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**INVESTIGATING THE ATTITUDES OF IN-SERVICE EFL
TEACHERS TOWARDS THE TEACHING PROFESSION:
BURDUR PROVINCE SAMPLE**

**Yasemin ÇAKICI
A Master's Thesis**

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Yasemin ÇAKICI

Tarih

İmza



To my beloved husband

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**İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Öğretmenlik Mesleğine Yönelik
Tutumlarının İncelenmesi (Burdur İli Örneği)
(Yüksek Lisans Tezi)**

Yasemin ÇAKICI

ÖZ

Öğretmenlik, öğretmenlerin alan bilgisi uzmanlığı, pedagojik yeterlilik ve sabır, yaratıcılık, adanmışlık ve esneklik gibi özelliklere sahip olmasını gerektiren çok boyutlu bir meslektir. Öğretmenler, öğrencilerin bilişsel ve entelektüel gelişimlerini olduğu kadar duygusal ve sosyal gelişimlerini de derinden etkilerler. Eğitim sisteminin temel unsurları olan öğretmenler, toplumun tasarımcıları olarak görülmekte ve gelecek nesilleri ülkelerinin ilerlemesine ve gelişmesine katkıda bulunacak şekilde donatmaktadır. İngilizce dil öğretimi alanında ise öğretmenlerin etkisi daha da önemli boyutlara ulaşmaktadır. İngilizce öğretmenlerinden yalnızca dil bilgisi kazandırmaları değil, aynı zamanda kültürlerarası anlayışı teşvik etmeleri, iletişim becerilerini geliştirmeleri ve modern, küreselleşmiş bir dünyada öğrenmeye karşı yaşam boyu sürecek bir tutku aşılımları beklenmektedir. Öğretmenlerin mesleklerine yönelik tutumları son derece önemlidir çünkü bu tutumlar, onların öğretme etkinliklerini önemli ölçüde etkiler ve bu durum da öğrencilerin tutumlarını, davranışlarını ve genel olarak eğitim sürecinin kalitesini şekillendirir. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin öğretmenlik mesleğine yönelik genel tutumlarını incelemeyi ve mesleklerine ilişkin tutumlarının çeşitli demografik özelliklere göre anlamlı bir şekilde farklılaşıp farklılaşmadığını belirlemeyi amaçlamıştır.

Araştırmada karma yöntem araştırma deseni kullanılmış olup, öncelikle nicel veriler, Burdur il merkezinde yer alan, farklı seviyelerdeki devlet okullarında görev yapan 79 İngilizce öğretmenin katılımıyla bir tutum ölçeği aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Nicel verilerin analizi, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleklerine karşı yüksek düzeyde, olumlu tutumlara sahip olduklarını ve yaş, cinsiyet, okul seviyesi ve meslekteki deneyim süresi gibi demografik değişkenler ile mesleki tutumları arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmadığını ortaya koymuştur. Akabinde, nitel veri toplama yöntemi olarak yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler uygulanmış ve bu süreçte nicel veri toplama sürecine katılan 13 gönüllü İngilizce öğretmeni yer almıştır. Nitel verilerin içerik analizi sırasında, İngilizce öğretmenleri, öğretmenlik mesleğini büyük ölçüde kendilerine özgü bir şekilde betimlemiş ve mesleğe dair tasvirleri, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleki yeterlilikleriyle iç içe geçmiştir; bu yeterlilikler, dil öğretiminde yetkinlik kazanmalarını sağlamak amacıyla geliştirilmiştir. Ayrıca, İngilizce öğretmenleri eğitim öğretim ortamlarında karşılaştıkları mesleki zorlukları ve mesleki tükenmişliğe neden olan birçok faktörü ortaya koymuştur. Sonuç olarak, bu çalışma, öğretmenlik mesleğinin mevcut durumunu iyileştirmek için ortaya konan sorunların yeniden gözden geçirilmesi ve mesleki iyileştirme adına harekete geçilmesi gerektiğini vurgularken, aynı zamanda İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleklerine ilişkin mevcut tutumlarını öne çıkarmaktadır. Çalışma, kapsamlı araştırma bulguları sunmakta ve ileri araştırmalar için önerilerde bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Demografik Özellikler, İngilizce Öğretmenleri, Öğretmenlik Mesleği, Tutumlar.

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**Investigating the Attitudes of In-Service English As A Foreign Language
Teachers Towards the Teaching Profession (Burdur Province Sample)
(Master's Thesis)**

Yasemin ÇAKICI

ABSTRACT

Teaching is a multidimensional profession that requires teachers to possess subject matter expertise, pedagogical proficiency, and traits such as patience, creativity, devotion, and flexibility. Teachers profoundly affect both the cognitive and intellectual advancement of students as well as their emotional and social development. Teachers, as the core components of the education system, are frequently viewed to be the designers of society, equipping future generations to contribute to the advancement and growth of their country. In the field of English language teaching, their impact reaches even greater levels. English language teachers have expectations that extend beyond providing linguistic knowledge; they should also promote intercultural understanding, enhance communication skills and encourage a lifelong enthusiasm for learning in the modern globalised world. Teachers' attitudes towards their profession are critical, as they substantially impact their teaching efficacy, which in turn shapes students' attitudes, behaviours, and overall quality of the education process. In this sense, the current study was an attempt to scrutinise the overall attitudes of in-service EFL teachers towards the teaching profession and determine whether their attitudes regarding their profession significantly differ across many demographic characteristics. A mixed-method research design was utilised; primarily, quantitative data was acquired by an attitude scale with the involvement of 79 in-service EFL teachers employed in different levels of public schools located in the city centre of Burdur province. Analyses of the quantitative data revealed that in-service EFL teachers had a high level of positive attitudes towards their profession, and there was no statistically significant difference between the professional attitudes of in-service EFL teachers and their demographic variables, including age, gender, teaching degree and teaching experience. Sequentially, semi-structured interviews were applied as a qualitative data collection method, including 13 volunteer in-service EFL teachers who attended the quantitative data collection process. During the content analysis of the qualitative data, in-service EFL teachers predominantly depicted the teaching profession in their distinctive way; followingly, their portrayal of the profession was intertwined with the professional competencies of English language teachers, which they developed to attain proficiency in language teaching. In-service EFL teachers also revealed the professional challenges they had in educational settings and many factors that caused professional burnout. In conclusion, this study underscores the necessity of revising issues and taking action to improve the existing state of the teaching profession while also highlighting in-service EFL teachers' prevailing attitudes regarding their occupation. The study reports comprehensive research findings and offers recommendations for additional research.

Key Words: Attitudes, Demographic Characteristics, In-service EFL Teachers, Teaching Profession.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	:	Analysis of Variance
CLT	:	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	:	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	:	English Language Teaching
GPA	:	Grade Point Average
MAKU	:	Mehmet Akif Ersoy University
MoNE	:	Ministry of National Education
METK	:	Fundamental Act of National Education
OECD	:	The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SPSS	:	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
IRB	:	Institutional Review Board
TPR	:	Total Physical Response

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a broad framework for understanding the study, organised into six subsections. To begin with, the study's background is thoroughly articulated, offering a contextual basis for recognising the importance of teachers' attitudes in deciding professional practices and educational outcomes. Following this, the purpose of the study is specified, emphasising the research objectives and the rationale for investigating this issue. The next section addresses the significance of the study, highlighting its contributions to both theoretical and practical dimensions of teacher education in EFL contexts. The following sections specify the assumptions and limitations of the study. The assumptions explain the foundational beliefs and expectations directing the research process, whilst the limitations offer a clear assessment of the study's scope and constraints. Finally, the chapter concludes with the definition of key concepts, ensuring clarity and consistency in the terminology used throughout the research.

1.1. Background to the Study

Education is a process that helps individuals to realize themselves by enhancing knowledge, behavioural alteration, values, and abilities as a means of formal and informal practices in that teachers have a heavy burden in modelling and shaping students' characteristic aspects, especially mental characteristics. It is underlined that the permanent progress of a nation counts on knowledge acquirement and the practical implications of this knowledge. Teachers are the keystones of the education process, and they can lead learners to self-improvement and become decent citizens. Enhancing positive attitudes towards their profession, improving academic performance, and developing lifelong skills for the future should be priorities for teachers (Chakraborty & Mondal, 2014).

It is noted that attitudes have a crucial role in the success of the teaching profession in addition to the process of learning and teaching foreign languages. Teaching

foreign languages is an intricate procedure involving the active application of cognitive and psychomotor skills. Many studies indicate the pervasive nature of the most effective factors in foreign language acquisition and how the second/foreign languages are acquired (Denis, 2020).

The notion of attitude is defined as a means of reacting positively or negatively towards a referent, a situation, or an object (Mazana et al., 2019). Thus, attitudes are not directly observable; in other words, they emerge in the form of a set of verbal or non-verbal inferences over someone's behavior. An attitude is a system including cognitive and emotional components besides a tendency for action (Sharma & Yadav, 2020). It is maintained that attitudes appear to affect success or failure in students' learning as attitudes have a significant influence on language learning (Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2009). In the same vein, Camadan and Duysak (2010) attempt to explain the attitude towards the teaching profession as an individual's opinions and feelings intended in mind regarding the profession.

Teachers' attitudes towards their occupation have a significant impact on influencing the satisfaction they get from teaching, the assumption that teaching is vital and required, the necessity for continuous development in their profession, and the belief that the teaching profession is considered to be a dedication rather than just a chosen career as well as vital for achievement in their profession (Güneyli & Aslan, 2009). It is emphasized that the profession of teaching depends on the competencies and abilities of teachers involving a standardized understanding of the profession and ethics requiring a lasting improvement in the process of the profession (Anghelache & Bențea, 2012).

As a result, the points mentioned above reveal the significance of attitudes in teaching and indicate that teachers' attitudes specify the level of satisfaction they get from teaching as well as the success of the students in language learning.

1.2. The Purpose of the Study

Based on a literature review that emphasises the critical role of teachers' attitudes in determining professional practices and influencing the quality of education, the present study endeavours to examine the attitudes of in-service EFL teachers towards

the teaching profession. Many researchers concur that the efficacy of instructors in a classroom environment is influenced by their attitudes and perspectives (Freeman, 1990; Hargreaves, 1994). It is also emphasised by Freeman (1990) that attitudes are such significant factors that they can either contribute to the success or failure of teachers. At this juncture, it is unavoidable to analyse the origins and causes of attitudes. Consequently, another major focus of the study is to investigate the effects of numerous demographic variables on the attitudes of in-service EFL teachers regarding their careers.

1.3. The Significance of the Study

An attitude is a mental stance that influences someone's thoughts and behaviours. The performance of an individual is susceptible to both a favourable or adverse influences based on their attitude. For example, one's negative attitude towards his profession might lead to poor performance. In the same way, the main indicator of how effectively a teacher plans and constructs the content of the courses often depends on the attitude of the teacher. Moreover, consciously or unintentionally, a teacher's attitude has a substantial influence on students' academic achievement (Araromi& Salman, 2020). Likewise, the attitudes of the teachers determine their commitment to the teaching profession (Issan et al., 2011).

The current study is noteworthy as it delves into the subject of whether the attitudes of in-service EFL teachers are intertwined with a variety of demographic characteristics such as gender, age, teaching experience, and the educational level of institutions. Furthermore, whether this relationship affects their teaching performance and their active involvement in the developing process in the school system in a negative or positive way is also a key point of research interest.

Previous studies on professional attitudes have predominantly focused on prospective teachers or teachers from various disciplines rather than in-service EFL colleagues. A significant body of research has examined the professional attitudes of preservice teachers, including a correlational study on the professional attitudes of prospective teachers in the educational sciences department (Andronache et al., 2014), an analysis of the attitudes of candida teachers enrolled in a pedagogical

formation certification program across multiple variables (Bademcioğlu et al., 2014), and a meta-analysis synthesizing findings from 35 studies, encompassing 4,289 male and 6,073 female preservice teachers from different departments (Erdamar et al., 2016). Additionally, investigations into the professional attitudes of preservice teachers have considered various factors, as demonstrated in studies focusing on preservice classroom teachers (Sarıkaya et al., 2018) and comparisons between preservice primary school teachers' teaching motivations and their attitudes toward the teaching profession (Deringöl, 2020).

Furthermore, several studies have explored the professional attitudes of teachers from other departments. For instance, researchers have conducted comparative analyses on the attitudes of secondary school physical education teachers and their job satisfaction levels (Kumar & Bhatia, 2011), examined the professional attitudes of physical education and sports teachers with respect to various factors (Pepe et al., 2015), and investigated preservice music teachers' attitudes toward the teaching profession through the lens of self-efficacy beliefs (Kaleli, 2020). Moreover, research has extended to in-service teachers, including a study on the professional and scientific attitudes of in-service science teachers (Çakır & Akbulut, 2022). However, despite these extensive inquiries into professional attitudes across various teaching domains, studies specifically focusing on in-service EFL teachers remain limited.

In most studies, the role of many variables (gender, age, marital status) is investigated in determining the attitudes of the EFL teachers towards different subjects (integration of the ICT, critical thinking period, motivation) in the educational context. Moreover, the researchers (Atmaca, 2015; Poorbehzadi et al., 2020; Masadesh, 2022; Ünsal et al., 2023) often favoured either quantitative or qualitative methodologies exclusively during the data-gathering phase. From this perspective, the current study will provide a substantial sample for research employing an explanatory mixed-method approach.

There are limited studies examining directly the attitudes of in-service EFL teachers towards the teaching profession in ELT in the literature (Akyel, 1999; Haddad, 2019; Ünsal et al., 2023). In this regard, the study paves the way for the ones who are

willing to investigate the interaction between the attitudes of EFL teachers and the teaching profession for future studies.

1.4. Assumptions

The current study assumes that in-service EFL teachers participated in this study serve as a representative sample for in-service EFL teachers in Turkey. The study participants responded to both the attitude scale and the interviews honestly, and the data gathered from the collecting instruments precisely reflect their viewpoints.

1.5. Limitations

This study included some limitations that should be taken into consideration for further research. The first limitation was the number of participants, limited to the 79 in-service EFL teachers working in the city centre of Burdur province, notwithstanding attempts to engage a broader participant population during the quantitative data collection process. The acquired data pertained to the accessible sample group and was assessed within certain linguistic circumstances. On top of that, the participants who took part in the semi-structured interviews were all volunteers who completed the initial phase of the study. The representativeness of qualitative findings might be impacted by this individual choice since those who did not contribute to interviews might have different opinions or a stronger interest in professional attitudes than those who voluntarily participated consequently, biased perspectives could be introduced.

As a result of these facts, the current findings may differ and be influenced in a variety of ways when it is conducted with a wide participant pool, comprising EFL teachers from various locations, including rural areas of Burdur and other cities in Turkey. A further limitation connected to the school type as the research was carried out entirely in public schools with in-service EFL teachers. The study's sampling may be expanded with the inclusion of EFL teachers employed in private schools and higher education institutes. Besides the viewpoints of the prospective teachers, the opinions of paid teachers and students in the ELT Department of MAKU may be

utilized. Prior research in the literature mostly prioritized quantitative approaches for data collection; however, a significant component of this study concentrated on the explanatory qualitative findings. Semi-structured interviews functioned as a qualitative data-gathering instrument; nevertheless, the actual classroom practices and practical teaching aspects of in-service EFL teachers were not observed. Qualitative data relied only on the self-reported comments of these teachers. Finally, the present study was grounded on mainly four variables (i.e. age, gender, teaching degree and teaching experience) and further studies may be enhanced with many other variables. Consequently, the results of this study cannot be generalized.

