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Enhancing pedagogical creativity: A comprehensive study of self-professional development among ESL educators

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Abstract

This article delves into the dynamic realm of English as a Second Language (ESL) education, specifically focusing on the critical aspect of pedagogical creativity among ESL educators. With the ever-evolving landscape of language instruction, the need for innovative teaching methods and strategies is paramount. The study adopted a mixed methodology (Quantitative and Qualitative approach) to collect data from the subjects and concerned thematic and statistical analysis was performed to identify and extract the emerging themes to capture a comprehensive understanding of the strategies ESL educators employ for their professional growth. The study reveals that self-driven professional development initiatives significantly influence educators' creative pedagogical practices. Educators who actively engage in a diverse range of activities, reflective practice, technology integration, distinct perceptions of self-professional development, creative teaching practices, and continuous learning demonstrate a higher level of pedagogical creativity. Furthermore, this research uncovers the diverse range of resources and activities ESL educators utilize to foster creativity, including technology integration, cultural sensitivity training, and the exploration of innovative teaching materials. These findings shed light on the multifaceted nature of self-professional development and its potential to revitalize ESL classrooms, ultimately benefiting students by promoting more engaging and effective language learning experiences. This study offers valuable insights for educators, institutions, and policymakers seeking to nurture and amplify pedagogical creativity in the ESL education landscape.

Keywords: ESL, ESL educators, ESL teachers, pedagogical creativity, self-professional development



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Public Interest Statement

This research holds significance for various stakeholders within the ESL education community. Firstly, ESL educators themselves will benefit from a deeper understanding of how self-professional development can be harnessed to enhance their pedagogical creativity. By uncovering effective strategies and resources, educators can make informed decisions about their professional development pathways, ultimately leading to more engaging and effective language instruction. Institutions and educational policymakers stand to gain insights into the importance of supporting and incentivizing self-professional development among ESL educators. Recognizing the pivotal role of educators' continuous growth in fostering creative teaching practices can lead to the development of targeted programs and policies that promote innovation in ESL classrooms. Moreover, this research contributes to the broader discourse on pedagogical creativity in language education. By shedding light on the relationship between self-professional development and creative pedagogy, it provides a nuanced perspective on the factors that drive innovation in the ESL classroom. This knowledge can inform future research endeavors and guide the development of best practices for ESL education worldwide.

Introduction

Language acquisition is a dynamic process, marked by its continuous evolution in response to changes in society, technology, and pedagogical theory (Lantolf et al., 2014). Within this ever-shifting landscape, English as a Second Language (ESL) educators play a pivotal role in fostering language proficiency and cultural understanding among their students (Olson, 2012). The effectiveness of ESL instruction hinges not only on the proficiency of educators but also on their capacity for pedagogical creativity (Zhi and Wang, 2023). The ability to engage, inspire (Barr et al., 2008), and adapt to the diverse needs of ESL learners requires educators to continuously evolve and innovate in their teaching practices (Derakhshan et al., 2022; Zhi and Wang, 2023). This research is primarily intended to explore the intricate interplay between self-professional development and pedagogical creativity within the context of ESL education. In an era characterized by rapid globalization and digital transformation, the conventional teaching methods employed by ESL educators have been rendered insufficient (Li et al., 2022). To meet the diverse linguistic and cultural needs of ESL learners, educators must possess a creative pedagogical repertoire that transcends traditional boundaries (Adashboyevich, 2019; Kadirova and Mastura, 2021)

The field of ESL education has witnessed substantial growth and transformation in recent years, driven by globalization and the increasing importance of English as a global lingua franca (Snow et al., 2006). ESL classrooms are populated by learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds, each bringing unique challenges and opportunities (Polyudova, 2018). This heterogeneity demands that ESL educators not only be proficient in English but also be adept at tailoring their teaching approaches to meet the specific needs of their students (Eyring, 2014; Mokhtari and Sheorey, 1994).

To address this demand, ESL educators often turn to self-professional development as a means of enhancing their pedagogical skills (Mak, 2010). Self-professional development encompasses a wide range of activities, including attending workshops (Al-Jarf, 2012), seeking advanced degrees, engaging in reflective practice, and collaborating with colleagues (Mokhtari and Sheorey, 1994). It reflects a commitment to lifelong learning and a recognition of the need for continuous improvement in the field (Kraut et al., 2016). However, the link between self-professional development and pedagogical creativity among ESL educators has not been thoroughly explored (Adashboyevich, 2019; Latta and Kim, 2009). While many educators engage in professional development activities, the extent to which these efforts translate into creative teaching practices remains uncertain (Ross and Bruce, 2007). Additionally, the specific strategies and resources that ESL educators employ in their self-professional development endeavors and how these initiatives impact their pedagogical creativity are areas warranting deeper investigation (Latta and Kim, 2009; Vanassche and Kelchtermans, 2016).

