

INVESTIGATING UNIVERSITY EFL TEACHERS' PERCEPTION, PRACTICE, AND CHALLENGES IN SELF-INITIATED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

^{1*}Mitiku Garedew Tessema, ²Girma Gezahegn Belihu

¹PhD Student, English Language Teaching, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

²English Lecturer, English Language Teaching, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

*Corresponding Author Email: girmagb@gmail.com

Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: February 2023 Revised: March 2023 Published: April 2023	<i>The topic of self-initiated professional development has garnered increasing attention among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers who are motivated to identify and address gaps in their professional development. This study aimed to investigate the perceptions, practices, and challenges of EFL teachers at Addis Ababa Science and Technology University with regard to self-initiated professional development. The participants consisted of 35 EFL instructors with 12 holding PhD degrees and the remaining 23 holding MA degrees at Addis Ababa Science and Technology University. The study adopted a concurrent mixed methods research design, utilizing both a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews for data collection. The study employed a total population sampling method and conducted semi-structured interviews with four randomly selected EFL teachers. Data analysis was performed separately for the questionnaire and interview data, followed by a mixed analysis to triangulate and corroborate the results. The findings revealed that the majority of the EFL teachers had a positive perception of self-initiated professional development, which was reflected in their practice of self-monitoring and analyzing critical incidents. However, the teachers did not engage in practices such as keeping a teaching journal, conducting action research, reflecting on their teaching, or developing a teaching portfolio. The challenges to self-initiated professional development were identified as lack of commitment, collaboration among colleagues, communication, and institutional support. This study highlights the potential of self-initiated professional development as an alternative means of addressing professional development needs among EFL teachers.</i>
Keywords Self-initiated Professional Development, EFL Teachers, Perception, Practice, Challenges	
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INTRODUCTION

No matter how thorough a teacher's pre-service preparation is, there is no way it can adequately prepare them for all of the obstacles they experience in their professional lives. Because of this, it's critical to give teachers access to in-service professional development opportunities in order to uphold a high standard of instruction and keep a talented teacher pool (Villegas, 2003). In support of this idea, Richards (2005) stated that the need for ongoing renewal of professional skills and knowledge is not about the issue of inadequate training but simply a response to that not everything teachers need to know are often provided at pre-service level and due to the knowledge and skills domain of teaching constantly changes.

To meet the changing needs of learners in the modern world, teachers have to pursue professional development. They have to do this by assessing and reexamining their teaching beliefs and practices. They also need to take the responsibility for their professional development in their teaching. Teacher professional development is considered as an essential

factor for teachers to function successfully. On the other hand, teacher professional development has to be viewed as an absolute necessity not only for professional reasons, but also for moral ones, (Mohammed, 2014).

Concerning professional development for higher institutions in Ethiopia, higher diploma program (HDP) and English language improvement program can be cited here. The purpose of HDP is providing teacher educators and other university teachers with development of skills in areas of action research, active learning, reflective teaching and continuous assessment. Similarly, the English Language Improvement Program (ELIP) was established to enhance the level of the then teachers' English language to produce a workforce capable of serving the needs of national development. Although these programs were able to address a lot of teachers, they were also criticized for the lack of effective implementation (Tamirat, 2020, Kefyalew, 2016, MoE, 2018).

Although professional development issue for EFL teachers in the Ethiopian higher institution is not specifically stated in the policy, these teachers are believed to develop their profession taking their own initiatives with or without the assistance of others in order to meet their professional needs. Because, teachers in the higher educations are knowledgeable enough to identify their gap and fill it with the current teaching learning approaches, MoE (2005). This idea is similar with the idea of Richards and Farrel (2005) named as self-initiated professional development approach which is the focus of this study. The study tries to investigate Addis Ababa Science and Technology University EFL teachers' perception, practice of self-initiated professional development and the challenges they face in their professional development effort.

Statement of the Problem

According to Richards and Farrell (2005), the field of language teaching is subject to rapid changes, both as the profession responds to new educational paradigms and trends and as institutions face new challenges as a result of changes in curriculum, national tests, and student needs. Similarly EFL teachers in a higher institutions in Ethiopia need to expand their roles and responsibilities over time if they are to continue to find language teaching rewarding.