1.6. Definition of Key Concepts

The following terms in the study are defined as follows:

Attitude is defined as “a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive and dynamic influence upon the individual’s response to all objects and situations with which it is related” (Allport, 1935, p. 810)

EFL stands for English as a Foreign Language. It refers to the process of learning English as a target language in a context where it is not the native language of the society. It entails a purposeful and intentional endeavour to achieve English proficiency, usually via formal education or structured learning settings (Setiyadi, 2020, p.16-24)

ELT is an abbreviation for English Language Teaching. It can be defined as “the teaching of English to people for whom it is not the first language” (Collins Dictionary, n.d.).

MoNE refers to the Ministry of Education (Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education, n.d.). (T.C. Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı, n.d.)

Teaching Profession is described as a vital occupation that demands extensive expertise and insight into the subject matter, along with a diverse set of interpersonal and professional abilities, including perseverance, mentorship, and innovation. It is grounded in both technical and personal competencies, upholds ethical and

professional principles, and requires an ongoing commitment to lifelong learning and development (Ağçam & Babanoğlu, 2016, p. 21).



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter has six sections and associated subsections, whereby the literature review offers a thorough framework and context for the fundamental concepts and theoretical foundations of the present study. The initial section provides a comprehensive description of the concept of attitude, emphasising its complexity and importance in comprehending human behaviours. The second section examines the components of attitude, mainly the affective, behavioural, and cognitive aspects and their influence on teachers' perceptions and behaviours. The third section defines the research through examining teaching as a profession, emphasising its progress, features, and social significance. The fourth section addresses the relationship between EFL and the teaching profession, highlighting the importance of both subject-matter expertise and pedagogical knowledge in forming teachers' professional identities. The fifth section examines attitudes towards the teaching profession, focusing on the factors that shape teachers' perceptions and their consequences for professional performance. This chapter concludes with a review of relevant studies on attitudes towards the teaching profession, encompassing an extended body of research undertaken both worldwide and in Türkiye.

2.1. An Extended Definition of the Notion of Attitude

The term “attitude” is a foundational concept within the field of social psychology. Many researchers have extensively attempted to define the term “attitude” regarding its crucial role in comprehending human thoughts and behaviours, particularly in the context of social behaviours (Wicker, 1969). In the broadest terms, attitude is employed as an umbrella term that encompasses a variety of conceptions such as reactions, evaluations, judgments, tendencies, beliefs, principles, values, emotions, viewpoints and opinions (Bagozzi, 1994a, 1994b).

Allport (1935) provides a widely recognized reference point for attitude as a cornerstone in the context of social psychology, emphasizing its influential impact on human behaviours. He characterizes attitude as a cognitive and neural preparedness that determines how an individual responds towards numerous objects

and circumstances with which they are associated. Furthermore, an individual's experiences exert a controlling or dynamic impact in shaping their attitudes (Allport, 1935, p.806). Gardner (1985) attributes the widespread acceptance of Allport's definition to its conceptualisation of attitude as "an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude, object, deduced from the individual's ideas or opinions concerning the referent/subject" (pp. 91-93). Similarly, Anastasi (1957) describes attitude as the tendency to react in a certain way to a designed class of stimulus. Attitudes are structures that can be identified through assertions of belief or views. From a different perspective, attitude was defined by Triantis (1971) as an emotionally charged notion that leads a particular set of behaviours to a particular group of social situations. Jain (2014) suggests, in the same way, that attitude can be accepted as the inclination of an individual to either favour or oppose a certain item or event. Likewise, Malhotra (2005) described an attitude as a concise assessment of an item or idea.

From the viewpoint of Ajzen (2005), attitude refers to a temperament to react positively or negatively to an object, other people, organizations, or events. He claims that the main characteristic of an attitude is its evaluative nature (pros-cons or pleasant-unpleasant) is consistent with the consensus among the majority of contemporary social psychologists. The present study followed Ajzen's functional definition, which is further reinforced by Weber's definition of attitude as "an evaluative reaction, a judgment regarding one's liking or disliking of a person, event, or other aspect of the environment" (Ajzen, 2005, p. 117). Likewise, an attitude is often regarded as a subjective assessment or evaluative response towards an individual, event, or other factors within the surrounding context (Garrett, 2010; Myers-Scotton, 2006). Additionally, attitudes are expressed as judgments used for evaluation rather than permanent personal temperament, and the information that is both available and attainable in various situations enables these evaluative judgments to be constructed (Schwarz, 2007).

According to Seel (2012), attitude is a theoretical structure that shows the extent to which an individual holds favourable or unfavourable feelings towards something. Attitude can be directed towards anything-an individual, location, object, or incident. Therefore, attitudes consistently reflect an individual's particular connection to items

and contribute to the organization of their consciousness as they integrate the objects with a sense of value and preference.

From another point of view, Tutar (2016) discusses the notion of attitude and draws attention to its two distinguishing characteristics. Firstly, attitudes are both long-lasting and highly organized. Secondly, the instantaneous or temporary tendencies of an individual are not considered to be attitudes.

Taking into consideration numerous theories of attitude, fundamental characteristics of attitudes could be summarized as follows:

- Attitudes are not immediately apparent or explicit; deduced from the direction and enduring nature of the extrinsic behaviours
- Attitudes are not simply separated into two categories but rather have multiple dimensions. They can differ in terms of being favourable or unfavourable.
- An individual's behavior can be affected by their attitudes though the relationship between attitudes and behaviors is not consistent
- Attitudes are the products of cognitive process and can additionally shaped through emotions and intuitions
- Attitudes are learned via experience rather than being intrinsic or hereditary
- Though attitudes have a tendency to endure, they can be altered by experience

Taking into consideration different explanations of attitude concept, many researchers have developed numerous models of attitude. The tripartite model and the Cognitive-Affective-Conative Model are merely well-organized and relevant exemplars of them. The underlying idea in all theories is that attitudes are built around three components, albeit each model labels them differently (Jain, 2014).

In this context, Ajzen (2005) expresses the attitude as the holding of a stance in opposition to a behaviour, belief, or object, and long-term personal inclinations that come from the association of three components: cognitive, emotional, and behavioural. Similarly, İnceoğlu (2011) pointed out that cognitive, affective, and behavioral components require internal coherence—that is, a degree of organization

and consistency in order to form an attitude. On the other hand, Bohner and Wanke (2002) stated that contrary to what was claimed in earlier theories, all three components do not need to be isolated from each other and that an attitude does not necessarily reflect these three discrete components.

Drawing on the previous definitions, in this thesis, the working definition of the attitude refers to a complex, evaluative psychological construct that represents an individual's learned predisposition to respond favorably or unfavorably towards an object, event, or situation. It is a multidimensional concept that encompasses cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components, reflecting an individual's subjective assessment and tendency to react in a particular way based on their experiences and perceptions.

2.2. The Components of the Attitude

The majority of the definitions presented in the preceding section consistently mention “beliefs”, “feelings” and “dispositions” as fundamental components that underpin the structure of attitudes. In this regard, Triandis (1971) stressed that attitude refers to someone's feelings, thoughts, and behaviours towards a proper object. Additionally, it is proposed that attitude is a multifaceted structure composed of cognition, emotion, and motivation that is developed utilising interaction with the surroundings (Bagozzi & Burnkrant, 1979; Sherif, 1979; McGuire, 1985). From this point forward, and with the intention of preserving consistency, the primary aspects of attitude will then be referred to as the ABC of attitudes; affective, behavioural and cognitive components.

2.2.1. Affective/ emotional component. The emotional component reflects an individual's feelings and level of excitement concerning the object of the attitude, particularly their positive and negative appraisals of the item (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004; Taylor et al., 2010). Fishbein (1967) emphasizes that attitude has a greater emotional component since he describes attitude as acquired tendencies to react favourably or unfavourably towards a particular object or group of objects. Similarly, it is the component of the attitude that represents likes and dislikes, and it is

something that cannot be defined with facts since it constantly changes (Baysal & Tekarslan, 1996). This statement is supported by Morgan (1998), who asserts that many attitudes are incapable of being rationally articulated and instead comprise simply emotional components.

As Eagly and Chaiken (1993) suggest, an affective factor is based on emotional experiences or preferences. The individual's value system is intrinsically linked to the individual's emotional component. According to Tavşancıl (2018), a person's value system has an influence on the formation of the manner in which they interact with an object, a condition, or another person.

From another perspective, the emotional component is intertwined with the other components in a very tight way. The individual's previous experiences and current level of knowledge are counted as part of the cognitive component, which plays a significant role in the formation of the emotional component. In addition, the behavioural component is created in accordance with the emotional features, and it represents the tangible, or observable, version of the emotional element since the behavioural element is shaped by the emotional component. (Tutar, 2016).

Azjen (1995) remarks that the emotional component of attitudes can be included in both verbal and nonverbal reactions. It is generally accepted that the nonverbal way of reactions includes facial expressions, in addition to a wide range of physiological and other body responses. For instance, the reactions of the face muscles, and many reactions of the sympathetic nervous system such as acceleration of the heart rate, blood pressure, or response of the skin might be taken into nonverbal responses.

2.2.2. Behavioural component. A person's attitude towards something depends on individual judgment, which will determine whether the person will exhibit positive or negative conduct towards an object when aligned with personal knowledge and beliefs (Taylor et al., 2010). Yüksel (2006) expressed that the behavioral component may be responded to orally or *de facto*, or it could just not exist concretely at all. Robbins and Judge (2012) express that the underlying reason for this as the behavioral component is an intention that leads the activity, rather than being a behavior itself (p. 73). İnceoğlu (2011) presents that the behavioral

component indicates the individual's behavioral inclination towards the subject of attitude in response to a certain set of stimuli. Verbal expressions and other actions may be monitored to provide insight into the behavioral tendencies of the individuals. Habits, norms, and attitudes that are not directly connected to the object of attitude may also have an effect on these tendencies of a person's attitude. It is vital to maintain two distinct forms of behavior apart from one another while discussing the behavioral component. The first one is emotional behavior, and the second is normative behavior.

Emotional behavior emerges as a result of associating the subject of attitude with a pleasant or unpleasant situation. It has two dimensions: positive and negative emotions. In other words, it refers to the process of forming or not forming a relationship between two parties. Normative behavior is founded on assumptions about what constitutes appropriate behavior. There are rational and logical predictions and judgments on the basis of attitudes that have been created in terms of normative behaviors.

2.2.3. Cognitive component. The cognitive component of an attitude is essentially determined by an individual's beliefs towards a social object or occurrence and the extent of these beliefs differs among individuals. Meanwhile, it is a *classifying phenomenon* used by individuals in their cognitive operational processes (Triandis, 1971). Accordingly, İnceoğlu (2011) states that though these classifications have an effect on the individual's perceptions of various circumstances, things, and people, they do allow for distinction of the individual's responses to various stimuli.

Cognitive attitudes, in a broader context, are abstract notions encompassing assumptions, thoughts, beliefs, and values that exist in an individual's mind about a certain object. They may be coherent or incoherent. These attitudes arise from the individual's mental manipulation of the knowledge that s/he has gathered as a reaction to her/his firsthand experience with events and facts. (Crites, Fabrigar & Petty, 1994). Ostrom (1969, p.16) indicates that the cognitive component generally addresses "beliefs regarding the object, features of the object, and relations of the

object with other items” as well as including perceptual reactions and expressions of the beliefs in a verbal way.

In the same vein, Tutar (2016) notes that the cognitive component that grows based on learning may be established through direct (by dealing with the object of attitude) or indirect (with the sense organs such as seeing and hearing) interaction with other individuals, mass media and objects of the attitudes such as education. Crano and Prislin (2008) maintain that the formation of attitudes requires a cognitive process that includes many steps starting with the perception of an object’s characteristics, appraisal of those characteristics, determination of the significance of those characteristics as contributions to an overall judgment of the item itself, and finally incorporation of these beliefs into one’s memory.

2.3. Teaching as a Profession

The term “profession” has been widely defined in the existing body of literature. A profession is an activity that requires expertise in a certain field, guided by ethical principles, and dedicated to proficiency, honesty, morality, selflessness and the welfare of the public. Accountability is essential in a profession, not only for the individuals it serves but also for society as a whole (Cruess et al., 2004). Likewise, Wise (2005) emphasizes the profession concept as a self-regulated occupation via establishing standards by creating a consensus on what their practitioners should know and be capable of doing and then implementing an accreditation and licensing system to assure the continued transfer of these standards. Nevertheless, an occupation becomes a profession when institutions such as colleges, governments, and the public adopt a system of practice. Additionally, in his well-known book “Education as a Profession” Liberman (1956) outlines the distinguishing features of a profession as follows:

- a social service that is distinct, definite and vital
- an extended duration of specialized training
- focusing on intellectual skills in providing its function

- providing a wide degree of autonomy for the practitioners on an individual level as well as the group overall in the field
- recognizing and accepting the principle of personal accountability by the practitioners for their decisions and actions carried out within the boundaries of professional autonomy
- planning and execution of social service tasks are primarily focused on the service itself, rather than the financial benefits for the practitioners as the foundation for the occupation group's responsibilities.
- establishing a self-governing, all-encompassing organization of practitioners
- depending on a set of ethical principles and guidelines (Lieberman, 1956, pp. 2–6)

Considering various definitions of the profession, in a pivotal document in Türkiye- the Fundamental Act of National Education, Article 43, the teaching profession is identified as a profession that necessitates specialization, and teachers have the responsibility for the education and training activities on behalf of the state and the related educational administration tasks (METK, 1973). According to the Common European Principles document (2010), teaching is described as “a profession which is inspired by values of inclusiveness and the need to nurture the potential of all learners, has a strong influence on society and plays a vital role in advancing human potential and shaping future generations” (p.1). Within this framework, four main principles have been mentioned, indicating the significance of education and the role of the teacher. Firstly, teaching is a well-qualified profession that requires highly qualified teachers. Secondly, it is situated within the context of lifelong learning. Thirdly, it emphasizes mobility. Lastly, it is founded on the notion of collaboration.

In the same vein, Smith (1986) points out that teaching is a profession that profoundly influences the lives of individuals and subsequently, the strength and prosperity of the country. Similarly, the teaching profession is characterized by altruism since it carries the role of fostering the growth of both the individual and the community (Gülbahar et al., 2023). It is claimed that the teaching profession has emerged as a result of the financial and social developments that have occurred in countries (Hotaman, 2010). Drawing from this assumption, he frames it as a “professional

group” within the education field that encompasses many aspects such as social, cultural, economical, scientific and technological. Furthermore, Bențea and Anghelache (2012) indicate that the teaching profession is founded on vocational and personal skills, and competencies comprising the professional and ethical norms and models, moreover, it requires continual growth in the professional process.

From a different perspective, Turan (2021) expresses teaching as a career that demands constant dedication and endurance over an extended period. The fact that it takes teachers to invest a significant amount of time before they observe the outcomes of their efforts on students makes teaching a tough and challenging profession. Polat and Özdemir (2018) point out that the teaching profession is commonly perceived as a professional occupation that involves the identification and cultivation of students’ capabilities as well as the demonstration of exemplary conduct though there are various viewpoints about the characteristics of the teaching profession. Mehmood et al. (2013) underline that teaching is a career dedicated to the organisation, implementation, and enhancement of instructional procedures at educational institutions.

2.4. EFL and the Teaching Profession

EFL teachers play a critical role in facilitating linguistic transmission, particularly in the context of teaching English. By definition, the term “foreign language learning” refers to the process of acquiring a target language in a country where that language is not the primary mode of communication within the community (Berns, 1990). As a result, English teachers must begin their instruction with foundational concepts to help students understand the language’s structure and usage effectively.

Typically, EFL students learn the language within classroom settings where the teacher serves as the primary source of knowledge. In addition to this role, teachers are not only transmitters of linguistic knowledge but also carriers of educational values. For example, Makmur (2000) identified five distinct roles teachers fulfill in the educational process:

- i. Conservator (Custodian): Preserving the value system and serving as a normative source for maturity.