Research Objectives

The primary aim of this research is to investigate the relationship between self-professional development and pedagogical creativity among ESL educators. It has been sought to understand how ESL educators perceive and engage in self-professional development and how these efforts influence their ability to innovate in the classroom. To achieve this aim, the research objectives are:

- To explore the self-professional development initiatives undertaken by ESL educators, including the types of activities, resources, and strategies they employ.
- To examine the perceptions of ESL educators regarding the role of self-professional development in enhancing their pedagogical creativity.
- To identify the creative teaching practices and strategies employed by ESL educators and assess the extent to which these practices are influenced by self-professional development.
- To understand the challenges and barriers ESL educators encounter in their pursuit of self-professional development and creative pedagogy.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a mixed research design, utilizing semi-structured interviews to report the findings via thematic analysis, and cross sectional survey is used to process the statistical analysis. Qualitative research is well-suited for exploring complex phenomena such as self-professional development and pedagogical creativity among ESL educators. The quantitative research significantly helped to collect the overview from the respondents. The semi-structured interviews and cross sectional survey allow for in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives, experiences, and practices, while thematic analysis facilitates the identification of recurring themes and patterns within the data.

Participants

The participants in this study were recruited using a purposive sample of ESL educators from a private English language institute. A total of 5 ESL educators with more than 5 years of experience in the field were interviewed. A total of 180 ESL educators were participated in the quantitative survey, through the online mode of data collection.

Data Collection

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with ESL educators. The interviews were conducted both in person and remotely, depending on the participants' preferences and logistical constraints. The semi-structured nature of the interviews enabled flexibility in exploring participants' experiences and perceptions related to self-professional development and pedagogical creativity. The quantitative research is collected through online mode using google forms.

A set of open-ended questions guided the interviews, covering topics such as participants' self-professional development activities, their perceptions of the role of self-professional development in enhancing pedagogical creativity, creative teaching practices they employ, and challenges encountered in their professional growth. These questions were first piloted with a small group of educators to ensure clarity and relevance. For the quantitative survey, 5-point likert scale based research questionnaire is framed concerning self-professional development activities, their perceptions of the role of self-professional development in enhancing pedagogical creativity, and challenges encountered in their professional growth.

Data Analysis

Statistical analysis such as descriptive statistics, correlational analysis, and regression analysis were performed for the quantitative data using SPSS version 26.

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the interview data. This method involved the following steps:

- Familiarization: Transcripts of the interviews were read and reread to become familiar with the data. Initial notes and impressions were recorded.
- Searching for Themes: The responses were noted and organized into potential themes by grouping related ideas together. The themes were refined through an iterative process of revisiting the data and adjusting themes accordingly.
- Reviewing Themes: Themes were reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately represent the data and address the research objectives.
- Defining and Naming Themes: Each theme was defined and given a descriptive name to capture its essence.
- Writing the Report: The findings were presented in a narrative form, supported by quotations from the interviews, to illustrate the identified themes.

Results and Analysis

Qualitative Analysis

In this section, the themes that emerged from the interviews are discussed, enlightening the relationship between self-professional development and pedagogical creativity among ESL educators. The thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews yielded rich insights into the practices, perceptions, and challenges faced by ESL educators in their quest for creative teaching. The results are organized into key themes that emerged from the data, providing a comprehensive understanding of how self-professional development influences pedagogical creativity.

Self-Professional Development Initiatives

Diverse Range of Activities

One prominent theme that emerged from the interviews was the diversity of self-professional development activities undertaken by ESL educators. Participants engaged in a wide array of activities, reflecting their commitment to continuous learning and growth. These activities included attending workshops and conferences, pursuing advanced degrees or certifications in education, collaborating with colleagues, and exploring online resources. Participant 1, an ESL educator with 6 years of experience, highlighted the importance of continuous learning by asserting that:

“I make it a point to attend conferences and workshops whenever I can. It keeps me updated with the latest teaching methods and materials.”

Another participant also added that:

“As ESL teachers, we’re always trying new things. Whether it’s attending workshops, learning online, or just sharing ideas with colleagues, it’s like an ongoing adventure. These experiences shape us as educators and bring a little extra spark to our ESL classes.”

Thus, these sentiments were echoed by most of the participants who recognized the value of staying informed about emerging pedagogical trends.