One of the professional development opportunities offered by the MoE, to higher institutions English teachers and other subject teachers who use English as a medium of instruction, is the English Language Improvement Program (ELIP) project which was established in 2003 to provide teachers in all educational institutions with English language support to enhance their perceived weak language skills, (British Council, 2010). Moreover the Higher Diploma Program (HDP) is currently the only institutionalized form of professional development program for teacher educators or higher institutions teachers in Ethiopia. It focuses on providing higher institutions teachers with trainings such as teaching methodologies, active learning, conducting action research and continuous assessment techniques. This approach is criticized for following very general approach rather than providing teachers with their subject area new developments trainings. In addition, the program doesn't indicate what should follow after the completion of the HDP (MoE, 2018:41).

Apart from the traditional approach of professional development, (top-down approach), self-initiated professional development (bottom-up approach) or teachers' self-learning or improvement has become a research focus recently. Scholars such as Birhanu (2014) and Malek, F. (2016) stated that self-initiated professional development is being favored as compared to institutional based professional development practices because it gives them freedom to be responsible for their own career improvement. This study is, therefore, going to explore this issue in relation to Addis Ababa Science and Technology University EFL teachers. The research questions that guided this study were the following.

What are EFL teachers' views about self-initiated professional development? How often do EFL teachers engaged in self-initiated professional development activities? What are the factors that impeded their self-initiated professional development activities?

Literature Review

Teachers Professional Development

Teachers' professional development is inevitable issue in a teaching learning process that is why many educators explain what it is and why it is important for teachers. For example, according to Díaz-Maggioli, (2004) and Murray and Christison, (2011:198), teachers' professional development can be defined as a lifelong process by which teachers learn to update or upgrade their skills and knowledge in order to meet their students need for knowledge and skills change over time. This definition implies that teachers are to upgrade or updated their knowledge or skill as long as they are in their professions, and as change in education is inevitable. Likewise, Guskey (2009) defines it as a practices or program that brings significant change on teachers' attitude, belief, instructional practices and students' performance. For Richards and Farell (2005: 4), teachers' development refers to the overall professional growth of an individual or a teacher.

This can be achieved by engaging themselves in a continuous and variety of professional development activities, to prepare themselves for new responsibilities. This means teachers deal with new classroom practice to improve students' learning outcomes, (Villegas-Reimers, 2003, & Day, 1999). What is common with all the above scholars are that teachers' professional development should be continuous as knowledge is changing every time. Therefore they should update or upgrade accordingly to meet the changing needs of their students.

Self- initiated Professional Development

Professional development approach can be top down which gives all the responsibilities to the ministry of education. In this approach all the training issues, manuals; trainers are managed by officials from the institution. On the contrary, self-initiated professional development approach deals with teachers own initiatives to develop themselves. As Richards and Farell (2005:5) and Knowles (1975) stated, in self-initiated professional development, instructors take the initiative and design their own programs. They further explained that teachers are generally interested in adding to their professional knowledge and keeping up to date with theory and practice in the field, in improving their teaching skills so that they feel more confident about what they teach and achieve better results with their students. According to the above mentioned scholars, all professional development should be self- motivated as individual teachers have the autonomy to select what they need from their PD resources.

Self-Initiated Professional Development Strategies

Self- initiated professional development strategies are methods and techniques that teachers use to promote their profession and bring a change in their classroom practice. According to Hampton, Rhodes, and Stokes (2004), they are a wide variety of specialized training, formal education, or advanced professional learning intended to help teachers improve their professional knowledge, competence, skill, and effectiveness. They also help them to change their beliefs about their class room teaching methodology as long as the new methods and techniques they acquire make their students successful. Teachers may select different professional development strategies depending on their gap or need. The following are supposed to be the major professional development strategies that can be implemented by teachers themselves.