- ii. Innovator (Developer): Advancing the value system of science.
- iii. Transmitter (Successor): Passing on the value system to students.
- iv. Transformer (Translator): Embodying and modelling the value system through personal behavior.
- v. Organizer: Facilitating an accountable educational process.

Collectively, these roles emphasize the teacher's critical involvement in both the teaching and learning processes, particularly in cultivating students' attitudes towards learning. In this context, teacher education programs offered by higher education institutions play a vital role in preparing teachers and fostering positive attitudes towards the teaching profession. Issan et al. (2011) highlighted that new teachers' choice of specialization is often influenced by their feelings about students and the act of teaching itself. Consequently, the effectiveness of teacher training programs depends on their ability to provide both subject matter knowledge and pedagogical expertise. Therefore, it is essential to evaluate the content of teacher education programs to ensure they meet these dual objectives.

2.4.1. Subject-matter knowledge. Subject-matter competence is the cornerstone of effective education, particularly in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT). Language proficiency is regarded as the most essential requirement for teachers in this domain. It is expected that someone who teaches English would have good competence in the language. According to Garvie (1990), to be a proficient language user, one must be able to communicate effectively across all four domains of the language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Garvie further emphasizes that effective language use requires not only knowledge of grammar but also an understanding of the factors influencing grammatical structures and their application in real-life contexts. Richards and Swan (1998) similarly argued that a teacher must first achieve a high level of fluency in the language to teach it successfully. Ward (1992) extended this idea by emphasizing that English teachers need both fluency in speaking and writing the language and the ability to teach it with accuracy and precision.

From another perspective, Halliday (1982) underscored the inseparability of language and linguistics, stating that three distinct systems—semantic, lexicogrammatical, and phonological—lie at the core of any language. These systems, commonly referred to as meanings, words, and sounds, highlight the complexity of language as a structure. Consequently, language teachers must have a thorough understanding of these systems to effectively guide learners. It is evident that foreign language teachers must excel in speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. Beyond linguistic competence, they must also guide students in applying the language in both professional and social contexts. Additionally, a strong grasp of language structure and an in-depth understanding of language acquisition theories are critical for teaching English effectively.

2.4.2. Pedagogical knowledge. The pedagogical knowledge base of teachers encompasses all the cognitive knowledge required to create effective teaching and learning environments. Researches indicate that this knowledge is both critical and measurable, although identifying its precise content remains a complex issue (OECD, 2017).

In this regard, Shulman (1986) defines pedagogical knowledge as encompassing the teacher's responsibilities in planning lessons and instructional units, organizing and managing classroom strategies, administering and grading student tests, and preparing the physical classroom for teaching. Furthermore, pedagogical knowledge also includes forming study groups, maintaining an effective pace for questions and answers, supervising small groups or individuals during seat work, providing constructive praise and critiques, and establishing an appropriate tempo for instructional interactions. In addition, this knowledge equips teachers to manage student misconduct effectively, preventing potential disciplinary issues before they arise (p. 10).

Building on this foundation, Shulman (2004b, 2004c) introduces the concept of *pedagogical content knowledge*, which refers to the integration of subject matter knowledge with teaching expertise. This unique perspective highlights a hallmark of

effective teaching, as it combines deep content understanding with the ability to convey that knowledge to students.

Similarly, Mullock (2006) highlights the pedagogical knowledge base as the accumulation of information about teaching, including objectives, methods, and strategies. These elements form the foundation for teachers' actions and decisions in the classroom, thereby providing the framework for effective educational practices.

2.5. Attitudes towards the Teaching Profession

As Benjamin et al. (2011) noted, having a professional attitude involves being prepared—both intellectually and emotionally—to respond to a learning scenario in a manner that respects the values and interests of the community and other stakeholders. Moreover, this readiness also reflects a willingness to address challenges effectively. Teachers, however, may approach the profession with varying attitudes, shaped by numerous factors such as the location of the school, the people who work there, in other words, colleagues, the students, the prevailing value systems, and cultural norms. Building on this perspective, Passos (2009) emphasized that teachers' attitudes towards students, the teaching profession, classroom activities, and administration are directly tied to whether they hold positive or negative judgments. These perceptions, in turn, can significantly influence their professional behavior and performance. In a similar vein, Çetin (2003) highlighted that teacher attitudes are influenced by an array of factors, including:

- educational programs,
- personal characteristics, values, and expectations,
- teachers' psychological states,
- the school environment in which teachers work,
- students and parents demographics,
- relationships with school administrators and colleagues,
- professional experiences
- job satisfaction while fulfilling professional responsibilities.

In summary, understanding the diverse factors shaping teachers' attitudes is crucial for fostering a supportive and effective teaching environment.

2.6. Previous Studies into Attitudes towards the Teaching Profession

Many researchers suggest a strong correlation between teachers' attitudes towards the teaching profession and their effectiveness in the classroom. Teachers' positive or negative attitudes can serve as key indicators of their success or failure in professional practices. However, influences of other factors, such as gender, qualifications, teaching specialization, teaching experiences, the fact of school administrators, other stakeholders in the school environment are incontrovertible (Andoh, 2012; Dhammi, 2009; Polat, 2019; Sireesha & Reddy, 2015). Furthermore, the existing literature provides extensive insights into teachers' attitudes towards the profession, often analyzed in light of these findings. For the present study, the researcher examined numerous studies that primarily focus on the attitudes of EFL teachers in Türkiye and globally. Additionally, the literature review incorporates research exploring the attitudes of both in-service lecturers at universities and prospective English language teachers, with an emphasis on various influencing factors. To provide a clearer structure, studies related to attitudes towards the teaching profession have been categorized into two distinct subsections.

2.6.1. Previous studies abroad into attitudes towards the teaching profession. The landscape of research on attitudes towards the teaching profession reveals a diverse and nuanced investigative approach across multiple international contexts. For instance, Smadi and El-Ghazo (2013) conducted one of the earliest comprehensive studies, focusing on 20 female EFL teachers in public schools in Ajloun. Their research utilized a survey and observation protocol to explore teachers' attitudes towards EFL teaching, revealing moderate attitudes with a surprisingly low and negative relationship between teachers' professional attitudes and their actual classroom pedagogical practices. This groundbreaking study highlighted the complex nature of professional attitudes and their potential disconnect from practical implementation.

In previous studies, gender emerged as a significant variable in multiple studies. To illustrate, Sharbain and Tan (2013) provided a critical investigation by examining 100 primary school English language teachers (50 females and 50 males) in Palestine. Their research distinctively revealed that female teachers consistently demonstrated more positive attitudes towards their professional careers compared to their male counterparts. This finding was further corroborated by subsequent studies, including Bahraeni and Zamanian (2017), who studied 50 EFL prospective teachers in Iran and found that female teachers exhibited more favorable attitudes towards the teaching profession.

Institutional and educational influences were also observed in the investigation of attitudes towards the teaching profession. In such a study, Sireesha and Reddy (2015) expanded the research scope by administering questionnaires to 240 language teachers across different high schools in the Chittoor District of Telugu, India. Their study made a significant contribution by demonstrating how institutional management and teacher qualifications, particularly graduation degrees, play a crucial role in shaping professional attitudes. Likewise, Abbas (2015) took a more critical approach by examining 121 fourth-grade EFL student teachers from two universities in Iraq, uncovering a more challenging narrative. His research revealed negative views among Iraqi EFL student teachers, accompanied by low levels of academic motivation and limited TEFL expertise.

In studies of comprehensive institutional and contextual analysis like that of Haddad (2019) who conducted a comprehensive study involving 120 primary school EFL teachers (82 females and 32 males), multiple variables including education, gender, experience, and marital status were explored. The statistical analysis produced a nuanced finding: no significant differences across variables, but an overall positive attitude towards teaching with a mean score of 3.87. In a recent study, Alsalihi (2019) provided additional depth by comparing 90 prospective teachers from two Baghdad universities, finding favorable opinions towards teaching and notably, equal professional inclination across genders.

Qualitative insights and systemic challenges also exist among the findings of the previous studies. Poorbehzadi et al. (2020) took a qualitative approach by

interviewing 26 Iranian EFL teachers, developing an innovative eight-factor model comprising 40 categories. Their research exposed complex systemic challenges including income sources, diminishing motivation, societal perceptions, and professional limitations. Lomi and Mbato (2021) further enriched this understanding through a mixed-method study of 44 pre-service EFL instructors, highlighting the critical role of external support systems from family, society, and government in sustaining positive professional attitudes.

Finally, from advanced perspectives and professional motivation aspect, Masadeh (2022) provided a unique perspective by investigating 42 male student-teachers in Saudi Arabia, focusing on how cumulative university grades impact professional attitudes. The study revealed that students perceived teaching as a noble and respected profession, with their positive attitudes profoundly influenced by aspirations to implement pedagogical knowledge acquired during university training.

In conclusion, these studies collectively demonstrate that attitudes towards teaching are multifaceted, and dynamically influenced by gender, educational background, institutional support, personal motivations, and broader sociocultural contexts. While most research indicates predominantly positive attitudes, significant variations exist across different geographical and institutional settings. The research underscores the critical need for comprehensive, context-sensitive approaches to understanding, supporting, and enhancing professional development in education, recognizing the complex interplay of individual, institutional, and societal factors in shaping educators' professional perspectives.

2.6.2. Previous studies into attitudes towards the teaching profession conducted in Türkiye. The landscape of research on EFL teachers' professional attitudes in Türkiye reveals a complex and nuanced exploration of various factors influencing their perspectives. Predominantly, studies have focused on pre-service and in-service teachers, employing diverse methodological approaches to understand the intricate dynamics of professional perceptions. These investigations have emerged against a backdrop of significant educational transformation, reflecting the critical role of language educators in Türkiye's evolving educational ecosystem. The

research demonstrates a growing recognition of the multifaceted nature of teachers' professional identities, moving beyond simplistic evaluations to more comprehensive and contextually grounded analyses.

To start with, Akyel's pioneering study in 1999 set the groundwork by examining 31 Turkish EFL teachers with an average of ten years' experience in Istanbul. Using semi-structured interviews, the research uncovered that teachers' professional attitudes are deeply intertwined with their personal values, skills, and achievements. The study emphasized the critical importance of analyzing both extrinsic and intrinsic elements in understanding professional commitment. By utilising a qualitative approach, Akyel (1999) was able to delve deeper into the subjective experiences of teachers, revealing the complex psychological and emotional dimensions of their professional perspectives. The research highlighted how individual teachers' self-perception and professional aspirations are intricately linked to their broader understanding of educational excellence.

Building on this foundation, Coşkuner's (2001) quantitative research involving nine university language department teachers highlighted unique insights. The study revealed a significant correlation between institutional variables and teaching dedication. Notably, teachers' commitment was most strongly influenced by professional pride, positive student interactions, and job satisfaction. Conversely, inadequate salaries emerged as a primary deterrent to long-term career engagement. The research went beyond surface-level analysis and further explored the nuanced interplay between institutional contexts and individual professional motivations. By examining multiple variables simultaneously, Coşkuner (2001) provided a more holistic understanding of the factors that contribute to teachers' professional commitment and potential career dissatisfaction.

Gender consistently emerged as a pivotal factor across multiple studies. Yıldırım (2012) and subsequent researchers such as Almacioğlu (2014), Atmaca (2015), Şener (2015), and Külekçi (2013), consistently found that female educators demonstrated more positive attitudes towards the teaching profession. Yıldırım hypothesized this trend might result from the perception of teaching as a predominantly female occupation. This consistent finding across different studies

suggests a deeper sociological phenomenon underlying gender dynamics in the teaching profession. The research not only highlighted the gender disparity but also prompted critical discussions about the societal and cultural factors that might influence professional attitudes differently across genders.

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations presented another crucial area of investigation. For example, Külekçi's 2013 study revealed that pre-service teachers were primarily driven by intrinsic motivators, with extrinsic factors often negatively impacting their professional perspectives. This finding was complemented by studies like Şener (2015), which highlighted participants' strong intrinsic motivations for becoming English teachers. The research delved into the psychological underpinnings of professional choice, exploring how personal passion, altruism, and self-fulfillment interact with external rewards and challenges. By distinguishing between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, these studies provided valuable insights into the complex decision-making processes that shape teachers' career trajectories.

Institutional and educational background variations were also systematically explored by researchers. In this respect, Üstüner et al. (2009) identified significant differences in professional attitudes based on factors such as department type, university entrance exam preferences, and socio-economic background. Interestingly, Almacioğlu (2014) found no significant variations in attitudes based on educational levels, suggesting that professional perspective transcends academic qualifications. These findings challenged conventional assumptions about the relationship between educational background and professional attitudes. The research highlighted the importance of individual agency and personal motivation beyond institutional and academic constraints.

A particularly intriguing dimension was explored by Güryay (2016), who discovered a fascinating relationship between attitudes towards the English language and the teaching profession. The study revealed that prospective teachers with favorable attitudes towards English simultaneously demonstrated positive perceptions of teaching as a career. This research unveiled the intricate relationship between language proficiency, professional identity, and career satisfaction. By exploring the symbiotic connection between language expertise and teaching motivation, Güryay's

(2016) study provided a nuanced understanding of the complex psychological and professional dynamics within language education.

From a different perspective, Ağcam and Babanoğlu's 2016 research provided valuable insights from in-service teachers across various educational levels. Their study confirmed that despite encountering professional challenges, a significant majority of teachers maintained positive attitudes towards their profession. This perspective was echoed by Tütüniş and Yalman (2018), who characterized teaching as a transformative and rewarding educational experience. The research illuminated the resilience and commitment of educators, demonstrating their ability to maintain professional enthusiasm despite systemic challenges. By capturing the experiences of teachers across different institutional contexts, these studies offered a comprehensive view of the professional landscape.

Later studies by Ertaşoğlu and Gürsoy (2019) and Yasan-Ak and Yılmaz-Yendi (2020) further refined these understanding. They explored multifaceted factors including gender, GPA, motivations, and departmental influences. Particularly noteworthy was the consistent finding that gender, professional motivations, and departmental contexts significantly impacted teachers' professional attitudes. These studies employed sophisticated methodological approaches, utilising comprehensive data collection and analysis techniques to uncover subtle variations in professional perspectives. The research demonstrated the importance of considering multiple intersecting factors when understanding professional attitudes.

The broader context of these studies underscores a critical observation: while extensive research exists, a significant gap remains in comprehensively understanding in-service EFL teachers' professional attitudes. Most studies have concentrated on pre-service teachers, leaving room for more nuanced investigations into the experiences of practicing educators. This limitation highlights the need for continued research that captures the evolving professional experiences of teachers throughout their careers. The existing body of research provides a foundation for future investigations that can offer more comprehensive insights into the complex world of EFL teaching.

Overall, this literature review reveals a rich, complex narrative of EFL teachers' professional attitudes in Türkiye. Characterized by predominantly positive perceptions, the research highlights the intricate interplay of personal, institutional, and motivational factors that shape educators' professional identities and commitments. The studies collectively demonstrate the dynamic and multifaceted nature of professional attitudes, emphasizing the importance of holistic, context-sensitive approaches to understanding teachers' experiences and motivations.



CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology utilized in the present study across seven sections, each focusing on a vital aspect of the research process. The initial section provides an overview of the research design, explaining the framework adopted to achieve the study's objectives. Following this, the research questions that guide and direct the investigation are presented. The third section offers an in-depth explanation of the sampling procedures and demographic characteristics of the participants. The subsequent sections elaborate on the data collection procedures and tools, which include an attitude scale and semi-structured interviews aimed at obtaining both quantitative and qualitative insights. The fifth section outlines the data analysis methods employed to address the research questions, ensuring a systematic and rigorous interpretation of the data. Finally, the chapter concludes with the validity and reliability issues, consisting of the steps implemented to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the findings.