Reflective Practice

Another common aspect of self-professional development was reflective practice. ESL educators engaged in reflective activities such as journaling, peer discussions, and self-assessments to critically evaluate their teaching practices (Paneerselvam and Mohamad, 2019). Participants 4 and 5 shared that,

“I keep a teaching journal where I jot down what worked and what didn’t in each class. It helps me improve with each lesson.” (P4)

“You know, after each class, I sit down and think, ‘What worked today? What didn’t?’ It’s like my own little post-game analysis. It’s amazing how those reflections help me keep improving.” (P5)

Therefore, reflective practice was seen as a means of identifying strengths and weaknesses, as well as a catalyst for creativity. By examining past experiences, educators gained insights that informed their future teaching decisions.

Technology Integration

The integration of technology into self-professional development activities emerged as a noteworthy theme. Participants highlighted the benefits of online courses, webinars, and educational apps in expanding their knowledge and skills. Participant 2, who had recently completed an online course on innovative teaching methods, remarked;

“Technology has opened up new avenues for learning. I can access valuable resources and connect with educators worldwide.”

Technology not only provided access to a wealth of information but also facilitated global networking and collaboration, reinforcing the notion that self-professional development extends beyond individual efforts to include collective knowledge sharing.

Perceptions of Self-Professional Development

Empowerment and Autonomy

Participants consistently expressed a sense of empowerment and autonomy resulting from their engagement in self-professional development. They felt more confident in their teaching abilities and better equipped to address the unique needs of their ESL learners. Participant 3, an ESL educator in a multicultural setting, shared;

“Self-professional development gives me the tools to adapt to any classroom. I feel more in control of my teaching.”

This empowerment was closely linked to a heightened sense of autonomy, allowing educators to tailor their approaches and experiment with creative teaching strategies. It reinforced the idea that self-professional development serves as a catalyst for pedagogical creativity. As another educator highlighted that:

“Self-professional development makes me feel like I’m in the driver’s seat of my teaching journey. It’s like having the keys to my own creativity, and it’s pretty empowering. I get to steer my classes in exciting new directions.”

Evolving Perspectives on Teaching

Participants’ perspectives on teaching evolved through self-professional development. They recognized that teaching was not a static endeavor but a dynamic process that demanded continuous growth and adaptation. Participant 1 reflected,

“I used to have a fixed teaching style. But through workshops and discussions with colleagues, I’ve learned to be more flexible and innovative.”

Participant 4 also asserted that:

“It’s funny how teaching changes over the years. I used to think there was only one way to do it. But now, I see it more like an ever-changing landscape. Learning about new methods and ideas keeps things fresh, you know?”

This evolving perspective on teaching underscored the transformative power of self-professional development in cultivating a growth mindset among educators. It encouraged them to embrace change and seek novel approaches to enhance their teaching.

Creative Teaching Practices

Student-Centered Approaches

One of the most prominent outcomes of self-professional development was the adoption of student-centered teaching approaches (Gibbs, 1981). Educators reported a shift from traditional, teacher-centered methods to more interactive and learner-centric strategies. Demonstrating this idea, one participant stated,

“I realized that students learn best when they’re actively engaged. So, I started incorporating group activities and discussions into my lessons.”

This shift towards student-centered approaches was regarded as a manifestation of pedagogical creativity, as educators tailored their methods to cater to the unique needs and preferences of their ESL learners. As Participant 2 summarised;

“I feel like shifting to student-centered teaching is what’s been a game-changer for me. It’s like giving the steering wheel to the students and letting them drive their learning. It’s more fun for them, and honestly, it’s more fun for me too!”

Culturally Inclusive Practices

The importance of cultural sensitivity and inclusivity in ESL classrooms emerged as a significant theme. Educators recognized the need to create an inclusive learning environment that celebrated the diversity of their students (Olson, 2012; Wen-Cheng et al., 2011). Participant 5, who had undergone cultural sensitivity training, noted,

“Understanding my students’ cultural backgrounds has allowed me to adapt my teaching materials and create a more welcoming atmosphere.”

Another educator also professed;

“It’s not just about teaching English; it’s about embracing diversity. Incorporating different cultures into my classes has been a blast. It’s like opening a door to a world of perspectives, and the students also appreciate it.”

Thus, incorporating culturally relevant content and promoting intercultural dialogue were seen as integral aspects of pedagogical creativity, fostering greater understanding and respect among ESL learners.

Creative Use of Technology

Technology plays a pivotal role in enhancing pedagogical creativity (Hughes, 2005). Participants shared innovative ways of integrating technology into their lessons, such as using multimedia resources, interactive platforms, and gamification techniques. Participant 3, an ESL educator with a strong tech focus, explained,

“I use interactive quizzes and online simulations to make learning English more engaging. It’s like bringing the world into the classroom.”

“Embracing technology in class is like adding a sprinkle of magic to my teaching.” (P1)

Creative technology integration not only increased student engagement but also showcased educators’ adaptability and willingness to explore novel teaching tools.