Self-monitoring

As Richards and Farrel (2005) stated self- monitoring refers to gathering information about teachers' activities, evaluating and reflecting up on them. The information can be documented through lesson reports, audio or video -recording a lesson, in order to review or evaluate teaching. It also refers to a systematic approach to the observation, evaluation, and management of one's own behavior in order to achieve a better understanding and control over the behavior. In order to better understand one's teaching and one's own strengths and weaknesses as a teacher, it is necessary to collect information about teaching behavior and practices objectively and systematically and to use this information as a basis for making decisions about whether there is anything that should be changed. According to Quddus and Khushid (2022), self-monitoring plays an important role in the professional development of English language teachers.

Keeping a Teaching Journal

A teaching journal is an ongoing written account of observations, reflections, and other thoughts about teaching, usually in the form of a notebook, book, or electronic mode, which serves as a source of discussion, reflection, or evaluation. The journal may be used as a record of incidents, problems, and insights that occurred during lessons; it may be an account of a class that the teacher would like to review or return to later; or it may be a source of information that can be shared with others.

Journal writing can serve different purposes, depending on who the audience for a journal is. For teachers, a journal can serve as a way of clarifying their own thinking and of exploring their own beliefs and practices, (Richards & Farrel, 2005). It can also be used to monitor their own practices, to provide a record of their teaching for others to read, and to document successful teaching experiences. As they further stated, it can provide a way of collaborating with other teachers in exploring teaching issues. For peers, supervisors, and mentors, reading and responding to a teacher's journal can serve as means of encouraging reflective inquiry and can facilitate resolving problems and concerns. Likewise, as stated by Donyaie, and Afshar (2019), reflective journal writing provides opportunities for the English teachers to become acquainted with their reflective practices.

Teaching Portfolios

For Richards and Farrell, (2005) in the context of EFL professional development, a teaching portfolio is a collection of documents and other items that provides information about different aspects of a teacher's work. It serves to describe and document the teacher's performance, to facilitate professional development, and to provide a basis for reflection and review.. First, it provides a demonstration of how a teacher approaches his or her work and presents evidence of the teacher's thinking, creativity, resourcefulness, and effectiveness. Second, a portfolio serves as a source of review and reflection. Third, a portfolio can promote collaboration with other teachers. For example, it can become part of the process of peer coaching. The peer reviews and discusses the portfolio and uses it to give feedback about the teacher's work. All in all portfolios can serve as a potentially effective method to encourage teachers to evaluate their own abilities and to enhance their skills. It can be combined with self- reflection or monitoring as it helps teachers to evaluate their professional beliefs and practices.

RESEARCH METHOD

In the study, the Concurrent mixed method was used as it provides the researcher with both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously from the study participants. In other words, both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were employed to collect the data from the teachers under the study. The data were collected through a questionnaire and

semi structured interview. Then the quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed separately. During the discussion, the qualitative and quantitative data were mixed for corroboration and triangulation purpose. Finally, the conclusion and recommendation are made respectively. The subjects of the study were English as a Second Language instructors from Addis Ababa Science and Technology University which was established in 2011 as Ethiopian Science and technology university. The intended number of participants in this study was 40. However, only 35 teachers were able to participate in the study. Among them, 12 of them had PhDs while the remaining 23 were MA holders. Their English language teaching experience ranges from three to fifteen years.

Due to their modest size, all of the teachers were included in the study. This was carried out in accordance with Cohn, Manion, and Morrison's (2007:93) suggestion that when the larger population is tiny, it is best to include the entire population. In this study, the questionnaire was filled out using total population sampling. Four of the 35 teachers were chosen at random to participate in semi-structured interviews in order to supplement the information gathered through the questionnaire.

Instruments and Data Collection Procedure

Questionnaire

A five section Likert type of questionnaires was used to gather information from all teachers under the study. Thus, based on research questions and review of related literatures, a set of questionnaires was prepared in English Language in relation to the participants' academic status. Many of the questionnaire items were adapted from previous similar studies conducted by Birhanu Simegn (2014), Hirpa Bane (2015) and Malek, (2016). The questionnaire was administered to the English teachers under the study. The questionnaire has three parts. Part one consists of items about EFL teachers' perceptions about self- initiated professional development(SIPD). In the second section, there are items which are supposed to explore teachers' practices in SIPD. And the third section probes what factors affects EFL teachers' professional development activities.