3.1. Research Design

The current study utilised a mixed-method research design by integrating quantitative and sequential qualitative methodologies, taking advantage of their extensive characteristics and data collection instruments. As noted by many scholars, the mixed method is a research approach in which the researcher or research group integrates elements from both qualitative and quantitative paradigms to gain a comprehensive and detailed insight into the subject of the study (e.g., Creswell et al., 2003; Johnson et al., 2007). In support of this, Fraenkel et al. (2023) highlighted several advantages of the mixed-method study design. Specifically, this approach can investigate and elucidate pre-existing connections among variables in depth. For instance, qualitative methods may be employed to ascertain the critical variables pertaining to a specific subject of interest. Moreover, this approach facilitates the verification or confirmation of differences identified among variables, such as by comparing qualitative and quantitative approaches to determine whether they converge on one

explanation of a phenomenon. If convergence is not achieved, the potential causes for such divergence may be examined.

In terms of classification, the present study was categorized as an explanatory sequential research design. A quantitative research method, which involves analyzing numeric data using mathematically based techniques to evaluate research questions, was applied in the initial phase of the study. As Fraenkel, et al. (2023) point out, quantitative studies are characterized by their focus on systematically representing observable changes or differences through statistical methods. Additionally, the quantitative method enables the generalization of results from studies that rely on numerical data and statistical analysis. Burns and Grove (2003) similarly emphasized that the primary objective of quantitative research is to accurately depict a situation in its original form, providing numerical data and percentages (Vyhmeister, 2008).

Following the completion of the quantitative analysis, a qualitative research approach was adopted for the subsequent phase of the study. According to Fraenkel et al. (2023), qualitative studies aim to comprehend circumstances and situations from the perspective of the individuals involved. Unlike quantitative approaches, qualitative research incorporates concepts from the individuals being examined within a natural environment rather than quantifying social interactions. As Neuman (2014) explains, themes, differences, and ideas are employed in qualitative analysis instead of variables. Thus, while the findings from qualitative methods are not generalizable, they facilitate a deeper understanding of complex circumstances (Dörnyei, 2007).

In consideration of the robust characteristics of mixed-method research, an attitude scale was employed to investigate the attitudes of in-service EFL teachers towards the teaching profession in the quantitative component. Subsequently, the researcher proceeded to investigate the perceptions of in-service EFL teachers towards the teaching profession. The qualitative phase enabled participants to express their viewpoints in extensive details.

In conclusion, separate analyses were conducted on the quantitative and qualitative data. In the final section of the study, these analyses were synthesized to provide a comprehensive understanding of the findings. Notably, the open-ended question

included at the end of the attitude scale encouraged respondents to provide more in-depth explanations of their perspectives on their profession or clarify items they found ambiguous. This data, subjected to content analysis, was subsequently integrated into the qualitative findings, thereby enhancing the overall depth of the study.

3.2. Research Questions

Building upon the aforementioned research design, three primary research questions and four sub-questions were formulated to fulfill the purpose of the study, as outlined below.

1. What are the overall attitudes of in-service EFL teachers towards their profession?
2. Do the demographic characteristics have a significant impact on in-service EFL teachers' attitudes towards their profession?
 - a. Does the age factor affect in-service EFL teachers' attitudes towards their profession?
 - b. Does the gender factor affect in-service EFL teachers' attitudes towards their profession?
 - c. Does the teaching degree factor affect in-service EFL teachers' attitudes towards their profession?
 - d. Does the teaching experience factor affect in-service EFL teachers' attitudes towards their profession?
3. What are the viewpoints of in-service EFL teachers towards the teaching profession?

3.3. Sampling and Participants

The current study aimed to investigate the attitudes of 79 in-service EFL teachers employed in different levels of state schools including primary, secondary and high schools which are located in the city centre of Burdur province through the Spring Term 2022. The data was gathered via two different data collection instruments; an

attitude scale and semi-structured interviews. The demographic characteristics of the participants who participated in the quantitative part of this study were presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1.

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Demographic	Items	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	16	20.25
	Female	63	79.74
Age	22–29	3	3.79
	30–39	34	43.03
	40 and above	42	53.16
Teaching Degree	Primary School	13	16.45
	Secondary School	34	43.03
	High School	32	40.50
Teaching Experience	1–5 years	2	2.53
	6–10 years	14	17.72
	11 years and above	63	79.74

Accordingly, demographic variables were summarized in four sections: gender, age, at which school level they teach (teaching degree) and the number of teaching years (teaching experience). Regarding the gender variable, most of the participants were female, including 63 participants (79.74%), and there were just 16 males, representing 20.25 percent of the total.

Considering the age factor, the largest population of participants could be found in the “40 and above” group, consisting of 53.16 percent of the whole ($f=42$). Subsequently, the age group of “30-39” included 34 participants (43,03%). In contrast, the youngest group, aged “22-29,” consisted of only 3 participants, representing 3.79%. The majority of the attendees were older and had extended years of working experience in the teaching profession.

The analysis of the teaching degree factor indicated that the numbers of the participants were almost equal in number between secondary school ($f=34$) and high school levels ($f=32$). Nevertheless, secondary school EFL teachers comprised the highest proportion of participants (43.33%), followed by high school teachers (40.50%). The number of primary school EFL teachers ($n=13$) was lower than that of the other groups.

Concerning the teaching experience variable, a huge number of participants had extensive experience in the teaching profession. A significant majority of 63 participants (79.74%) possessed 11 years or more of teaching experience, whilst 14 participants (17.72%) worked in this position for 6-10 years. The fact that just 2 participants (2.53%) had 1-5 years of teaching experience proved the fact that the sampling group was primarily composed of highly experienced EFL teachers.

A total of 13 volunteer in-service EFL teachers, consisting of 8 females and 5 males, participated in data collecting process through semi-structured interviews. The participants were from different school levels, involving 3 females and 1 male from primary school, 3 females and 2 males from secondary school and 2 females and 2 males from high school. All of the participants were employed in state schools. The youngest participant was 35 and the oldest one was 57. The study included individuals with teaching experience ranging from 5 to 31 years.

Since the researcher was an EFL teacher, the selection of the participants was carried out using a convenient sampling method which involves the principles of proximity and accessibility of the study participants (Dörnyei, 2007; Mertens, 2010; Nunan, 1992). Convenience sampling, often referred to as incidental or opportunity sampling, has several advantages involving cost-effectiveness, efficiency, and convenience compared to other sampling methods. However, it is regarded as inefficient as a result of its low capacity to minimize biases as participants are involved in the study only based on their coincidental presence at the appropriate moment. Therefore, the researcher must recognize the limits of the sample group and refrain from generalizing the findings to the broader population. This bias may be managed through the implementation of triangulation, which involves the utilization of multiple data collection methods within a single study to increase its validity and reliability (Dörnyei, 2007; Neuman, 2014).

3.4. Data Collection Procedures

This study sought to examine the attitudes of in-service Turkish EFL teachers towards the teaching profession, with a particular emphasis on their demographic characteristics. In consideration of the ethical issues, the study secured approval from

the MAKU Institutional Review Board (IRB), the attitude scale developers, the researchers, and the Provincial Directorate of National Education in Burdur, Türkiye, prior to data collection (see Appendices 1, 2 and 3). Following this approval, data were gathered from voluntary and accessible in-service EFL teachers employed at state schools in the city centre of Burdur province. All participants included in the study were non-native English speakers. For the quantitative phase of the study, data were collected using an attitude scale, which was completed by 79 in-service EFL teachers. The participants filled out the scale in a setting convenient for them, such as the school canteen or teachers' room, where they were able to engage in face-to-face interaction with the researcher herself. Upon the administration of the attitude scale, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 13 participants as a means of data collecting tools. Though the attitude scale was initially administered in English, the participants were offered the option to select either Turkish or English for the semi-structured interviews. This approach aimed to guarantee that participants felt confident while expressing their viewpoints, insights and emotions while minimizing errors arising from language misconceptions. In addition, the real names of the respondents were referenced anonymously and were followed by a number (Neuman, 2014).

3.5. Data Collection Tools

Data collection instruments are essential tools for systematically gathering information aligned with the study's objectives. The integration of quantitative and qualitative approaches within a mixed-method research design both broadens its scope and deepens insight into the research problem. This study utilized two main data collection tools: an attitude scale and semi-structured interviews. By combining these methods, the study leveraged the strengths of mixed-method research. The quantitative data obtained from the attitude scale provided an extensive overview and supported generalizability, while the qualitative data from the interviews offered greater depth. Collectively, these approaches enriched the findings and facilitated a more holistic understanding of the research topic.

3.5.1. Attitude scale. Brown (2001) defines questionnaires as “any written instruments that present participants a series of questions or statements to which they react either by writing out their answer or selecting from among existing answers” (p.6). Questionnaires proceed to be extensively employed in the field of social sciences for data collection due to their efficiency and affordability, as well as their versatility and appropriateness for large-scale studies. In terms of structure, questionnaires can include both open-ended and closed-ended items. Among the various types of closed-ended items, scales are the most commonly used. A scale is a rudimentary instrument used for measurement, including a series of statements that require participants to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement (Dörnyei, 2007). A specific score is provided based on the participant's approval of each statement. The overall score, derived from the summation of each item score, places the responder along a spectrum ranging from the least favourable to the most favourable (Karavas-Doukas, 1996).

The present study utilized an attitude scale with three different sections, which was selected based on the specific research objectives (see Appendix 4). In the initial section, the participants were asked about their demographic characteristics, including age, gender, teaching degree, and teaching experience. The purpose of this phase was to collect demographic data to examine potential differences between these variables and the attitudes of in-service EFL teachers towards the teaching profession. In the second section, the participants responded to items adopted from an attitude scale designed specifically to examine teachers' attitudes towards the teaching profession (Demirel & Ünişen, 2018). The scale included 28 items, comprising 11 negative and 17 positive statements in total. It was also categorized into four subsections and presented in the following table.

Table 2.

Distribution of Attitude Scale Items into Related Subsections

Attitude Subsections	Total N of Items	Related Items
Professional Burnout	6	21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27
Professional Apathy	6	3, 8, 9, 11, 13, 15
Professional Commitment (job satisfaction)	12	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 14, 17, 22, 28
Willingness To Engage In Professional Development	4	16, 18, 19, 20

Originally created in Turkish, the scale was translated into English as the sampling group of the study only included in-service EFL teachers. Additionally, the validity and reliability of the instrument were verified prior to its use. Specifically, the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient for this instrument was 0.94, which falls well within the acceptable range for reliability. As noted by Büyüköztürk (2004), a Cronbach's Alpha value exceeding 0.70 is sufficient to ensure tool reliability. Furthermore, Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients for all components demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, ranging from good to acceptable levels (Suryani et al., 2016). The participants were instructed to indicate their level of agreement with each statement by marking (x) the corresponding number on a five-point Likert scale. The scale featured five levels of agreement as *strongly agree* (5), *agree* (4), *neutral* (3), *disagree* (2), and *strongly disagree* (1). On average, the questionnaire required approximately 10–15 minutes to complete. Furthermore, the participants anonymously answered the questionnaire to ensure confidentiality.

Finally, an open-ended question was included at the end of the scale, thereby allowing participants to share their views as regards the teaching profession and the study overall, as well as to elaborate on items they found ambiguous or potentially biased. Additionally, they were requested to voluntarily provide their email addresses if they wished to participate in follow-up interviews.

3.5.2. Semi-structured interviews. Subsequently, semi-structured interviews were carried out with a sample of 13 volunteer EFL teachers (5 males, 8 females) employed in different levels of state schools located in the city centre of

Burdur province (see Appendix 5). Notably, these participants made significant contributions to the initial aspect of the data-gathering process. The primary purpose of interviews is to provide a comprehensive examination and further interpretation of the data collected during the quantitative phase.

The decision to use semi-structured interviews was well-justified, as this approach allows participants to share their individual experiences and emotions regarding a particular subject from their own perspectives (Creswell, 2009; Fraenkel et al., 2023). To ensure alignment with the study's goals, the interview questions were designed to correspond directly with the research questions of the current study. These questions aimed to address various personal, contextual, and behavioral indicators relevant to the participants.

To ensure the quality and relevance of the questions, the interview protocol was developed following an extensive review of relevant literature. Additionally, a pilot study was conducted involving five English teachers. Based on the feedback gathered during this period, the interview questions were refined and further improved through consultation with the supervisor of the study from the ELT Department at MAKU in Burdur province. Ultimately, the questions were formulated in both Turkish and English, allowing participants to select their preferred language for the face-to-face semi-structured interviews.

During the interviews, detailed notes were taken by the researcher herself on the responses of participants who preferred not to be audio recorded, with their explicit permission. For recorded sessions, audio files were subsequently transcribed and analyzed alongside the written notes. Each interview lasted approximately 10 to 15 minutes.

3.6. Data Analysis

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative analyses were employed as this study utilized a mixed-method approach. For the quantitative data, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 23) was used to evaluate the data collected through the attitude scale in a descriptive way. Specifically, the total score of each participant's level of attitude towards their profession was calculated to ascertain

whether data were normally distributed. Additionally, inferential statistics were applied to provide deeper insights into the data. These included the frequency (number of participants), arithmetic means of the data, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis values, as well as the minimum and maximum values of the scales. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 3 for clarity and reference.

Table 3.

Data on Arithmetic Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness, and Kurtosis Values

Data	N	M	S	Skewness	Kurtosis	Min.	Max.
Attitude	79	106.51	14.65	-.001	-.357	69.00	138.00

The Skewness and Kurtosis values were computed to assess the distribution of the data. Parametric statistics were used for data analysis, as the normality analysis indicated that the skewness and kurtosis values were within the range of +1 to -1 (Hair et al., 2013). According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), the acceptable range for Skewness and Kurtosis reference values was between +1.5 and -1.5.

As illustrated in Figure 1 below, histograms and Q-Q plot graphics depict the distribution of the total scores of in-service EFL teachers' attitudes towards their profession.

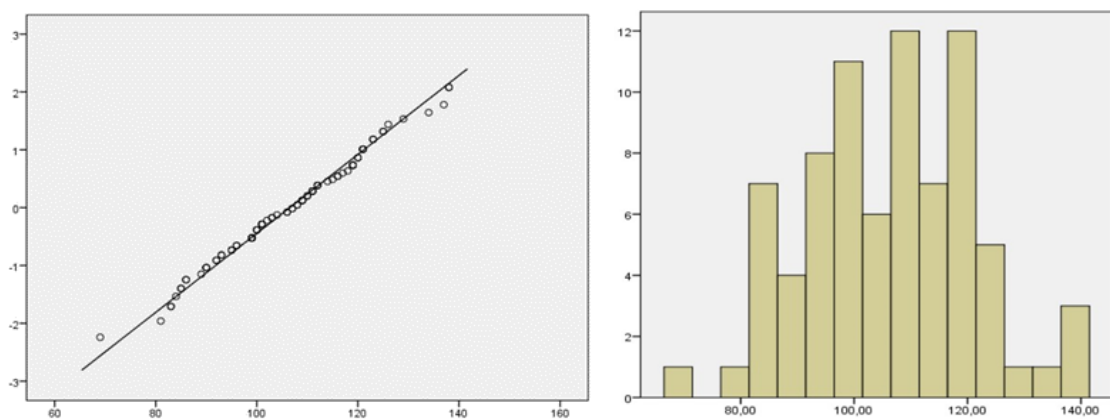


Figure 1. Distribution Graphics of Attitude Scale Total Scores

Following the analysis of the graphics that illustrated the distribution of in-service EFL teachers' total professional attitude level scores, the normality assumption for

the data was confirmed in the present study. There was no significant deviation from normality according to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test ($p=.20>.05$) and coupled with the skewness (-.001) and kurtosis (-.357) values falling within the range of -1 to +1. Therefore, it was determined that parametric statistics would be employed for the analysis of the data. One -way ANOVA was utilized to examine whether there were significant differences between the attitudes of in-service EFL teachers' regarding their profession and their ages, teaching experience and teaching level. Moreover, an independent sample T-test was conducted to investigate whether in-service EFL teachers' attitudes differed towards their profession based on the gender variable. Correlation analysis was employed to figure out the significance of the relationships between variables, as well as their directions and degrees.