Quantitative Analysis

Demographic Analysis

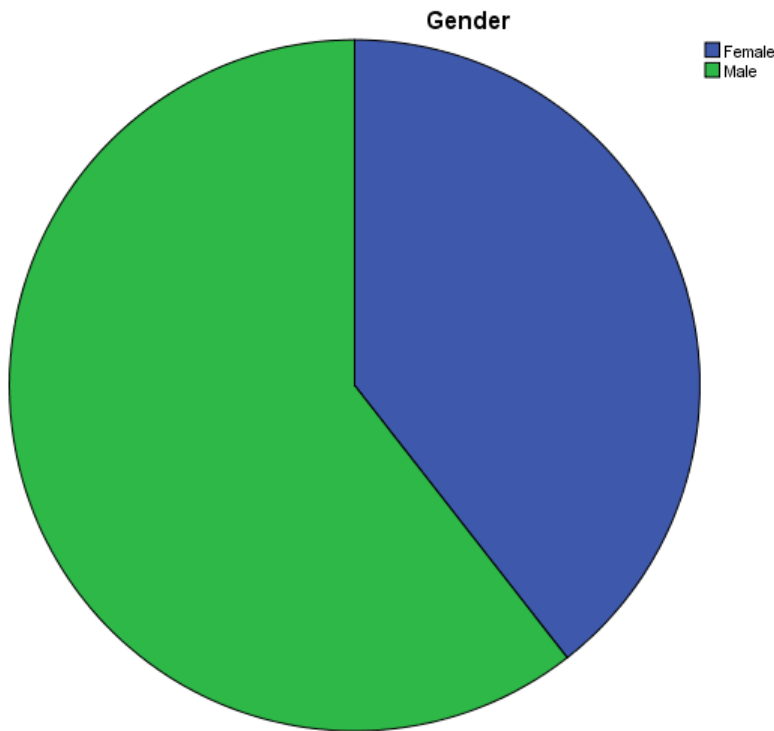


Figure 1: Gender of the Participants

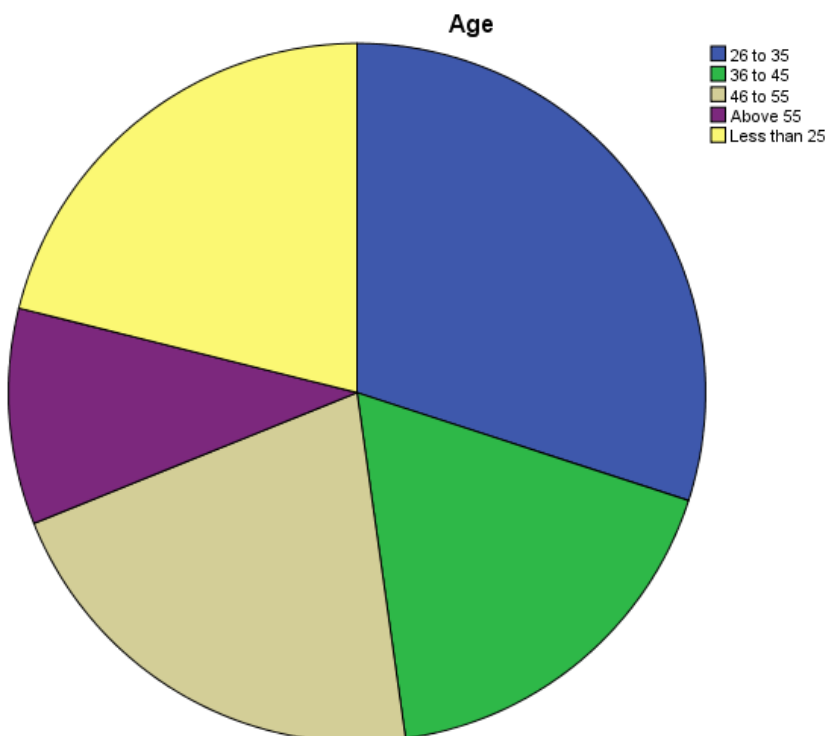


Figure 2: Age of the Participants

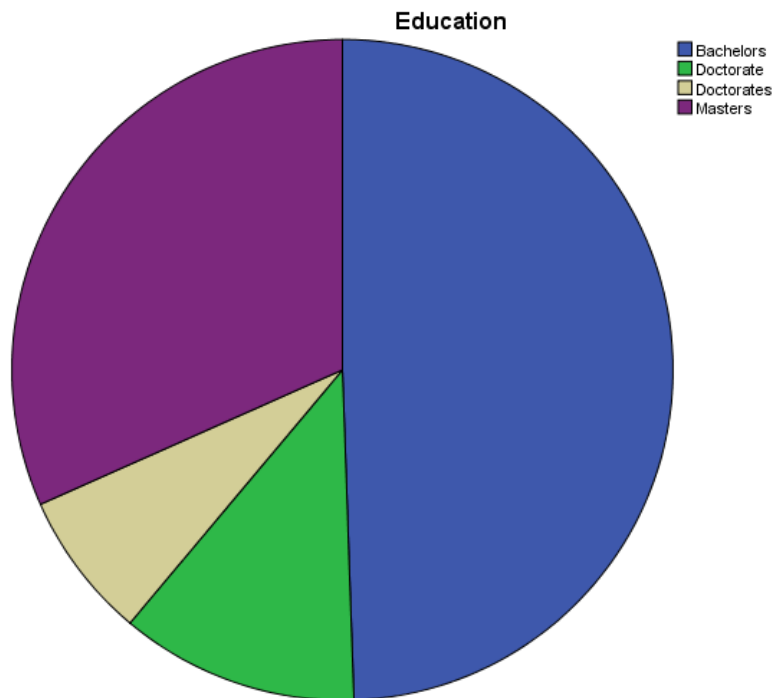


Figure 3: Education of the Participants

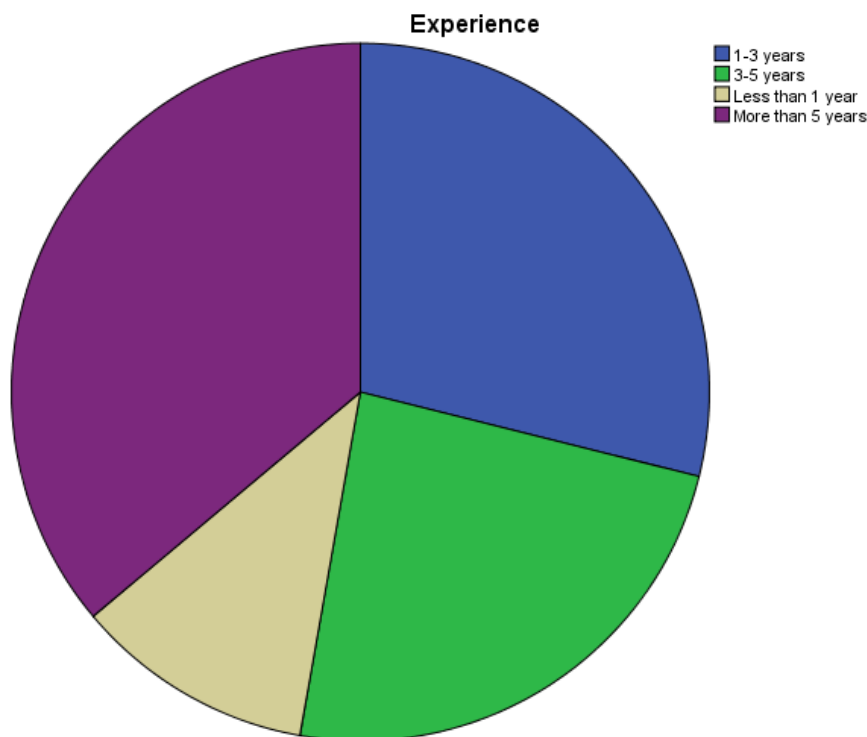


Figure 4: Experience of the Participants

As per above provided results, it focuses on respondent's demographic breakdown, on basis of study experience, education, age, and gender, including 180 ESL educators. In general, majority respondents were male; representing around 60.6% and females represents around 39.4%, out of total sample taken. It denotes that, there is gender imbalance in sample, based on higher male representation. The age distributions of respondents represent from diverse age groups. The biggest age group includes between age group of 26 years to 35 years, of which represents around 30.0% of respondent sample. The next biggest age group includes between age group of 46 years to 55 years, of which represents around 21.1% of respondent sample, and is followed by age group, which includes age group below 25 years, of which represents around

21.1% of respondent sample. Herein, distribution of age is evenly spread, based on sizeable representation for each age group. In relation to teaching experiences, it shows diversity among respondents. The biggest working experience group includes educators with above 5-year working experience, of which represents around 36.1% of respondent sample. The next biggest working experience group includes educators between 1 year to 3 years working experience, of which represents around 28.9% of respondent sample. It suggests the mix of both new and exercised educators in this study. The respondent’s education qualification varies. The biggest educational qualifications group includes educators holding Bachelor’s degree, which represents around 49.4% of respondent sample. The next biggest educational qualifications group includes educators holding Master’s degree, which represents around 31.7% of respondent sample and is followed by educational qualifications group, which includes educators holding Doctorates and its equivalents, which represents around 18.9% of respondent sample. It denotes that ESL educators who are the respondents are from different educational qualifications, and most of them holding higher educational qualifications with advanced degrees. In demographic profile, it displays divers sample representation in relation to ESL educators, on basis of study experience, education, age, and gender. However, gender distribution in general, off-centred towards males. Such demographic data, are important to generalise and interpret the findings of study, and it because it offers insights on respondent’s characteristics, included I this research study.