Interview

A semi-structured interview was employed in this study. As the semi-structured interviews are particularly useful for collecting information on people's ideas, opinions, or experiences. Therefore, the researcher employed it to collect additional data about EFL teachers' perception and practice concerning self- initiated professional development and the factors that affect their professional development activities. The interview was conducted with four randomly selected EFL teachers of Addis Ababa Science and Technology University. These teachers were selected among the participants in the study. Among the interviewees, one of them was a PhD holder but the rest three were PhD candidates. The interview was carried out with only these teachers as the data required saturated. The interviews were conducted in English as the participants are good at English language skills. Each interview lasted for 18 to 25 min.

Data Analysis

Before collecting the data through a questionnaire and interview, the research participants were requested if they were willing to participate in the study. They were also informed that the data obtained from them would be confidential. After the researcher got the consent from the participants, the data were collected. The data collected via the questionnaires were entered into SPSS 24, statistical package program. As for the data analysis of the questionnaire, percentage, frequency, mean were used. The data were analyzed using tables and verbal descriptions in relation to EFL teachers perception, practices about self- initiated professional development and the factors that affect their professional development practices. The interviews were transcribed and verified for accuracy and

consistency by listening to the recordings. Then after the data were analyzed by using information from the interview data in the form of themes and verbatim in relation to each research question. This was done with the help of open code4.02. Both tools helped the researcher to examine and gain an understanding of participants' perceptions, practices and factors challenging their practice of SIPD. Finally, the themes obtained from both the quantitative and qualitative data were discussed by mixing the data from both tools and findings were presented.

Presentation and Analysis of the Data

The analyses of the study are presented in three sections. The first section discusses teachers' perceptions about SIPD. The second section discusses teachers' practices of SIPD. The third section describes the challenges that affect teachers' SIPD practices. The analysis in each theme is also stabilized by the data obtained from the semi structured interview.

Quantitative Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1
English Language Teachers' Perception about Self- Initiated Professional Development

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
I think it deals with							
1 taking the initiative and action for my own professional development.	2	-	-	12	21	4.43	0.979
	5.7			34.3	60		
2 testing any idea or a new technique in my teaching.	2	-	1	19	13	4.17	0.954
	5.7	-	2.9	54.3	37.1		
3 being involved in the evaluation of my English teaching skills and knowledge.	2	-	3	14	18	4.31	0.993
	5.7	-	2.9	40	51.4		
4 learning with and from my colleagues.	1	1	1	12	20	4.4	0.914
	2.9	2.9	2.9	34.3	57.1		
5 reflecting (consider and evaluate) upon my own practices to improve professionally.	2	2	-	11	20	4.34	1.027
	5.7	5.7	-	31.4	57.1		
6 upgrading and /or updating me with changes and improvements in ELT.	1	-	-	9	25	4.63	0.77
	2.9	-	-	25.7	71.4		
7 developing my sense of responsibility in my professional development.	1	1		15	18	4.4	0.812
	2.9	2.9		42.9	51.4		
8 being committed for self-improvement activities.	1			12	22	4.54	0.78
	2.9			34.3	62.9		

As Table 2 indicates, for Item1 most of the respondents 33 (94.3%) agreed or strongly agreed, except 2 (5.7%) who strongly disagreed, with a statement taking initiatives and

actions to their own professional development. This might imply majority of the teachers have positive perception towards in taking self-initiation for SIPD. Concerning testing any idea or a new technique in their teaching, as many as 32 (91.4%) teachers either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement but two (5.7%) of the respondents strongly disagree. A single teacher preferred being neutral about this statement. This could imply that many are positive about testing any new idea or technique in their teaching.

Respondents were asked to show their agreement on being involved in their self-evaluation of their English teaching skills and knowledge. 32 (91.4 %) teachers were strongly agreed or agreed but, 2 (5.7%) of the teachers disagreed with this idea the rest 1(2.9%) teacher chose being neutral. The responses obtained from the teachers also indicate that they perceive SIPD as evaluating themselves. Concerning learning with and from colleagues, 32 (91.4) of the teachers showed their strong and normal agreement. 2 (5.7%) teachers disagreed in general as the rest 1(2.9%) teacher chose neutral. The result shows that many of the teachers are positive about exchanging their experiences.