In the subsequent phase of the research, content analysis was carried out for qualitative data analysis. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) described qualitative content analysis as “a research method that involves a systematic procedure of coding and finding themes or patterns in written data to assess its content subjectively” (p.1278). Similarly, Fraenkel et al. (2023) stated that content analysis is “a technique that allows researchers to examine human behaviours indirectly, in other words via communication” (p.432). With these perspectives in mind, the current study utilized the qualitative content analysis method by implementing the components outlined in the Miles and Huberman model. A visual representation of this model was presented in Figure 2 below.

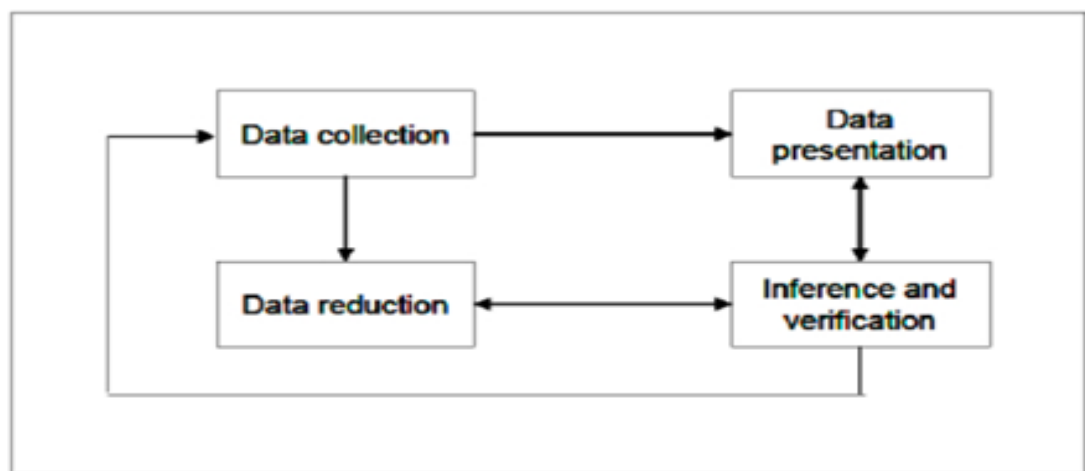


Figure 2. Miles- Huberman Model (Miles & Huberman, 1994)

In the data reduction stage, qualitative data obtained through recordings were first transcribed verbatim. Additionally, the responses to the open-ended question at the end of the attitude scale and participants' written comments during interviews were reproduced word for word following the interview sessions to ensure that no details were lost. Since the majority of participants preferred Turkish as the interview language, transcription was done in Turkish (see Appendix 6). However, the data was subsequently translated into English for the analysis process.

After obtaining the English version of the transcripts, the raw data was reviewed multiple times, and several notes were taken to guide the researcher during the coding process. During this stage, initial codes were generated, and any additional codes deemed necessary were incorporated as the data analysis progressed. From these codes, themes were carefully developed and refined to ensure their alignment with the research questions.

In the data display stage, the identified themes were analyzed to gain a deeper understanding of the occurrences. As noted by Miles and Huberman (1994), data displays assist researchers in recognizing the current situation and making informed decisions about subsequent actions. To enhance clarity, themes were explained in detail with the support of direct quotations from the participants. Furthermore, data were presented in various formats, including texts, tables, and figures, to improve clarity and accessibility for readers.

In the final stage, the qualitative data was comprehensively presented in the results section. Moreover, qualitative findings, including the responses to the open-ended question at the end of the attitude scale, were integrated with the quantitative data, and the combined results were compared with existing literature to provide a broader context and significance to the findings.

3.7. Validity and Reliability of the Study

The current study addressed the trustworthiness concern within a mixed-method research design, recognizing the essential role of reliability and validity in assuring data integrity and credibility in all studies. As several scholars have noted, appropriate approaches must correspond to established criteria for evaluating the

quality of qualitative research, in line with the standards applied in quantitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Mertens, 2010). In light of these facts, validity is defined as “the appropriateness, meaningfulness, correctness, and usefulness of the inferences drawn by a researcher” (Fraenkel et al., 2023, p.143). As such, validity is accepted as the paramount concept that should be considered while deciding or developing an instrument to employ for the purpose of a study (Fraenkel et al, 2023). Scholars have identified various conventional forms of validity, including content validity, construct validity, and face validity, as essential standards for assessing the validity of a measurement tool (Creswell, 2009; Cohen et al., 2000; Mertens, 2010).

During the quantitative phase, face validity was assessed to ensure the research instrument appeared to measure what it claimed to evaluate (Borg et al., 2003; Cohen et al., 2000). Specifically, the attitude scale, originally created in Turkish, was translated into English by the researcher herself, who has been an experienced English teacher for 15 years. Subsequently, the translated scale was reviewed by an English instructor with over 15 years of teaching experience and a PhD in English Language Teaching, along with the study's supervisor, a faculty member in the English Language Teaching Department at Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University, who possesses over 17 years of teaching experience before managing a pilot study. To address concerns related to ambiguity, phrasing, and consistency, the English version of the attitude scale was revised following the pilot study, which involved 15 EFL teachers. This process helped determine the content validity of the attitude scale. Content validity, as described by Cohen et al. (2000) and Creswell (2009), assesses whether the instrument's items accurately reflect the underlying construct it aims to measure.

Thus, the final version of the scale was structured systematically, offering clear, concise, and comprehensive clarification of each item. Upon having determined the content validity, construct validity was also evaluated. Construct validity refers to the degree to which a concept or phenomenon is accurately represented by the measurements of an instrument and how well it is classified and explained (Black, 1999). As Mertens (2010) emphasized, construct validity must account for “appropriate cultural contexts” (p. 398). Accordingly, this study incorporated

concepts and notions from theoretical frameworks, language policies, and attitudes, clarified through an extensive literature review to establish construct validity.

Furthermore, the reliability of the study was carefully considered, since it was claimed as an essential prerequisite for validity by Merten (2010). In this context, reliability refers to “the consistency of scores or responses” across multiple administrations of an instrument (Fraenkel et al., 2023, p. 143). More specifically, it reflects the accuracy of measurements and the extent to which tools are devoid of error (Mertens, 2010). To ensure reliability, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 23) was employed, and Cronbach’s Alpha for the attitude scale was calculated as 0.92. This value, exceeding the acceptable threshold for reliability, demonstrated the robustness of the quantitative data (Büyüköztürk, 2004; Mertens, 2010).

During the qualitative phase, the study adhered to the following four criteria for judging trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 300). First, credibility was addressed through triangulation and member checking. Triangulation was achieved by employing multiple data collection methods, including an attitude scale and one-on-one interviews (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1999). In addition, member checking was used to enhance credibility. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted, this technique is one of the most effective ways to ensure accuracy and prevent misunderstandings. For this study, all interview respondents were provided with the initial data versions for verification, ensuring the accuracy of the information. Second, transferability was considered a key aspect of reliability and validity in the qualitative phase. Although Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that transferability is not the researcher’s responsibility, they recommend using thick descriptions to support it. This approach entails providing detailed explanations of the underlying hypotheses so that attentive readers can generalize the findings to other settings, circumstances, or populations (Cohen et al., 2000; Holloway, 1997). In this regard, comprehensive data was presented to enable readers to transfer the acquired findings to relevant contexts. Third, dependability was addressed using respondent validation and external auditing. As Cohen et al. (2000) highlighted, respondent validation involves verifying data accuracy with participants. In addition, an external audit was

conducted for this study. For this process, PhD degree teacher with nearly 20 years of teaching experience and expertise in both educational sciences and qualitative research methodologies initially evaluated the raw data and preliminary findings to assess their sufficiency. Following this, the external auditor re-coded the data, and a cross-checking process was performed. Mutually agreed-upon codes were approved, while disagreements were re-evaluated and refined until consensus was reached. Finally, confirmability was established using an audit trail approach. This approach provides a clear account of all procedures followed, from the study's inception to the dissemination of findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For this study, confirmability was ensured through meticulous documentation of research procedures that included detailing the research design, sample, data collection methods, and the processes for data management, analysis, and reporting. By consistently documenting and reporting these steps, the researcher was able to ensure transparency and validity throughout the inquiry.

Transferability was assured as one of the procedures for ensuring the reliability and validity of the qualitative data. Though Lincoln and Guba (1985) disagreed with the transferability as not being a task of the researcher, the only technique was given as thick description. It entails detailing the underlying hypothesis sufficiently for the attentive readers to generalize the study's results to different settings circumstances, and individuals (Cohen et al., 2000; Holloway, 1997). In this regard, comprehensive data was presented for the readers of this study to facilitate the volunteers in transferring the acquired data to other circumstances.

Another procedure outlined was dependability, which involves the necessity of "respondent validation" (Cohen et al., 2000). One technique also applied in the current study to test the trustworthiness of qualitative data was an external audit. For this process, an external audit who is a doctoral student and not engaged in the context of the study, initially evaluated the research to ascertain the sufficiency of raw input and preliminary findings. The external audit re-coded the data and a cross-checking process was performed. The codes mutually admitted by the researcher and the external auditor were approved, while those on which they disagreed were re-evaluated and modified until an agreement was reached.

Finally, the audit trail approach was employed to test the validity and reliability of the data as confirmability techniques. This provides a clear account of the procedures followed from the beginning of the study to the dissemination of findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A comprehensive explanation of the study methodology is essential, encompassing research design, sample, data collecting procedures, and the processes employed for data management, analysis, and reporting. To establish confirmability for this study, the researcher meticulously documented the research procedures and consistently reported them throughout the inquiry.



CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This study aims to determine the attitudes of in-service EFL teachers towards their profession and to evaluate the impact of four main demographic factors, including their age, gender, teaching degree and teaching experience, on their viewpoints.

The data analyzed in this chapter is presented in the sequence of the research questions of the study, with quantitative data obtained from an attitude scale and qualitative data acquired from follow-up interviews. Moreover, the responses to the open-ended question in the final section of the attitude scale were analyzed and integrated with qualitative data from semi-structured interviews. The quantitative phase incorporates the investigation of numerical data using descriptive statistics, while the qualitative phase involves the examination of textual material using content analysis. The data are provided through remarks, tables, figures, and citations from participants to enhance the accessibility of the results for readers.

4.1. Findings from the Attitude Scale Administered to In-service EFL Teachers

The attitude scale used in this particular study had 28 items. This adopted scale was handed out to 79 in-service EFL teachers, currently working in the field with different demographic characteristics. The findings of the attitude scale are presented through two overarching research questions and four sub-questions pertaining to the demographic factors of the participants.

4.1.1. Overall attitudes of in-service EFL teachers towards their profession. EFL teachers' responses to the attitude scale which indicated their agreement or disagreement with specific items, were analyzed to address the first study question which corresponded with participants' overall level of attitude towards the teaching profession. The responses of the participants were presented descriptively, i.e. as percentage and frequency; in Table 4 below. The item numbers were provided in parentheses as shown on the attitude scale.

Table 4.

The Percentage of the Items on which In-service EFL Teachers Attained Consensus

Subsections	Items	Agree Totally Agree		Neutral		Disagree Totally Disagree	
		Percent (%)	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)	Frequency (f)
Professional Commitment (Job Satisfaction)	(n1) Teaching is the most appropriate profession for me.	92.4	73	5.1	4	2.5	2
	(n2) I dedicate my whole life to teaching.	74.7	59	15.2	12	10.1	8
	(n4) Teaching is a passion for me	87.3	69	11.4	9	1.3	1
	(n5) As I have gained experience in teaching, I become more attached to this profession.	86.1	68	7.6	6	6.3	5
	(n6) The spiritual satisfaction I get from teaching is indescribable.	65.8	52	27.9	22	6.3	5
	(n10) The enthusiasm I get from teaching makes me forget the challenges I have ever experienced in this profession.	64.6	51	31.6	25	3.8	3
	(n12) If I was asked to decide on my occupation again, I would still choose the teaching profession	69.7	55	11.3	9	19.0	15
	(n14) The more I work, the more I am getting devoted to the teaching profession.	72.1	57	22.8	18	5.1	4
	(n22) I feel peaceful in the teaching profession	77.2	61	17.7	14	5.1	4
	(n28) Being a teacher makes me happy.	86.1	68	10.1	8	3.8	3
Willingness To Engage In Professional Development	(n16) I'm constantly improving myself to do my profession better	92.4	73	6.3	5	1.3	1
	(n18) I understand the importance of the profession better as I get more and more experience	84.8	67	7.6	6	7.6	6
	(n19) Teaching is an honourable profession.	91.1	72	7.6	6	1.2	1
	(n20) Interacting with the students makes me relaxed and understanding.	87.4	69	11.4	9	1.2	1
Professional Apathy	(n13) I assume that I would no longer be enthusiastic about learning and teaching in this profession.	67.1	53	22.8	18	10.1	8

As shown in Table 4, the majority of in-service EFL teachers provided a predominantly favorable attitude towards their profession without considering the demographic characteristics of the participants. These items are mostly related to the three subsections of the attitude scale: professional commitment (job satisfaction), professional apathy and willingness to engage in professional development. A significant proportion of the participants (79,9%) expressed high percentage of agreement on 15 items of the attitude scale.

In the professional commitment (job satisfaction) subsection, nearly all of the participants (92.4%) hold the belief that teaching is the most suitable profession for them. In the same vein, most of the in-service EFL teachers (87.3%) considered that teaching is a passion for them and 86.1% reported becoming more attached to the profession as they gain experience, emphasizing their strong commitment to teaching profession. Furthermore, in-service EFL teachers underlined the importance of spiritual fulfilment and emotional rewards with 65.8% of the participants stating that the spiritual satisfaction they derive from teaching is indescribable and 64.6% of them recognizing that the enthusiasm they experience from teaching, makes them forget the challenges in this profession. Similarly, 74.7% dedicated their whole lives to teaching, though 10.1% disagreed with this statement, showing that some educators may struggle with balancing their personal and professional lives. A greater number of participants (69.7%) revealed that they would still choose teaching if given the opportunity to decide on their profession again; however, 19.0% of them expressed some regret or doubt. Holding a sense of peacefulness and happiness in the teaching profession, 86.1% of the participants expressed being a teacher makes them happy, while 77.2% of the teachers claimed to feel peaceful in their profession. Under these circumstances, 72.1% of in-service EFL teachers indicated that as they work more, their devotion to teaching strengthens.

Based on the items in the willingness to engage in professional development subsection, in-service EFL teachers expressed their desire for self-improvement, learning, and growth in their careers. The data revealed that nearly all of the participants (92.4%) hold the belief that they are constantly improving themselves to do their profession better. Similarly, a notable percentage (91.1%) view teaching as an honorable occupation.

The study also highlighted the affective and motivational dimensions of the teaching profession. 87.4% of the participating teachers stated that interacting with the students makes them relaxed and understanding, while 84.8% of them believed that as they gain more experience, they become more and more experienced.