Statistical Analysis

Table 1: Reliability Analysis

| Reliability Statistics | | |
|------------------------|--|------------|
| Cronbach’s Alpha | Cronbach’s Alpha Based on Standardized Items | N of Items |
| .944 | .946 | 7 |

According to above provided results, it is based on reliability statistics by including Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients in the scale of one (1) to seven (7). Cronbach’s Alpha involves measuring consistency on internal reliability, by evaluating on how well scale again and again measures the underlying hypothesis, However, Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients is around 0.944, of which is considered as highly favourable sign related to internal consistency context.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

| Descriptive Statistics | | | |
|--|--------|----------------|-----|
| | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
| Level of self-professional development (LSD) | 4.0511 | 1.09730 | 180 |
| Engagement in creative teaching practices and strategies (ECT) | 3.6122 | 1.43230 | 180 |
| Self-professional development activities (SDA) | 3.7322 | 1.17234 | 180 |
| Reflective practices (RPS) | 3.8444 | 1.31320 | 180 |
| Challenges and barriers to self-professional development (CBD) | 3.8600 | 1.28348 | 180 |
| Access to resources for professional development (ARD) | 3.9111 | 1.29670 | 180 |
| Pedagogical creativity among ESL educators (PCE) | 3.8944 | 1.31284 | 180 |

As per above provided results, this study suggests that ESL educators largely showcase huge amount of commitment towards self-professional improvements (mean LSD = 4.0511), thereby denoting collective recognition of its significance. Even as there are moderate engagement levels on practices related to creative thinking (mean ECT = 3.6122) as well reflective actions (mean RPS = 3.8444), and moderate unpredictability denotes varied approaches, towards boosting creativity. The perceived barriers and challenges (mean CBD = 3.8600), together with moderate resources accessibility (mean ARD = 3.9111) highlights a multifaceted professional development environment. Moderate level related to pedagogical creativeness (mean PCE = 3.8944) denotes active instructional environment, as with huge further exploration possibilities. The varied demographic profile, suggest the requirements for tailored programs on professional development, towards addressing the distinctive needs in ESK education, thereby offering a concrete basis, as for any such initiatives in future.

Table 3: Regression Analysis

| Coefficients ^a | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | -.094 | .057 | | -1.646 | .102 |
| | Level of self-professional development (LSD) | .059 | .021 | .049 | 2.815 | .005 |
| | Engagement in creative teaching practices and strategies (ECT) | -.159 | .038 | -.173 | -4.163 | .000 |
| | Self-professional development activities (SDA) | .247 | .063 | .220 | 3.924 | .000 |
| | Reflective practices (RPS) | .390 | .088 | .390 | 4.416 | .000 |
| | Challenges and barriers to self-professional development (CBD) | .380 | .072 | .371 | 5.303 | .000 |
| | Access to resources for professional development (ARD) | .112 | .084 | .111 | 1.340 | .182 |

a. Dependent Variable: Pedagogical creativity among ESL educators (PCE)

According to above provided results, the results for regression analysis offers significant insights, on such factors influencing the pedagogical creativity amongst the ESL educators. This model involves overall importance, of which is evident, in relation to p-value related to F-statistic, of which is lower than conventional limits that is 0.05. It thereby indicates that minimum of one predictor variable, largely offers for explaining differences, on dependent variables.