Reflection up on teachers own practice to improve professionally was part of the items to explore EFL teachers' perception. 31 (88.5%) of the respondents showed their agreement while 4 (11.4) of them disagreed with this idea. From the above data, it is possible to understand that majority of the teachers recognize positively reflection up on their teaching practices. Respondents were also provided with the idea of upgrading and or updating themselves with current changes in ELT. Almost all 34(97.1%) of them responded positively. Only, 1 (2.9%) of them disagreed with this issue. From the above data, it can be noted that the majority of the teachers see SIPD as updating and/or upgrading themselves.

Developing the sense of responsibility in their professional development was also stated in the questionnaire to identify their perception. 33 (94.1%) of them responded positively except 2(3.8%) of the teachers who chose disagreement. This implies that majority of the teachers see SIPD as developing the sense of responsibility in professional development. Respondents were asked to know their perception about the commitment needed to self-improvement activities. 34 (97.1%) agreed on the importance of commitment in self-initiated professional development. Thus, the above analysis shows that most of the teachers perceived SIPD as being committed for self-improvement.

All in all, it may be argued that based on the above quantitative data, results by and large showed that many EFL teachers are positive about self- initiated professional development. The data obtained from one of the interviewees, too stabilized the above mentioned idea. According to the qualitative data, teachers have positive perceptions about self-initiated professional development. Moreover, teachers recognize that SIPD is a self-directed activity in order to improve oneself. Moreover, they believe that it is a self-motivated activity individually guided engagement to be better teachers to contribute something in their profession.

Table 2
English Language Teachers' Self-Initiated Professional Development Practice

Items	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean	SD
	N or %	N or %	N or %	N or %	N or %		
1. I monitor my strength and weakness as a teacher.	-	4	10	16	5	3.63	.877
	-	11.4	28.6	45.7	14.3		
2. I write a teaching journal about my teaching incidents,	16	6	8	3	2	2.11	1.255

	Items	Never	Rarely	Someti mes	Often	Alway s		
	problems success and insights that occurred during lessons.	45.7	17.1	22.9	8.6	5.7		
3.	I conduct action research.	7	19	7	2	-	2.11	.796
		20	54.3	20	5.7	-		
4.	I analyze critical incidents of my teaching in order to learn from them and improve practice.	-	9	10	10	6	3.37	1.060
		-	25.7	28.6	28.6	17.1		
5.	I collect documents and other items that describe my teaching performance at the end of every semester.	17	11	5	1	1	1.80	.994
		48.6	31.4	14.3	2.9	2.9		

N=35

This section deals with analyzing teachers' self-initiated professional development experience. 5 items were given for respondents to get enough information about how often they are engaged in. Concerning item 3, 21 (60%) of them often or always monitor their strength and weakness as a teacher, but 4(11.4%) rarely do it. The rest 10 (28.6%) of them sometimes monitor their strengths and weakness. The result shows that majority of the teachers monitor their strength and weakness.

When it comes to writing a teaching journal about teaching incidents, problems success and insights that occurred during lessons, 22 (62.8%) never or rarely practice it. 5 (14.3%) of them often or always engaged in it while the rest 8 (22.9%) of them do it sometimes. This could imply that majority of the teachers didn't write a teaching journal about their teaching incident except some teachers. Conducting action research looks often practiced by as few as 2 (5.7%) of the respondents. 26 (74.3%) of them never or rarely practice it but 7 (20%) of them are sometimes engaged in it. The responses obtained from the teachers indicated that majority of the teachers do not conduct action research except some teachers.