Nevertheless, one item regarding the professional apathy subsection led to a lower level of agreement among participants and caused ambiguity in the overall results. Surprisingly, 67.1% of the participants agreed with a negatively structured item, indicating that they would no longer be enthusiastic about learning and teaching in this profession, while 22.8% of them stayed neutral, and 10.1% of the teachers disagreed with the statement, causing a risk of professional burnout.

Overall, the data illustrates that the participants are primarily enthusiastic, dedicated and believe the importance of gaining experience in their profession. The items with a smaller degree of agreement require detailed examination through the qualitative section to gain a better understanding of the underlying factors and address any potential concerns among the in-service EFL teachers.

In Table 5 below, many items were reverse-coded, indicating that they were framed negatively. These items correspond mainly to the two major subsections of the attitude scale: professional apathy and professional burnout. In the data analysis process, it is crucial to recognize that choosing to *disagree* or *strongly disagree* with these items indicates positive attitudes towards the teaching profession in real life.

Table 5.

The Percentage of Reverse-Coded Items

Subsections	Items	Agree		Neutral		Disagree	
		Totally Agree				Totally Disagree	
		Percent (%)	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)	Frequency (f)
Professional Apathy	(n8) Teaching is an inappropriate profession for my personality.	18.9	15	10.3	8	70.8	56
	(n9) Choosing the teaching profession(among lots of professions) as a career is nothing but despair	12.6	10	25.3	20	62.1	49
	(n11) I dislike the teaching profession	5.0	4	6.3	5	88.7	70
	(n15) I keep up the teaching profession because I have no other choice.	16.4	13	22.0	17	61.6	49
Professional Burnout	(n21) Teaching is a monotonous profession that stereotypes the human being	22.7	18	22.7	18	54.3	43
	(n24) If I had another chance, I would resign from the teaching profession.	17.7	14	17.8	14	64.5	51
	(n26) Lodging into a classroom constantly makes me nervous and tense.	12.6	10	12.6	10	74.8	59

The professional apathy subsection includes 4 items that evaluate the extent to which in-service EFL teachers perceive teaching as an undesirable or inappropriate career choice. Higher levels of agreement with these statements suggest a lack of motivation and enthusiasm for the profession. Following that, the item “Teaching is an unsuitable profession for my personality.” received 18.9 % agreement and 10.3% neutral responses, as seen in Table 4 above. It reflected that some participants did not believe teaching was an ideal career for them. On the other hand, a huge percentage (70.8%) expressed disagreement or strong disagreement, indicating a strong belief that teaching is a suitable choice for their personality.

Similarly, 12.6% of the participants agreed, “Choosing the teaching profession (among lots of professions) as a career is nothing but despair.” and 25.3% of them remained neutral. However, nearly half of the participants (62.1%) stated disagreement, pointing to the reality that the majority of them do not perceive their career choice as a result of desperation. The other item, “I dislike the teaching

profession.” which received strong disagreement from 88.7% of the participants, with a small percentage of 5.0% agreement and 6.3% neutral, revealed that a large number of in-service EFL teachers have a favourable viewpoint on their occupation. Alternatively, 61.6% of the teachers disagreed with the statement “I keep up the teaching profession because I have no other choice.”, while 22% of them stayed neutral, and 16.4% agreed with this statement that showed some teachers may feel obligated to continue in their roles, most do not perceive teaching as their only option.

Regarding the professional burnout subsection, the item “Teaching is a monotonous profession that stereotypes the human being.” received a slightly greater percentage of neutral responses (22.7%), and an equal percentage agreed that certain aspects of their work are monotonous whilst 54.3% of them stated their disagreement with this statement, confirming that though some in-service EFL teachers encounter monotony, the majority do not perceive the teaching profession as restrictive. A concerning 17.7% of the teachers agreed, and 17.8% were neutral, while 64.5% of them disagreed with the item “If I had another chance, I would resign from the teaching profession”. These results pointed out that though a small percentage of participants may feel limited in their choice of profession, the majority do not feel disappointed in their role as teachers. Likewise, (74.8%) of the participants selected the disagree option for the statement “Lodging into a classroom constantly makes me nervous and tensed.” and a small number 12.6% remained both neutral and agreed on the statement, thus proving their positive views of the teaching occupation.

In general, the analysis of the data emphasizes that the majority of in-service EFL instructors in the current study have positive attitudes towards their profession. This is clear through their tendency to disagree with the negative items. The existence of some neutral and agreement responses displays potential areas for further investigation that may present challenges or conflicting emotions of the participants.

Finally, the following Table 6 below specifically addresses the items that generated *confusion or uncertainty* among EFL teachers. The significant proportion of neutral responses and the distribution of agreement and disagreement percentages across these items is an indicator of this uncertainty. The items in Table 6 reveal the primary influence of two subsections, professional commitment and professional burnout, as

well as incorporating a small number of items from professional apathy on the professional attitudes of in-service EFL teachers.

Table 6.

The Percentage of the Items Leading to Ambiguity among In-Service EFL Teachers

Subsections	Items	Agree Totally Agree		Neutral		Disagree Totally Disagree	
		Percent (%)	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)	Frequency (f)
Professional Apathy	(n3) Doing the tasks related to my profession never satisfies me.	26.5	21	17.7	14	55.8	44
Professional Commitment (Job Satisfaction)	(n7) Nobody can stop me from doing this profession.	58.0	46	21.0	16	20.0	15
	(n17) I also want my child to do this job.	18.7	15	28.1	22	53.1	42
Professional Burnout	(n23) I feel tired of teaching.	25.2	20	18.9	15	55.9	44
	(n25) Teaching profession is too degenerated to be fixed again.	38.0	30	32.9	26	29.1	23
	(n27) Spending time with the students steadily stresses me out.	22.7	18	18.9	15	58.4	46

As seen in Table 6, there were 6 items, out of which 5 had negative meanings. Specifically, items in terms of the professional commitment subsection evaluate teachers' dedication to their profession and willingness to continue in their careers. 58.0% of in-service EFL teachers agreed, and 20.0% of them strongly disagreed that "nobody can stop them from doing this profession". Nonetheless, 21.0% of them were still neutral, which suggests a certain level of uncertainty in their dedication. In addition, 18.7% of the participants agreed, while 53.1% disagreed with the item "I also want my child to do this job." suggesting that more than half of the teachers do not want their children to enter the profession. 28.1% were neutral, which may indicate uncertainty or mixed perceptions about the teaching profession's future prospects. Meanwhile, more than half of percent (53.1%) disagreed with the statement on the attractiveness of their occupation.

Emotional exhaustion and stress levels of in-service EFL teachers were assessed in the professional burnout subsection. Particularly, 55.8% of in-service EFL teachers

expressed disagreement with the item “I am also tired of teaching.”, emphasizing that most teachers do not feel exhausted by their profession. Though 25.2%, a quarter of them agreed with the belief of professional exhaustion in their occupation, a small percentage (18.9%) stayed neutral with the statement.

Additionally, 38.0% of the participants agreed, suggesting that a significant portion of teachers feel that the profession has declined in status or quality, while 32.9% of them selected being neutral regarding the claim that the teaching profession is “too degenerated to be fixed”. On the contrary, only 29.1% of in-service EFL teachers disagreed, indicating a widespread feeling of optimism concerning the future of the profession.

On the other hand, 58.4% of participants stated disagreement with item 27; however, 22.7 % agreed and 18.9% remained neutral, illustrating that stress is a significant problem for a small minority.

Finally, the professional apathy subsection underlines the factors that cause dissatisfaction and motivation among in-service EFL teachers towards their profession. Under this subsection, 26.5% of the participants agreed, and 17.7% of them stayed neutral with item 3, which suggested perpetual dissatisfaction with professional tasks. On the other hand, 55.8% of them disagreed with the statement, indicating contentment with their professional activities.

In general, the data reveals a notable level of ambiguity and ambivalent reactions among in-service EFL teachers, as a large number of them state both favourable and unfavourable attitudes towards their occupation.

4.2. Impacts of Demographic Characteristics on In-service EFL Teachers' Attitudes towards Their Profession

This question was designed primarily to assess the relationship between in-service EFL teachers' attitudes regarding teaching careers and the demographic characteristics of the participants, including age, gender, teaching degree, and teaching experience. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics

following the application of the adapted attitude scale. The data were presented in detail below, along with the following sub-questions.

4.2.1. The impact of age factor on in-service EFL teachers' attitudes towards their profession. To address the initial sub-question of the age variable that has a significant impact on the attitude level of in-service EFL teachers towards the teaching profession, descriptive statistics are shown in Table 7. The results of a one-factor analysis of variance (ANOVA) are reported in Table 7 as follows:

Table 7.

Age-based Descriptive Statistics of In-Service EFL Teachers' Professional Attitude Level

Age	N	M	SD
22-29	3	108.67	7.77
30-39	34	108.62	12.60
40+	42	104.67	16.44
Total	79	106.52	14.65

Based on the data shown in the table, it can be observed that out of in-service EFL teachers, only 3 were within the age range of 22 to 29, while 34 were between the ages of 30 and 39. Both groups of in-service EFL teachers, aged 22-39, showed considerably the same degree of professional attitude, with scores of 108.67 and 108.62 respectively. Though the group of in-service EFL teachers above the age of 40 had the biggest population, they exhibited a lower level of professional attitude when compared to the other two age groups, with a mean score of 104.67.

Additionally, the results of a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) are reported in Table 8 below to provide a comprehensive view of the relationship between age and teachers' attitudes

Table 8.

Age-based One –Way ANOVA Results of In-service EFL Teachers' Professional Attitude Level

	Sum of Squares	SD	Means of Squares	F	P
Between Groups	307.69	2	153.85	.71	.49
Within Groups	16436.03	76	216.26		
Total	16743.72	78			

Table 8 above presents that the attitude level of in-service EFL teachers regarding the teaching profession did not significantly differ based on the age variable, as determined by one-way ANOVA ($F(2, 76)=.71, p>.05$).

4.2.2. The impact of gender factor on in-service efl teachers' attitudes towards their profession. An independent sample T-test as administered to determine the impact of the gender variable on the attitudes of in-service EFL teachers in terms of their profession, and the results are presented in Table 9 below.

Table 9.

Gender-based T-test Results of In-service EFL Teachers' Professional Attitude Level

Gender	N	M	S	SD	T	P
Female	63	107.73	14.25	77	1.47	.15
Male	16	101.75	15.70			

The table 9 above indicates that there was no statistically significant difference in the professional attitude levels of female and male EFL teachers ($t(77)=1.47, p>.05$). Nevertheless, both female and male EFL teachers expressed similar levels of professional attitude though the former ($n=63$) outnumbered the latter ($n=16$).

4.2.3. The impact of teaching degree factor on in-service EFL teachers' attitudes towards their profession. The scale was completed by in-service EFL teachers currently employed in three distinct types of educational institutions: primary schools, secondary schools, and high schools. Table 10 provided descriptive data on the professional attitude levels of in-service EFL teachers based on the teaching degree they are working in. Additionally, Table 10 presented the results of a single-factor analysis of variance (ANOVA) below.

Table 10.

Teaching -degree Based Descriptive Statistics of In-service EFL Teachers' Professional Attitude Level

Institutions	N	M	SD
Primary school	13	108.62	20.53
Secondary school	34	104.91	11.95
High school	32	107.38	14.82
Total	79	106.52	14.65

According to Table 10, the lowest number of participants in the study was from primary school (n=13), on the contrary, 34 secondary school EFL teachers and 32 high school EFL teachers answered the attitude scale. The results revealed that primary school EFL teachers had the highest mean score of 108.62 the participants from secondary school obtained the lowest mean score of 104.91. It was suggested that primary school EFL teachers possessed considerably higher levels of professional attitudes than the other two groups.

Beyond that, the table 11 below presents a one-way ANOVA result of the study, which demonstrate the impact of the variable, teaching degree on the attitudes of in-service EFL teachers towards the teaching profession.

Table 11.

Teaching -degree based ANOVA Results of in-service EFL Teachers' Professional Attitude Level

	Sum of Squares	SD	Means of Squares	F	P
Between Groups	168.41	2	84.21	.39	.68
Within Groups	16575.31	76	218.10		
Total	16743.72	78			

According to the data, it is clear that the professional attitudes of in-service EFL teachers did not differ based on their teaching degree ($F(2,76) = .39, p > .05$).

4.2.4. The impact of teaching experience factor on in-service EFL teachers' attitudes towards their profession. Descriptive statistics were conducted, and the results are presented in Table 12 below to determine if in-service EFL teachers' years of teaching experience has a notable influence on their attitudes in terms of the teaching profession, the results of which are presented in Table 12 below.

Table 12.

Teaching -experience Based Descriptive Statistics of In-service EFL Teachers' Professional Attitude Level

Teaching experience	N	M	SD
5 years	2	103.50	4.95
11 years	14	110.07	7.65
11+ years	63	105.83	15.93
Total	79	106.52	14.65

As Table 12 suggested, EFL teachers' attitude level differed correspondingly in the number of years of experience in teaching. A total of 79 in service EFL teachers participated in the study, with 2 of them having 5 years of teaching experience, 14 of them having 11 years of teaching experience, and the largest sample group consisting of 63 teachers with more than 11 years of teaching experiences. EFL teachers with 5-11 years of teaching experience obtained the highest mean score of 110.07. In comparison, EFL teachers with 5 years of teaching experience had a mean score of 103.50, while the participants with more than 11 years of teaching experience had a mean score of 105.83. The mean scores revealed that EFL teachers with 5-11 years of teaching experience had considerably more professional attitudes than the others. Additionally, Table 13 below provides the results of a one-way ANOVA.

Table 13.

Teaching -experience Based ANOVA Results of In-service EFL Teachers' Professional Attitude Level

	Sum of squares	SD	Means of Squares	F	P
Between groups	225.21	2	112.61	.52	.60
Within groups	16518.51	76	217.35		
Total	16743.72	78			

The data analysis suggested that the disparity between the professional attitudes of in-service EFL teachers and the number of teaching experience years was not statistically significantly different. In other words, the teaching experience variable did not have a meaningful impact on in-service EFL teachers' attitudes regarding their profession, as indicated by the p-value of .60 ($F(2,76)=.52, p>.05$).

4.3. In-service EFL Teachers' Self-Reported Attitudes towards the Teaching Profession

In response to the third research question, thirteen volunteer in-service EFL teachers engaged in follow-up semi-structured interviews to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the perspectives they expressed in the questionnaire.

The qualitative data was subjected to content analysis and was expected to be categorized into the themes of *professional burnout*, *willingness to engage in professional development*, *professional apathy*, and *professional commitment* (job satisfaction) *in teaching*, which were the subsections within the attitude scale. Specifically, the data obtained through the semi-structured interviews led to the emergence of four overarching themes: description of the teaching profession, professional challenges, professional competencies, and professional burnout, respectively. These themes covered 13 sub-themes and an extensive number of codes reflecting the perspectives of in-service EFL teachers currently working in the field. Apart from interview participants, 31 participants from the quantitative phase of the study willingly responded to an open-ended question, “would you like to add anything else about how you view the teaching profession” placed at the end of the attitude scale. The purpose of this question was to explore the aspects on which the participants showed bias or were willing to share further opinions or comments. Following the content analysis of the participants' responses, the findings were integrated with the existing qualitative data. It emerged that the in-service EFL teachers evaluated the teaching profession from their perspectives and also assessed their occupation with regards to students, role of the teachers and education system in Turkey. Moreover, they mentioned the worsening status of their occupation by identifying various factors. The blended qualitative data was presented, detailing the main themes individually, together with their relevant sub-themes and codes.

Table 14.