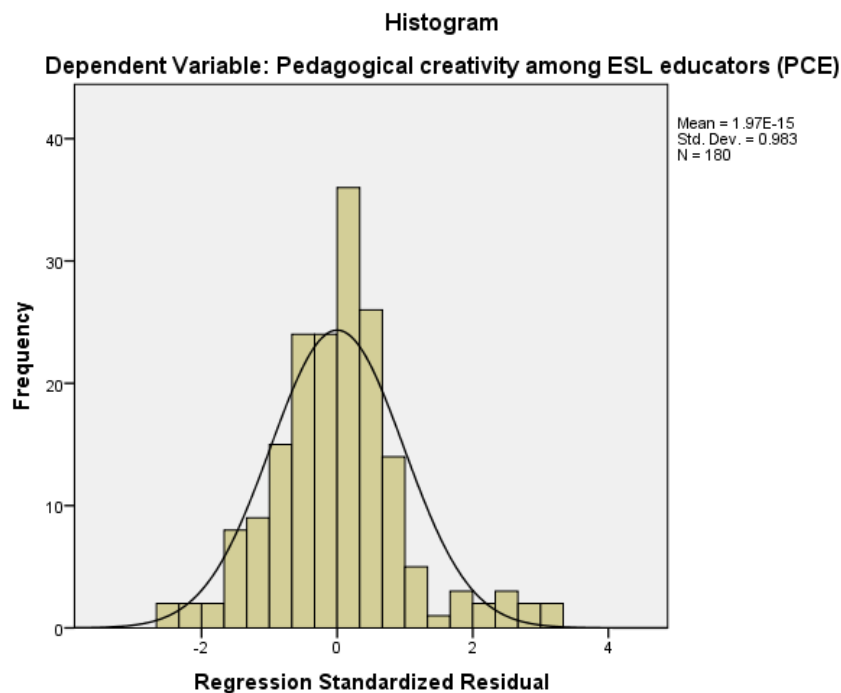


Figure 5: Regression Residual Plot

As per above provided results, on evaluating individual predictors like LSD levels emerging as positive major contributor ($\beta = 0.049$, $p = 0.005$), signifying that as ESL educators engage frequently on self-professional improvement activities, there includes positive kind of corresponding impact, on pedagogical creativity of ESL educators. The strategies and practices of SDA or Self-Professional Development Activities, and ECT Or Engagement Creative Teaching also demonstrates major positive kind of relations ($\beta = -0.173$, $p < 0.001$ and $\beta = 0.220$, $p < 0.001$, correspondingly), thereby suggesting that, higher involvement levels on practices of creative teaching as well different activities of professional improvement, influences the pedagogical creativity in positive manner. CBD or Challenges, Barriers to Self-Professional Development (CBD) and RPS or Reflective Practices, demonstrates huge kind of positive relations ($\beta = 0.390$, $p < 0.001$ and $\beta = 0.371$, $p < 0.001$, correspondingly), by giving importance to reflective practices as well ability towards overcoming the challenges, for boosting the pedagogical creativity. The ARD or Access Resources Professional Development, on other hand do not display statistically important relations, with the pedagogical creativity ($\beta = 0.111$, $p = 0.182$).

To sum up, such findings, highlights complex nature of the factors that influences the pedagogical creativity amongst ESL educators. By engaging on creative kind of teaching practices, self-professional improvements, and varied activities on professional development, along with boosting reflective practices as well overcoming the challenges, are the major contributors towards boosting the pedagogical creativity. Such relationship of non-significant natures, along with resources accesses, suggest the requirements for further examination, and considering specific type of resources, of which might impact the ESL pedagogy creativity.

Challenges and Barriers

Time Constraints

Despite the positive impact of self-professional development, participants faced challenges in balancing their teaching responsibilities with their pursuit of continuous learning. Time constraints were a common barrier, particularly for educators with heavy teaching loads or multiple job roles. Participant 3 lamented,

“Finding time for self-professional development can be tough. There are so many demands on our time, and it’s challenging to strike a balance.”

Resource Limitations

Resource limitations were another obstacle, especially for educators in underfunded institutions. Access to workshops, courses, and educational materials was often limited. Participant 5 revealed,

“I’d love to attend more workshops, but they’re expensive. I have to rely on free online resources.”

These resource limitations highlighted the need for greater support and resources for educators in less privileged settings to facilitate their self-professional development.

Resistance to Change

Resistance to change, both from educators themselves and from institutional cultures, was a recurring challenge. Participant 2, who had encountered resistance within her institution, shared,

“There’s often resistance to change. Some colleagues prefer the tried-and-true methods, and it can be discouraging.”

It indicates that some educators are initially reluctant to adopt new teaching methods, while institutional policies and norms sometimes discourage innovation.

Discussion

The results of this study illuminate the intricate relationship between self-professional development and pedagogical creativity among ESL educators. The findings underscore the diverse range of self-professional development activities employed by educators, including workshops, reflective practice, and technology integration. These activities reflect their commitment to continuous learning and growth, aligning with the idea that self-professional development is a dynamic and evolving process.

Moreover, self-professional development empowers educators and fosters a growth mindset, enabling them to adapt and innovate in their teaching practices (Day, 2002; Horton-Deutsch and Sherwood, 2017). The transition towards student-centered approaches was a particularly significant finding. This shift signifies a departure from traditional, didactic teaching methods toward a more interactive (Goodwin et al., 2017), engaging, and learner-centric approach (Dung et al., 2020). By actively involving students in the learning process, educators create an environment that encourages critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity (Piper, 2009).