When it comes to reflecting on own teaching and set own learning goals to improve oneself, 11 (31.4%) of the respondents never or rarely do it. Another 11 (31.4%) of them sometimes do it. 13 (37.2%) of them often or always practice it. From these results it is clear that majority of the teachers reflect on their own teaching practice but the rest do not do it. Concerning analyzing critical incidents of teachers' teaching in order to learn from them and improve practice, 16 (45.7%) of the teachers often or always perform it as some 10 (28.6%) of them sometimes execute it, but 9 (25.7%) of them rarely do it. From the results, it is clear that many of the teachers would practice analyzing critical incidents of their teaching except a few teachers. Preparing portfolio about their teaching learning process at the end of every semester is never or rarely implemented by 28 (80%) of the teachers as opposed to 2(5.7) of the teachers who often or usually and 5(14.3%) of them who sometimes do it. The results demonstrate that many of the teachers didn't prepare portfolio at the end of every semester.

Generally, majority of EFL teacher's professional development practice looks somehow good but at the same time significant numbers of the teachers don't practise professional development activities. The data obtained from the interview indicated similar result. The interviewees usually practice many of the professional development activities but they don't do some other activities due to shortage of time.

Table 3
English Language Teachers' Challenges in Their Self-Initiated Professional Development Activities

Items	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
	N or %						
1. lack of institutional support (incentive) for self-initiated professional development	2	1	7	21	4	3.69	.932
	5.7	2.9	20	60	11.4		
2. lack of communication among colleagues	2	7	6	17	3	3.34	1.083
	5.7	20	17.1	48.6	8.6		
3. lack of collaboration among colleagues	2	5	3	24	1	3.49	.981
	5.7	14.3	8.6	68.6	2.9		
4. excessive work load	4	11	1	19	-	3.00	1.163
	11.4	31.4	2.9	54.3			
5. lack of motivation	3	7	2	16	7	3.49	1.269
	8.6	20	5.7	45.7	20		
6. lack of commitment	3	4	2	20	6	3.63	1.165
	8.6	11.4	5.7	57.1	17.1		
	8.6	22.9	31.4	34.3	2.9		

N=35

Table 3 deals with English language teachers' challenges in their self-initiated professional development practices. The item deals with lack of institutional support (incentive) for self-initiated professional development. 25 (71.4%) teachers agreed or strongly agreed to this statement, but 3 (8.6%) of them disagreed generally. 7 (20%) teachers remained neutral to this issue. This could imply that many of the teachers didn't get support from their institution. Teachers were also asked to respond on lack of communication among colleagues. Accordingly, 20 (57.2%) teachers agreed or strongly agreed but 9(25.7%) of them disagreed to this item. 6(17.1%) of them chose neutral stand. From the above data, it can be noted that the majority of the teachers lack communication with their colleagues.

Concerning lack of collaboration among colleagues, 25 (71.4%) teachers agreed or strongly agreed. However, 7 (20%) teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed to this issue. The remaining 3 (8.6%) opted neutral stand. The responses obtained from the teachers indicated that many of them didn't collaborate each other but some of them collaborate. Excessive work load was asked if it was a challenge for teachers SIPD. 19 (54.3%) and 15 (42.8%) of the teachers showed their agreement and disagreement and strongly disagreement to this item respectively. Only 1 (2.9%) teacher remained neutral. Thus, the above analysis shows that some of them are engaged in excessive over load while the others didn't.

Teachers were also asked whether lack of motivation was a challenge for their SIPD. 23 (65.7%) teachers agreed or strongly agreed but 10 (28.6%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. The rest 2(5.7%) remained undecided. Lack of commitment was another item to identify whether it is a challenge for SIPD. 26 (74.2%) teachers agreed or strongly agreed about this item but 7 (20%) of the teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed. The remaining 2 (5.7%) opted neutral stand. From these data it is clear that many of the teachers thought that lack of

commitment was an impeding factor although others didn't accept it. Concerning the challenges, based on the data obtained from EFL teachers, that lack of commitment and lack of institutional support were among the leading challenges in self-initiated professional development practices.

Qualitative Data Presentation and Analysis

This section tries to present and analyze the data obtained through qualitative data collection tool that is a semi-structured interview. The purpose of the interview was to help the researcher to substantiate the results obtained from the questionnaire.