Characterizing the Teaching Profession: The Analysis Framework of Main Theme 1

Themes	Sub-Themes	Codes
Description of The Teaching Profession	Motivation	Influence of an EFL teacher Being a family profession Having a natural aptitude for language learning Popularity of being an EFL teacher A conclusion of a university entrance exam Importance of the school type Exposure to an intensive English curriculum Job availability Impact of the living- place Teaching language with love
	Emotional Reactions	Motivating students to learn English Creating a new path for students Improving students' language skills Awareness of students' feelings and experiences Supporting critical-thinking abilities Having practices and staying up-to-date Providing cultural enrichment
	Expectations	Teaching a completely new thing possessing positive qualities Using a variety of materials Experience-based development Achieving a long learning process Opening new visions Instilling a love for language learning.
	Professional characteristics	A source of affection A lifelong devotion A source of happiness Having a dynamic structure Accepting as a gifted profession Fostering individual fulfillment A transformative process Serving as an inspiration-role model Leading dual-dimensional emotions Decreased significance of teaching A moral duty The cornerstone of the society

4.3.1. Main theme 1: description of the teaching profession. As seen in the table above, four sub-themes, motivations, emotional reactions, expectations and professional characteristics, were identified as related to the first main theme, “description of the teaching profession”. Subsequently, the subtheme of motivation was illustrated by the corresponding codes.

4.3.1.1. Motivation. In the sub-theme “motivation,” nine codes were obtained, and the participants expressed their reasons for being an EFL teacher, stressing their key sources of inspiration. Five participants indicated the influence of an EFL teacher in the following statements:

“One of my language teachers at high school inspired me.” (P8)

“The biggest factor that inspired me to become an English teacher was my EFL teacher at high school. Prior to that, I had prejudices against English, and this situation stemmed from the fact that I did not have English lessons from an English teacher during my secondary school years. Thus, I thought that I did not know English. My English teacher at preparatory class in high school broke down these prejudices that I created in my own way and motivated me to become an EFL teacher.” (P9)

“I was motivated by my English teacher when I was in high school.” (P12)

“In those years, I had a teacher called ... who was subsequently promoted to a position at a university. I loved him very much, and he became my role model. I still keep in touch with him.” (P11)

“One day, an EFL teacher came to my high school called ... I was very impressed by her. In my last year, she convinced me that I should absolutely become an English teacher, and I went to the English language department, all thanks to one of my teachers.” (P4)

Similarly, two participants highlighted that they characterized their motivation for selecting their occupation as *being a family profession* by the following perspectives:

“My father was a teacher too. That is why I choose this job” (P3)

“My father’s profession as an English teacher had an important effect in shaping my future” (P13)

One of the codes that emerged under the sub-theme motivation was *having a natural aptitude for language learning*. Four of the participants stated their perceptions in the following statements:

“I considered that I can do English, I can speak English, I can teach English. I was explaining to my friends in high school, so I decided to be an English language teacher.” (P7)

“I have always been curious about learning new languages. Also, I feel myself talented in this field, so I decided to be an English teacher.” (P2)

“...the necessity of knowing a language and effort of both older and young people to speak a foreign language pushed me to become an English teacher” (P1)

“...as a result of being constantly exposed to English during my childhood, I have determined that this is the source of my happiness” (P13)

Under the sub-theme of *motivation* in the description of the teaching profession, one of the participants described the code *popularity of being an EFL teacher* in the following manner:

“Initially, English teaching was very popular during the years I attended high school” (P10)

During another interview, one of the participants articulated his motivation for *a conclusion of a university entrance exam* in the following way:

“I received education in abroad. I studied in Germany for ten years and have a robust background in English, German, and French. I wanted to study in the engineering department. I returned to Turkey and continued my high school education for two years there. I entered the university exam at the end of the two years without knowing any Turkish. I did not understand the questions in the university exam. If I understood them, I could solve them. Therefore, I could not pass the exam in my first year. The following year, I decided to use my language skills and entered the exam again. I won the Department of English Language Teaching. That is how I became an English teacher, by chance” (P6)

Another finding related to the sub-theme of motivations was *importance of the school type*. The following statements were provided by two of the participants concerning this aspect:

“When I was at high school, there were Anatolian Teacher Training High Schools to educate students for becoming a teacher” (P7)

“There were Anatolian and İmam Hatip secondary schools which required entrance exam after primary school. I attended Anatolian İmam Hatip secondary school. I determined my career choice in those years and never gave up my dream.” (P11)

Moreover, one of the most recurrent codes within this sub-theme was *exposure to an intensive English curriculum*. With this regard, four participants highlighted the significance of being immersed in heavy-loaded English lessons throughout their educational process while making career choices in the following statements:

“... in these schools, twenty-four hours of English lessons were provided weekly. I attended Anatolian İmam Hatip secondary school” (P11)

“Two things motivated me to become an English teacher. First, I attended a preparatory class where we had intensive English lessons. As a result, English greatly attracted my attention...” (P5)

“...at the same time, I attended a preparatory class in my high school which offered an intensive English curriculum. Consequently, this fact motivated me to become an English teacher indeed.”(P10)

“I received education abroad. I studied in Germany for ten years, and I had a very strong background in English, German and French...”(P6)

Finally, one of the participants claimed her inspiration for choosing the teaching profession as *job availability*, while the other one cited the code *impact of the living place* as a basis for his future career by stating the following:

“...the second reason was that a significant number of English teachers were being employed during that period. I preferred it since it was a profession that was comparatively simple to enter in Turkey in terms of employment opportunities” (P5)

“... living in a tourist destination enabled me to become an English teacher.”(P1)

4.3.1.2. Emotional reactions. In-service EFL teachers highlighted the emotional and personal bonds that they had with their careers in this sub-theme. The sub-theme of emotional reactions outlined the inner reasons and experiences that affected their teaching approach and attitudes. The frequency of the responses

demonstrated that the participants identified several crucial emotional aspects which mainly reflected their feeling in terms of the students. Moreover, these emotional aspects provided a deeper understanding of their relationship with their roles, which extended beyond their basic professional responsibilities. Five of the participants offered the code teaching language with love under the sub-theme of emotional reactions and expressed their viewpoints with the following statements:

- “...Moreover, I aim my students to love English and English lessons”(P3)
- “...As a teacher, my primary focus is to touch the heart of the child. In my opinion, once you reach a student’s heart, there is nothing that the student will not be eager to do. I often heard the statement from my students “teacher, I do not love English however I have finished my homework so that you will not get upset”. This statement makes me happy as I know that this student will develop a passion for English in time as the student developed an affection for me” (P11)
- “...so I want to teach the language with love” (P2)
- “...I think that my most important role is to make primary school students love English.”(P9)
- “Once students believe that they love something, the students also believe that they can succeed in it.”(P9)

In addition, one of the participants recognized the code *motivating students to learn English* as another key emotional reaction. This code implies that a certain number of EFL teachers take satisfaction from their capacity to stimulate curiosity and passion in their students, considering this fact as a fundamental aspect of their professional effectiveness, as stated by the participants below:

- “I try to make my students believe in themselves to be successful in learning English at first...” (P2)
- “...we will try whatever we can do to make students love the language” (P5)

Within the sub-theme of emotional reaction, three participants preferred a code *creating a new path for students*. They emphasized that they had spiritual fulfilment from the intention of offering students new academic and personal opportunities, as expressed in the following statements:

- “I succeed in opening a new horizon, a door for my students by teaching them a new language”(P1)
- “I often enjoy helping students improve their language skills, which can open up new opportunities for them” (P8)
- “The students, most of the students don't know anything about English. They can hear something, but they don't know anything about it. And you teach from the beginning as a primary school English language teacher. So I think it's a path for the students, a new path, a new viewpoint. I feel like this.” (P7)

Additionally, four participants demonstrated a high level of emotional engagement with the enhancement and advancement of their students’ linguistic skills by selecting the code *improving students’ language skills*. The findings suggested that

these participants perceive the achievements of their students as a direct result of their own endeavours, which strengthens their emotional devotion to teaching. They stated their perspectives as follows:

“Our duty is to equip students with the necessary competencies required to gain in the field of foreign languages as specified in the curriculum, following the framework of regulations “(P4)

“...later enhancing four language skills and I think improving the speaking skill is the most critical one”(P9)

“I often enjoy helping students improve their language skills...” (P8)9

“...I facilitate my students in reaching a level where they can express themselves in daily lives”(P11)

With the code of *awareness of students' feelings and experiences*, another participant emphasized the need to display sensitivity regarding the emotions and experiences of students in order to cultivate an emotional bond between teachers and their profession. Teachers may provide enhanced assistance, cultivate a more profound connection with students and provide a more rewarding classroom atmosphere for learning by gaining insight into the emotional states of the students, as expressed by one of the participating teachers below:

“I feel like a child when I am in a classroom. I like playing games with them”(P12)

According to one of the participants, the code of *supporting the critical-thinking abilities of the students was a source of emotional fulfilment*. It indicates in a broader sense that EFL teachers have the responsibility of not only teaching language but also assisting students in the development of additional cognitive skills, considering their roles as intellectually stimulating. In this regard, one of the teachers expressed his/her idea in the following way:

“Teachers must support the critical-thinking abilities of the students” (P13)

While referring to the sub-theme of emotional reactions, the majority of participant teachers addressed the requirements and enhancements for their students. Nevertheless, two of the participants assessed emotional responses from the perspectives of teachers and identified the code of *having practices and staying up to date*. Subsequently, both of the participants expressed their views as follows:

“We must constantly practice and keep ourselves updated in order to avoid forgetting the English language. Since it is not our native language, it is at risk of being easily forgotten”(P5)

“...I think teachers must constantly keep up with current trends”(P13)

4.3.1.3. Expectations. In this sub-theme, the demands of the in-service EFL teachers were illustrated regarding their profession with an emphasis on their students' personal and linguistic progress. In other words, the responses revealed a wide range of expectations regarding the influence they attempt to have on students' lives, as seen in the previous sub-theme of emotional reactions. This sub-theme also highlighted the areas in which the teachers needed extra support or further professional development. In this regard, four participants determined the code of providing cultural enrichment with the following statements:

“Learning a new language is learning a new culture. I love teaching the differences and the culture as well.” (P2)

“Teaching a new language while simultaneously exploring and presenting other cultures is extremely entertaining” (P13)

“...teaching a new language means both teaching and acquiring a different culture” (P4)

“Teaching the language also includes teaching of the cultural components that come together with it” (P1)

Additionally, four participants decided on another code-*teaching completely new thing*, stressing that introducing students to an entirely new subject, especially a foreign language, serves as a source of fulfilment and reflects their enthusiasm for presenting new concepts in language. They used the following statements in presenting their perspectives:

“I think it is trying to teach something completely new to students” (P3)

“...students are experiencing an unfamiliar thing for the first time. They are learning totally a new thing” (P5)

“When I teach a new subject, most of my students get excited” (P12)

“Teaching new things and using a different language is fascinating” (P1)

Among several codes created within the subtheme of expectations, the code of *possessing positive qualities* was the most frequently utilized, as five participants emphasized the necessity of teachers having a positive nature, including characteristics such as patience, tolerance, and understanding in teaching rather than students demonstrating a positive attitude towards language acquisition. The following responses provided by participants highlighted the personal attributes that teachers value in themselves and in their approach to education:

“...I believe that being a teacher requires a high degree of tolerance and humanism” (P4)

“For me, most favourite aspect of teachers is using innovative approaches in their lessons without discouraging the students in learning” (P11)

“Easygoing people. I believe that English teachers are easygoing people like the other branch teachers such as German teachers. However, English teachers do not feel like

traditional teachers; they teach the language without a strict manner, like making a stand-up in a classroom with a more friendly style”(P6)

“English teacher are cheerful in general and teach the lesson in a motivated manner and their high energy also reflects onto their students” (P9)

“My favourite features of being an English teacher are showing willingness to new ideas and thought as well as quickly adapting to innovations” (P13)

Only two of the participants agreed on the code of *using a variety of materials*, recognising that using diverse materials promotes students’ active engagement, interactive learning environment and learning outcomes as follows:

“If we consider that the new generation is closely intertwined with the technology nowadays, using technology in language teaching, the ability to teach English outcomes without bothering the students are the favourite aspects of an English teacher, for me”(P11)

“We have the opportunity to use much more materials. Honestly, this reality makes teaching English more entertaining”(P10)

Similarly, two participants maintained the code of *experience-based development*, claiming that as teachers enhanced their pedagogical and instructional practices throughout many years of professional expertise, they achieved a sense of fulfilment rather than giving into professional exhaustion, as proven by the following statements:

“For all of the jobs, being experienced is of course, very important. However, experience is a process. Being experienced is a process. So yeah, you have to be experienced.”(P7)

“As I gained experience in teaching, I became more attached to this profession” (P14)

There were a few codes that a small number of participants preferred to indicate for the sub-theme of *expectations* in the teaching profession, while certain themes received more responses, revealing an agreement on particular beliefs. The code of *achieving a long learning process* was one of the least used. Only one participant used the following statement to emphasise that language acquisition is a journey, focusing on the perseverance and dedication of EFL teachers to the long-term success of their students:

“Seeing students gain confidence and fluency can be a highlight of the teaching experience” (P8)

Another participant revealed the life-changing potential of language education in broadening students' horizons using the code of *opening new visions*. The participant suggested that in-service EFL teachers believe in opening new perspectives for their students, enabling them to perceive the world in an entirely distinct manner through the lens of a new language.

“...so you are opening new areas, new visions to your students” (P7)

Finally, one of the participants stressed the importance of the code; *instill a love for language learning*. The participant specified that it is crucial for teachers to inspire a love for the language in their students, allowing them to prioritise their capacity to succeed, regardless of any biases they may have regarding the language learning process.

