliefs. There are just 31 participants experienced 21 years and above while 403 participants 0-5 years experienced teachers. However, 21 years and above experienced teachers are affected more than new teachers when four of the factors analyzed. It could be interpreted that as teachers get experienced, they are affected more. Their motivations, emotions, cognition and beliefs differ from one another. As the time passed, teachers could get bored, they might not get what they expected, salary could be not inadequate, students' profile changes could affect them, renewal of education system almost every year might affect them. Also, the number of the 16- 20 (N=85) and 21 years and above (N=31) experienced teachers' participation is quite lower than the other groups. 0-5 years experienced teachers are the biggest part of the participants while 6-10 years of experienced follow as secondly and 11-15-years experienced teachers are the third biggest group. The survey was implemented online and young teachers participated more than elder ones. It can be inferred that new teachers' use of technology might be much better than elder ones. As they get older, the use of technology may decrease according to the participants' numbers. This could be a limitation of this study as well. Experienced teachers are supposed to be integrated with technology more, especially in today's world.

As to degree level, there is no statistically significant difference found, however; teachers with bachelor's degree are affected less than teachers who have master's degree and PhD by the factors of teacher cognition and beliefs and teacher motivations while the other factors affect teachers with different degrees equally. The number of the teachers with master's degree and PhD degree is far less

than teachers with bachelor's degree. Teachers may find it difficult to study MA or PhD or it might be difficult to get these degrees.

To sum up, In Turkey context, it was inferred that teachers have similar factors affecting their professional learning and it was assumed that Turkish EFL teachers mostly come together with the factors affecting them. As they get experienced and older their thoughts are changing, some factors affect them more while the others affect less despite the unequal age distribution of the participants.

### 5.1. Implications and Suggestions

This study revealed the factors influencing teachers the most and may give some ideas to the government and all administrators in order to get to work and make some changes. School practice hours could be increased and could be started from the first year of the university to give a chance to teachers to practice, experience and create their own theories. Teachers should improve and promote relationships with parents, colleagues and school administrators. Ministry of National Education could increase the hours of the English lessons at primary schools and could improve the conditions for English teachers. The use of technology should be extended to every level of school and teachers should be integrated and trained if necessary, irrespective of their ages. The salary might be inadequate for teachers and this might affect their emotions and motivations. Salary also affects the teacher's prestige in society that's why it could be revised and increased. Administrators should facilitate professional learning for teachers and also must provide opportunities for professional development.

### 5.2. Limitations

The fact that there are few studies conducted to find out the factors affecting EFL teachers' professional learning made it difficult to compare the findings of the study.

Another limitation is, there are thousands of English teachers in Turkey but reaching them was so difficult. Some of the ones who were reached complained about the scale itself because it has 45 items and it takes time to answer all the questions, so participants might have got bored while answering and it might have led them to answer questions inattentively.

## 6. Ethics Committee Approval

The author(s) confirm(s) that the study does not need ethics committee approval according to the research integrity rules in their country (Date of Confirmation: January 14, 2021).

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## Appendixes

### A.1. APPENDIX-A ELT Learning Scale (ELTLS)

Please read each item carefully and indicate the extent to which each one applies to you and your teaching context. Very little (1), little (2), somehow (3), much (4), very much (5).

No		1	2	3	4	5
1	I have good command of the language I teach					
2	I have good knowledge of processes, practices, and methods of teaching and learning					
3	I have learnt a lot about teaching through my extensive experience as a learner					
4	I have extensive experience of teaching in classrooms					
5	I have my own personal theories about teaching and learning					
6	I am committed to be a better teacher					
7	I attend to learners' individual differences and needs					
8	I feel emotionally free to talk about my ideas and feelings about my job as a teacher with others at work					
9	I teach out of interest and enjoyment					
10	I am satisfied with my institutional/societal position as a teacher					
11	I feel I'm submitting to others' goals which are set for me as a teacher*					
12	There is a low probability that I lose my job in near future					
13	My students are not disciplined and disrupt my teaching*					
14	I don't have much time for teaching preparation and recovery*					
15	I have satisfactory interpersonal relationship with others at work					
16	I have agreeable working conditions					
17	The school/institution I work for provides opportunities for collaborative professional learning					
18	Being a language teacher has a great social prestige in my society					
19	I observe and reflect on my colleagues' teaching practices					
20	I have self-regulation strategies to cope with my job stress					
21	As a language teacher, I feel intellectually fulfilled					
22	I feel that there are some rules and roles imposed on me as a teacher					
23	I teach in congruence with my own educational beliefs and values					
24	I believe that I am a skillful and efficient teacher					
25	I accept and follow the school/institution goals and values					
26	My colleagues are professional and supportive					
27	I feel emotionally exhausted of my working environment*					
28	I feel I'm overworked*					
29	The school/institution I work for is supportive and gives helpful advices					
30	The school/institution I work for is open to change and flexible to teachers' practical suggestions					
31	I am resistant to my job stress and view job demands as opportunities for improvement					
32	As a language teacher, I am well-paid					
33	I receive professional and practical guidelines from teacher observers/educators at work					
34	I regularly attend teacher education programs					
35	I feel that parents trust and believe in my teaching					
36	Teaching materials I work with are not informative and helpful*					
37	I critically observe, assess and reflect on my own teaching practice					
38	My work activities change my teaching behavior					
39	I perceive my prior teaching failures as a result of my lack of personal competence*					
40	I do best to be able to answer even the most challenging questions of my students					