Furthermore, the adoption of culturally inclusive practices demonstrates educators’ commitment to recognizing and valuing the diverse backgrounds and experiences of their ESL learners (Sailsman, 2021; Youngs and Youngs Jr, 2001). This approach not only fosters a sense of belonging but also enriches the learning experience by incorporating diverse perspectives and materials into the curriculum (Wong et al., 2016).

Creative use of technology emerged as a vital aspect of pedagogical creativity (Mishra and Koehler, 2008). ESL educators harnessed the power of technology to make lessons more interactive (Prestridge, 2017), engaging, and relevant to students’ lives (Burnard, 2007). The integration of multimedia, interactive platforms, and gamification techniques showcased educators’ adaptability and willingness to explore innovative teaching tools (Krishnan et al., 2021).

However, while the benefits of self-professional development were evident, participants also faced several challenges (Park and So, 2014). Time constraints were a recurring issue, highlighting the need for a balance between teaching responsibilities and personal growth (Desta et al., 2013; Saric and Steh, 2017).

Resource limitations, particularly in underfunded institutions (Kong, 2018), hindered educators' access to workshops and professional development opportunities (HIEW and MURRAY, 2018). Resistance to change, whether from educators themselves or institutional cultures, posed additional challenges (Lee et al., 2007; Luykx et al., 2005)

These challenges underscore the importance of systemic support and institutional recognition of the value of self-professional development (Aziz and Kashinathan, 2021; Giles, 2018). While educators play a crucial role in driving their growth, institutions must provide the infrastructure and incentives needed to facilitate continuous learning (Chatterton and Goddard, 2000; Olcott Jr and Wright, 1995).

To put it succinctly, the findings of this study provide valuable insights into the dynamic relationship between self-professional development and pedagogical creativity among ESL educators. Self-professional development serves as a catalyst for empowering educators, shaping their perspectives on teaching, and inspiring creative teaching practices (Alwadi et al., 2020; Goodwin et al., 2017). However, addressing challenges related to time, resources, and resistance to change is essential to harness the full potential of self-professional development (Choi, 2005).

Conclusion

The findings of this study shed light on the pivotal role of self-professional development in enhancing pedagogical creativity among ESL educators. Through a thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews, several key themes emerged. ESL educators engage in diverse self-professional development activities, including attending workshops, engaging in reflective practice, and integrating technology. These activities empower educators, shaping their perspectives on teaching and facilitating the adoption of creative teaching practices.

The statistical findings of this study highlights about the major role, in relation to reflective approaches, practices of creative teaching, and -professional improvements, towards boosting pedagogical creativity of ESL educators. For overcoming the barriers and challenges, emerges as significant aspects, giving importance for requirement on targeted support. However, resources access, showed no major impact, thereby denoting a complex environment. Such findings offer significant insights, to improve creativity, amongst ESL educators.

The study highlights the transformative power of self-professional development, enabling educators to shift towards student-centered, culturally inclusive, and technologically innovative teaching approaches. However, it also reveals challenges, including time constraints, resource limitations, and resistance to change, which can hinder educators' self-professional development efforts.

Future Recommendations

Institutional Support: Educational institutions should recognize the importance of self-professional development and provide support in the form of funding, flexible schedules, and incentives for educators to engage in continuous learning. This can help overcome challenges related to time constraints and resource limitations.

- **Professional Development Programs:** Institutions can design and offer tailored professional development programs that align with the specific needs and goals of ESL educators. These programs should encourage creativity, cultural sensitivity, and technology integration in ESL classrooms.
- **Peer Collaboration:** Promote a culture of peer collaboration and knowledge sharing among educators. Encourage the formation of communities of practice where educators can learn from each other's experiences and collectively explore innovative teaching methods.
- **Cultural Sensitivity Training:** Incorporate cultural sensitivity training as a standard component of ESL educator professional development. This training should equip educators with the skills and knowledge needed to create inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments.

- **Research and Evaluation:** Conduct further research to assess the long-term impact of self-professional development on ESL educators' pedagogical creativity and student outcomes. Longitudinal studies can provide insights into the sustainability of creative teaching practices.
- **Technology Integration:** Develop resources and training programs that specifically focus on the creative and effective integration of technology into ESL instruction. This can help educators harness the full potential of technology to engage students.
- **Advocacy:** ESL educators, professional associations, and policymakers should advocate for the recognition of self-professional development as an integral part of the teaching profession. This can lead to broader systemic changes that prioritize continuous learning and growth.

Finally, self-professional development is not merely a personal endeavor but a transformative force that enriches the teaching and learning experience in ESL classrooms. By addressing the challenges and leveraging the strengths identified in this study, we can empower ESL educators to continue fostering pedagogical creativity, ultimately benefiting ESL learners and promoting cultural understanding in an interconnected world.

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