EFL Teachers' perception about self-initiated professional development

Concerning EFL teachers' perceptions about SIPD teachers explained that it is what teachers individually do to improve their profession or is anything that they try to support themselves to learn or to know about something new be a better teacher. It is usually done without any external imposition. By doing so, teachers can be better teachers in particular in English language teaching. They also perceived it as a way of updating themselves with the current or innovative methods of teaching due to the 21st century continuously changing way of teaching and learning. Therefore, they stated that teachers should take the initiation to improve their profession. They believe that SIPD is the core practice of teachers who are teaching in the 21st century and the most important aspects of teachers, (T1 T2, T3).

T4 on his part stated that it is something teachers have to do to improve themselves without expecting the institution. He added more the following.

...but Self-initiated professional development is really important because as I mentioned earlier, our students needs have to be taken into consideration or has to be taken into account... we have to improve ourselves. It's not expected from the government or it is not expected from that university which we work for. That's entirely expected of us, It's a matter of survival that one has to do it unless we update, we are getting out of the system or we will be replaced by another, (T4, 4/3/2021).

All in all, based on the interviewees' responses, teachers recognize that SIPD is a self-directed activity in order to improve oneself. Moreover, they believe that it is a self-motivated activity individually guided engagement to be better teachers to contribute something in their profession. They also believe that teachers should take the initiative without waiting any external command. They also notice that these days teachers in the higher institutions can improve themselves by utilizing the fruits of technology for education in general and ELT in particular. As they reiterated, currently, teachers should improve themselves in order to meet the changing needs of the 21st students According to the above data EFL teachers under this study had a very good perception about SIPD.

EFL teachers' self-initiated professional development practices

T1 explained the following concerning his SIPD experience. He said that he is usually using the internet to get updated ELT materials that provide him with filling his own gap. Sometimes he share experience to and from his colleagues. And other times he observes senior teachers' classroom teaching practice, (T1, 24/3/2021).

T2: on the other hand tried to take the trainings provided by MOSHE in collaboration different universities in the globe. For example, he said that he took trainings such as massive on line teaching and teaching students writing using virtual platforms. He also usually tries to share something new he has with his friends. He further explained that he utilizes ICTs such as YouTube, browsing ELT websites for latest development, (T2, 28/3/2021).

T3:

She said that she was always engaged in short and long term trainings. She wouldn't miss any professional development opportunities as long as it's free of payments. She also

stated that she attends different trainings, in particular on line trainings. She also attended ELT issues trainings offered by MoSHE in collaboration with international universities under the Coursera raining package and US embassy in Ethiopia. She would usually consider ever opportunity as one way of development so she is always standing by for snatching such opportunities. Asking help from colleagues is also another practice she usually does it. But, she usually drops out of the training due to insufficiency of time as she is managing her home and learning and working simultaneously, (T3, 31/3/2021).

T4:

He explained that there are some teachers whom he exchanges experience with. He stated that but they are very limited. Sometimes he would discuss with his colleagues and exchange experiences with other international community teachers who teach outside Ethiopia. He also stated that he has learnt a lot from them. He further explained that he would browse websites which help him to improve his professional development just like English Daily and the like. He also employs YouTube tutorials to know more about such as e-learning, etc. (T4, 4/3/2021).

EFL teachers' challenges in their self-initiated professional development practice

With regard to practicing SIPD activities all of the interviewees have stated common challenges. All of them raised lack of positive attitude towards SIPD as a challenge as it doesn't have incentives in terms of cash. They also mentioned lack of time for SIPD as a blocking factor. Teachers tend covering all the gaps in life instead of being engaged in SIPD. Part time work load and lack of will were also mentioned as factors which hampers SIPD. Lack of motivation and /or seeking for payment for training allowance or incentives are mentioned as challenges although they stated that they were motivated. They also cited reluctance to do something to fill their own gap. They also stated that some teachers were really still there in the old fashioned way of teaching or they were resistant to new developments of ELT.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the results of the analysis on EFL teachers' self-initiated professional development perceptions, practices and challenges were discussed below in relation to each research question. Concurrent Mixed method was employed in the study. Using total population sampling, 35 teachers participated in the study and filled in the questionnaire. In addition, semi structured interview was employed with four EFL teachers randomly selected among the participants of the study. The data were analyzed by mixing the data obtained through a questionnaire and an interview. The discussion was made in relation to each research question of the study.