41	I do my best to avoid making linguistic mistakes while teaching				
42	My linguistic proficiency as a teacher should be ostensibly better than my students' linguistic proficiency				
43	I try to be a better and more popular teacher in comparison with my colleagues				
44	I'd like to teach higher level classes at work				
45	I do my best to master even the most difficult classroom learning materials to teach				

## A.2. APPENDIX-B ELT Learning Scale's Factor analysis

Item no.	Gist of the Item	Factors			
		1	2	3	4
1	Subject matter knowledge	.78			
2	Pedagogical knowledge	.74			
3	Prior learning experience	.64			
4	Teaching experience	.62			
5	Personal theories	.83			
6	Teacher commitment	.59			
7	Teachers' awareness and sensitivity	.56			
19	Peer observation	.60			
37	Self-reflection	.58			
8	Emotional Freedom		.65		
10	Job satisfaction		.62		
11	Goal orientation		.62		
15	Interpersonal relationship		.55		
20	Self-regulating strategies		.56		
22	Emotional suffering		.57		
27	Emotional exhaustion		.69		
28	Workload		.80		
31	Hardiness		.54		
9	Autonomous motivation			.54	
12	Job security			.62	
16	Working condition			.64	
18	Social prestige			.56	
21	Intellectual fulfillment			.50	
24	Teacher self-efficacy			.77	
25	Goal internalization			.58	
32	Salary			.73	
39	Success expectancy			.61	
13	Discipline				.57
14	Time pressure				.58
17	Collaborative context				.53
23	Value consonance				.62
26	Relation with colleagues				.66
29	Supervisory support				.57
30	Program flexibility				.54
33	Teacher evaluation				.55
34	Teacher education programs				.65
35	Relation with parents				.75
36	Teaching material				.54
38	Work activities				.63
40	Leamers' questions				.61
41	Leamers' feedback				.72
42	Leamers' proficiency				.62
43	Teacher popularity				.59
44	Class level				.53
45	Classroom learning material				.64

## Öğretmenlerin mesleki öğrenmelerini etkileyen etkenler: İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen Türk öğretmenlerle bir çalışma

### Öz

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, öğretmenleri profesyonel anlamda etkileyen etkenleri (a) öğretmenlerin biliş ve inancı, (b) öğretmen duyguları, (c) Öğretmen motivasyonu ve (d) bağlamsal değişkenler adlı dört faktör altında inceleyip en çok etkileyen faktörü bulmak ve deneyim ve öğrenim derecesi bakımından öğretmen öğrenmesi üzerinde farklılıklar olup olmadığını belirlemektir. Araştırma örneklemini Türkiye’de farklı illerde ve kademelerde çalışmakta olan ve çeşitli yaşlardaki 1015 İngilizce öğretmeninden oluşmaktadır. Öğretmenleri profesyonel anlamda en çok etkileyen etkenleri bulmak için İngilizce Öğretmenleri Öğrenme Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Elde edilen sonuçlara göre öğretmenleri en çok etkileyen faktör öğretmenlerin biliş ve inançları iken bağlamsal değişkenler de ikinci etkileyen faktör olmuştur. Farklılıklara bakıldığında sadece öğretmenlerin biliş ve inancı ile deneyimleri arasında fark bulunmuştur. Yapılan post-hoc testi ile öğretmenlerin bilişleri ve inançlarında 21 yıl ve üstü deneyimli öğretmenler ile 0-5 yıl arası deneyimli öğretmenler arasında anlamlı bir farklılık bulunmuştur.

*Anahtar sözcükler:* Öğretmen öğrenmesi; ELT ölçeği; Öğretmenleri profesyonel gelişim; İngilizce Öğretmenleri

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