How do EFL teachers' perceive about self-initiated professional development?

According to the quantitative data, many of the EFL teachers perceive that self-initiated professional development is a self-regulated activity for one's own professional improvement to be a better teacher in order to meet the current students need. This is supported by Richards and Farell (2005) and Knowles (1975) who stated that self-initiated professional development deals with teachers own initiatives to develop themselves. According to the qualitative data, teachers recognize that SIPD is a self-directed activity in order to improve oneself. Moreover, they also believe that it is a self-motivated activity and individually guided engagement to be better teachers to contribute something in their profession. This finding was also supported by Richards and Farell (2005) and Knowles (1975). As they explained, teachers are generally interested in enhancing their profession to improve their teaching skills and achieve better results with their students.

All teachers have positive perception about SIPD as the mean score indicated between 4.17 and 4.63. This finding is similar with is similar with Birhanu (2014) who found out that EFL teachers expressed their positive feelings towards employing self-initiated professional development and the need for practicing self-initiated professional development activities and opportunities in their career. Moreover, Malek (2015) also found similar results that stated majority of English language teachers were positive towards the idea of taking the initiation for professional development. Diana also (2020), indicated in her study that all of ESP teachers responded positively to individual-initiated professional development activities for their professional teaching practices.

How often do EFL teachers engaged in self-initiated professional development activities?

Concerning this question, the researcher found that majority of the EFL teachers were enthusiastic about monitoring their strength and weakness as a teacher as the mean score read 3.63 nearly 4 that indicates teachers often practice this activity. In support of this argument, Quddus and Khushid (2022) stated that self-monitoring plays an important role in the professional development of English language teachers. They also analyze critical incidents of their teaching in order to learn from them and improve practice. The mean score was 3.37 which indicated sometimes teachers do this activity. The reason may be that as Richards and Farrel (2005) stated that critical incident analysis in teaching is helpful in that it makes the teachers learn from the incidents and improve practice.

On the contrary, all of the teachers never or rarely practice activities such as writing a teaching journal, action research, writing a portfolio. The mean score read 1.8-2.11 that attested the above claim. Malek (2015) similarly indicated that, for example, action research doesn't receive much attention from the teachers. According to the interview data, the professional development practices which were frequently practiced were monitoring their strength and weakness and analyzing critical incidents. Moreover, they also frequently used internet and Youtube to obtain latest developments about ELT, shared their experiences with their colleagues, and participate willingly in online and formal professional trainings.

What are the factors that affect EFL teachers' self-initiated professional development?

Regarding factors that affect EFL teachers' self-initiated professional development, all the listed factors were believed to hinder EFL teachers' professional development activities. To begin with, lack of institutional support took the leading position as a challenge for the mean score indicated 3.69. The second challenge was lack of commitment as its mean score indicated 3.63. The third challenges were lack of, collaboration among colleagues and lack of motivation as the mean scores showed 3.49. The other challenge was poor communication among colleagues. This was attested by the mean score 3.34. The interview data also indicated that teachers were not able to collaborate, and communicate with their colleagues searching for additional income to win their daily bread. Financial problems were found out to be one of the challenging factors in teachers' professional development practices, Diana (2020), Malek (2015) and Hirpa (2015) These implied that teachers did not give much time and commitment which affected their professional development practices. Financial problems

CONCLUSION

Although EFL teachers have a positive perception about the importance of self-initiated professional development; however, majority of them were found not to be engaged in their professional development activities. In addition, factors such as lack of, collaboration among colleagues; poor communications among colleagues and lack of institutional support appeared the impending factors in SIPD. Therefore the universities should facilitate the trainings on the importance and implementation of self-initiated professional development activities. EFL teachers also should collaborate and share their knowledge and skills as it

helps to fill the gap one has from the more knowledgeable staff. The ministry of education should also incorporate self-initiated professional development approach in its policy and should support teachers in higher institutions in general and English languages teachers in particular.

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