“...as an English language teacher, I try to make them love English. The first thing about learning a foreign language is, I think, to love the language. So, I am trying to make them love English with songs and games. And the most important thing for me is to have an ear for the language”(P7)

4.3.1.4. Professional characteristics. Within the findings of the first main theme, interview participants identified the last sub-theme as professional characteristics. Nearly all of the codes beneath this sub-theme were generated by the participants who filled out the open-ended question at the end of the attitude scale. They favoured discussing their profession's attributes that shape their identity, portray emotional significance, and offer both benefits and challenges. For instance, four participants specified that teaching offers them emotional fulfilment by the code of a source of affection, in their following viewpoints:

“I am passionate about my profession...” (P15)

“I love my job; it is a therapy for me. I relax when I teach.”(P16)

“I think it is enjoyable and relaxing “(P17)

“I like being an English teacher...” (P12)

Furthermore, three of the participants indicated that teaching is beyond an essential occupation, particularly everlasting calling, using the code of *lifelong devotion*. These participants perceived their profession as an ongoing commitment, consistently influencing both their students and their personal development and presented their perspectives in the following way:

“Teaching never ends; it is also a journey” (P19)

“Teaching is a life longing profession” (P18)

“I always say that “I am glad to be an English teacher”. I became an English teacher by chance, but I do my profession with love. I give it my all, and I struggle to teach English to my students until I accomplish my objectives. If I were born again and chose a profession, I would still be an English teacher” (P6)

Besides, some participants suggested that the inner satisfaction derived from their profession further strengthened their excitement and dedication to teaching, serving

as a source of happiness. Reflecting on this issue, two in-service EFL teachers remarked that:

“I am happy to be a teacher” (P20)

“I am happy with my profession; I am trying to improve myself and do my best “(P21)

The teaching profession was characterised by *having a dynamic structure*. One of the participants indicated that she appreciated the ever-changing and flexible nature of teaching, which requires the adoption of new methodologies, collaboration with diverse student groups and the evolution of the teacher's role, by commenting as follows:

“The teaching profession is a dynamic work so you are supposed to be dynamic as well.”(P22)

In a similar manner, two participants conveyed their satisfaction with their occupation, emphasizing teaching as *accepting as a gifted profession* that involved special talents or natural abilities by stating that:

“According to me, teaching is a passion and a very blessed profession. I think I have done the best thing ever in my life by choosing this job” (P23)

“...it is a holy job” (P24)

Fostering individual fulfilment was one of the findings related to the sub-theme of professional characteristics. Three participants commonly claimed that their own well-being originates from assisting students in realizing their maximum potential, which in turn makes them feel effective and accomplished in their position as teachers. In this regard, they stated in the following manner:

“Teaching means freedom, and being a teacher reflects my character”(P25)

“I try to do my best. Teaching gives me happiness and satisfaction” (P15)

“Teaching is a therapy for me. I relax when I teach.”(P16)

Two of the participants recognized teaching as *a transformative process that* fosters versatility in personal and professional growth, encouraging changes and advancement for both the students and the teachers by asserting that:

“I like teaching. Teaching is the most important thing because a teacher can change the life” (P26)

“Teaching profession improves communication skills, increases knowledge and provides enjoyment. It is a transformative process for students” (P27))

“Shaping students' opinions, thoughts, and plans are precious. It means shaping the future” (P28)

One of the professional characteristics that in-service EFL teachers defined was their ability to *serve as an inspiration and role model*. One of them insisted that students’

ambitions, perspectives and attitudes are considerably affected by the remarks and behaviours of the teachers with the following statements:

“Besides, an inspired teacher can make students motivated by setting up role models. This is the most important and valuable asset for a society” (P27)

Additionally, a few participant teachers had difficulty in expressing their viewpoints about their profession as it evoked a duality of feelings, ranging from joy and contentment to frustration and exhaustion. Two of them selected the code of *leading dual-dimensional emotions* and stated their opinions in the following way:

“Being a teacher is a hard but enjoyable job” (P29)

“Teaching is a tiring but satisfying job” (P24)

Meanwhile, another professional characteristic that in-service EFL teachers explained their unfavourable perspectives on was the *decreased significance of teaching* throughout the interviews. Two participants expressed profound disappointment about the perceived lack of value of their career in society, noting that:

“Being a teacher was an honourable thing but now nowadays. It lost its prestige” (P30)

“To me, among other professions, teaching has a precious place. Even though it has lost its importance and it is not seen as respected as in the past” (P31)

Ultimately, two of the codes, *being a moral duty* and *being the cornerstone of society*, were the facets that a small number of EFL teachers preferred to articulate as constructive aspects of their job. For instance, one of the open-ended question participants associated teaching profession with ethical responsibility to guide students comprehensively in moral, social, and intellectual dimensions by stating that:

“Teaching is an honourable profession, however in our country, the education system should be revised properly according to the needs of the changing and developing world. People should be educated first in moral issues rather than in academic professions. Maybe that kind of approach gives this occupation the importance that it really deserves” (P32)

In the same vein, another participant highlighted the belief that teachers play an essential role in constructing and sustaining the basis of a nation in the following manner:

“Teaching is a profession and a mode to make students have more potential and learn important lessons about life like respect, sharing and culture” (P33).

4.3.2. Main theme 2: professional challenges. The qualitative analysis revealed a further theme of professional challenges particularly relevant to the problems and obstacles in-service EFL instructors encounter in their careers. This main theme was categorised into three sub-themes: *education system (applications)*, *education policy issues*, and *school and student-related problems*. The table below presented each sub-theme that examined a particular facet of the professional problems, covering systemic concerns, classroom interactions, and school climate along with numerous appropriate codes.

Table 15.

Characterizing the Professional Challenges: The Analysis Framework of Main Theme 2

Themes	Sub-Themes	Codes
Professional Challenges	Education System (Applications)	Lack of enough practice in language learning Teaching grammar and speaking skills Addressing different ways of learning Inadequate lesson hours Lack of repetition of the learned subject Structural differences of the target language Reverse impact of technology Negative impact of the prior learning Lack of extra activities for disadvantaged students Role of examinations <u>The content of the coursebooks(sequence of the topics)</u>
	Education Policy	Deficiencies in the education system Lack of renovation in the education system Restrictions of the teachers' roles Low salaries
	School and Student-Related Problems	Lack of respect Attitudes and disinterest of students Negative thoughts of parents Impact of School Administration and colleagues Consequences of the modern changes

Following the table, the subtheme of the education system (applications) was illustrated by the corresponding codes.

4.3.2.1. Education system (applications). The practical difficulties in-service EFL teachers face in the existing educational structure was discussed within the subtheme of education system (Applications). Eleven codes emerged under this subtheme, and two participants identified the code lack of enough practice in language learning, reporting that the students lacked adequate exposure to the target

language both in the classroom and real-life contexts. It can be understood that though the students got the theoretical knowledge in the lessons, they had insufficient opportunities for using their productive skills, which blocks their proficiency in English. This problem might lead to a gap between the curricular objectives and the actual classroom experiences. The participants elucidated their thoughts with the following statements:

“...our students do not have many opportunities to practice English. In other words, they do not have any area outside of the classroom to use their speaking skills rather than English courses and communicating with me” (P4)

“Students do not have a chance to use the foreign language in their daily lives, to integrate the language into regular daily life and to have enough practice in the target language”(P1)

Some of the teachers expressed having difficulty in balancing *teaching grammar and speaking skills* in the target language with the code of teaching grammar and speaking skills. Two of them noted their attempt to integrate communicative competencies into English lessons since the improvement of practical speaking abilities is essential for acquiring the language. Nevertheless, an emphasis on teaching grammar generally impeded their efforts, as noted by two teachers below:

“The most challenging aspect of teaching English is the grammar and speaking the target language” (P2)

“... teaching grammar and vocabulary became my priority as listening and speaking skills are not included in LGS exam” (P11)

Addressing different ways of learning was another code that some other participants expressed regarding the negative impact of students' having diverse learning styles in same classroom. They also highlighted many external factors, involving a greater number of students in classroom, the role of the curriculum in restricting teachers' ability to effectively guide though they admitted the necessity of differentiation in teaching by stating the following:

“Students have different ways of learning, and it can be challenging for me to address everyone's needs effectively” (P8)

“The most challenging part for me is the classes that consist of 25-30 or sometimes 40 students. There are students of very different levels in these classes. Therefore, this fact compels us to think in diverse ways. It is evidently hard to manage students having different level of learning simultaneously”(P10)

Furthermore, two participants noted that inadequate *lesson hours* allocated to English language education created a barrier, restricting students' opportunities for effective practice and reinforcement. Consequently, teachers suffer from pressure to quickly

move through the curriculum while many students struggle with achieving language competency, as expressed by the participating teachers below:

“Particularly, in primary school second classes, there are two hours of English lessons weekly that is not efficient for language learning” (P9)

“Students had fewer opportunities to reinforce and practice the newly acquired vocabulary during class as a result of the limited number of English lessons” (P5)

In addition, two participants who expressed their concern about the inadequate lesson hours, underlined that students had difficulty in remembering and internalizing the target language principles resulting from *lack of repetition of the subject*. They claimed that adequate time was not allocated in the education system for reviewing and reinforcing of the taught material, leading to weaknesses in students' language comprehension and proficiency, by stating the following:

“... and if the students do not review at home what they have learnt at school, they will forget it all” (P9)

“...we do not have enough time to review the subjects at school and the students forget quickly what they have learnt” (P5)

Another code that was pointed out by three participants was *structural differences of the target language*, which led to a slower language learning process for students, was pointed out by three participants. They maintained that the structural differences between students' native language and English created an additional challenge for both the students and in-service EFL teachers in the learning process, presenting their perspectives in the following manner:

“Most of the students indicate that “teacher, we say school, but it is not written as school”. The difference between the writing and the pronunciation is the most difficult thing in teaching English for Turks” (P7)

“.. Especially, they have trouble in learning English as a result of the difference between the written form and pronunciation of the words” (P9)

“My students have difficulty in pronunciation of English” (P12)

A subsequent finding that emerged under the subtheme of the education system was the *reverse impact of technology*. Though technology has become an integrated part of the classroom environment and is frequently regarded as a means to improve education, three participants stated that its misuse might adversely affect language acquisition. In this context, they articulated the following viewpoints during the interview:

“We can easily see the negative effects of technology on both the students and language acquisition process” (P13)

“...particularly for the last five years, the most challenging issue for me is that students excessively use technology for social media rather than educational purposes or

beneficial content. I think it encourages an important level of laziness among students.”(P4)

“Nowadays teaching is getting easier and harder because of the system and the technology” (T19)

Additionally, a high school participant addressed the *negative impact of prior learnings*, claiming that most of the students arrive at the classroom with pre-existing misunderstanding or incorrect knowledge in English. Also, these learnings can be difficult to change and may require a considerable time in the learning process.

“Basically, I do not blame any of my colleagues, exonerate all of them. I am sure that each of them is definitely very skilled in their own field. However, they have learnt something wrong somewhere along the way, and they have taught the students in the same wrong way, and then these students have come to my class. I do not tell the students, “This one is right, that is wrong” Instead I recommend them to forget the past since I know that they have learnt from mistakes” (P6)

In a similar way, one participant mentioned the code of *the lack of extra activities for disadvantaged students*, emphasizing the significance of additional language activities that would promote language acquisition outside the classroom, particularly for students who had difficulty accessing certain opportunities by stating the following sentences:

“...we work on E-twinning projects and Erasmus projects. However, a limited number of students can engage in these projects. I wish that Eurodesks and similar programs would become more active in our province or for regional authorities such as municipalities to support the programs and activities that enable the participation of a greater number of students who are particularly disadvantaged and unable to reach such opportunities. That would make me very happy” (P4)

Another in-service EFL teacher underlined the *role of the examinations* in which test preparation was prioritized rather than integrating interactive and communicative practices in language learning in the following way:

“I did not have any difficulties for fifth graders; however, the preparation and administration of three exams in other grades posed a challenge for me in terms of completing all topics on time. I couldn’t dedicate much time to listening and speaking activities to cover all the subjects” (P11)

After all, *the content of the coursebooks (sequence of the topics)* was among the recurrent codes, in which one participant expressed her discontent with since it does not consistently correspond with the needs of students or the natural process of language acquisition noting that:

“...in second grades, the units begin with sentence patterns rather than word acquisition. Since the children are directly faced with the questions such as “what is your name, how are you, how old are you” which necessitate responses in a certain sentence structure, it is quite difficult to predispose students to gain this skill by the

curriculum. First, vocabulary should be taught in second grades and sentence patterns should be given in further units” (P9)

4.3.2.2. Education policy issues. In the qualitative analysis of the interviews and open-ended question, in-service EFL teachers emphasized the systemic and policy-related problems encountered in their profession under the sub-theme of education policy issues. Many codes emerged based on this subtheme, reflecting the origins of problems resulting from educational policies that may significantly affect their professional fulfilment and efficacy. In this context, two participants identified a challenge as the code of deficiencies in the education system and explained their perspectives with their following statements:

“The system has devalued teaching so much. We have no say over the students, and it is exhausting” (P34)

“The education system and some policies (from salaries to books) should be rearranged to satisfy the teachers” (P35)

Within the sub-theme of education policy issues, the most frequently occurring code was the lack of *renovation in the education system*. Three participants agreed that the lack of change in the education system creates an impression of stagnation and disappointment in the teaching profession stating that:

“Teaching is in the process of evaluation. I can not define it with exact words, but I know we need to form a new style over the walls. I do not mean only online learning because we need to interact face to face. However, just placing hundreds of students indoors is out of date” (P36)

“If the education system changes and the teaching profession gets the importance it deserves, everything can be different” (P37)

“Being a teacher is literally an honourable profession, but it needs to be regulated /fixed again in some aspects” (P38)

One of the participants expressed the effect of *restrictions on the teachers’ roles*, stating that *education policy generally limits the autonomy of teachers in the following way*:

“The system has devalued teaching so much. We have no say over the students, and it's exhausting” (P34)

Adopting an alternative perspective throughout the analysis of qualitative data, two participants pointed out the negative impact of *the low salaries* on their professional motivation. Furthermore, they proposed that inadequate compensation for their efforts can cause a feeling of professional discontent by expressing their perspectives in the following manner:

“...teachers should get much higher salaries and social opportunities” (P39)

“The teaching profession is the best for me, but its salary is not enough for life conditions these days” (P40)

4.3.2.3. School and student-related problems. Within the subtheme, in-service EFL teachers mentioned the difficulties they experienced while interacting with students, parents, colleagues, and the school administration. The participants claimed that these issues hinder their capacity to perform their tasks successfully and provide constructive learning settings. In this context, the code of attitudes and disinterest of students was one of the most widely concurred ones during the interviews, with four participants articulating their views through the following statements:

“In fact, it is not bad, but students’ attitudes and disinterest make teaching stressful and difficult. Even as a teacher, I try to make a fresh start at the beginning of the lesson; at the end, I feel worn out. Although I like teaching, I am fed up with this despairing situation” (P41)

“The behaviours of students make me stressed...” (P42)

“For me, it’s the prejudice of students to learn English because the most common things I hear from my students the statements such as “I can not speak English, I can not learn English, etc.” (P3)

“The most difficult issue is students’ reluctance and fear towards learning English...” (P5)

In the same vein, two other participants selected the code *the lack of respect*, adding that it could weaken the learning process since pupils may not regard their educational objectives with seriousness, which can result in behavioural problems and disengagement. In this perspective, they expressed their points of view in the following statements:

“Teaching should be respected as it deserves” (P24)

“...the approach to teachers by the society and governors urges me to hate my job. I love my branch but the system is wrong” (P42)

In light of the critical role of parents in the educational process, some participants referred to the code - *negative thoughts of parents*, characterized by negative attitudes or resistance to the significance of language learning, along with a devaluation of teachers' roles as educators. This attitude may adversely affect teachers' morale and reduce students' willingness and motivation to engage in the language learning process. In this sense, two participants reflected their thoughts in the following way:

“The most challenging issue for me is “parents” in teaching process” (P11)

“The negative attitudes and thoughts of families or parents towards English language and the assumption that everything can be learnt by paying for the courses. This kind of approach also affect the students” (P13)

In addition to these numerous codes, one participant recognized the code regarding *impact of school administration and colleagues* on the professional attitudes. The participant criticized the questionnaire for its deficient points as follows while presenting her perspective by noting that:

“I would like to add that your questionnaire is deficient from the point of view of the educational system and socio-cultural perspective. You are so focused on the teacher-student relationship. Also, it lacks teacher and teacher relation and teacher and school administration” (P43)

Ultimately, one participant addressed the code: *consequences of the modern changes*, specifically referencing the educational process during the pandemic as follows:

“During the pandemic process, distance learning has been difficult for both students and teachers” (P44)

4.3.3. Main theme 3: professional competencies. Another prominent theme that appeared in the qualitative data analysis of the current investigation was professional competencies, which were subsequently classified into four sub-themes, including *process, skills-abilities, knowledge of methods and techniques and communication*. The following table illustrates the distribution of sub-themes and codes within this major theme.

Table 16.

Characterizing the Professional Competencies: The Analysis Framework of Main Theme 3

Themes	Sub-Themes	Codes
Professional Competencies	Process	Being Influenced by social media platforms
		Attending in-service training courses
		Interaction with colleagues
		Searching the net
		Role of the Ministry of Education
		Joining PDC courses in the field
		Use applications related to language learning.
		Continue education life
		Impact of the projects
		Following entertaining activities
		Reading academic documents
	Skills	Having positive personal characteristics
		Having proficiency in teaching
		Using language accurately
		Being multifunctional
		Being able to adapt to students' level
		Acquiring the affection of the students
		Having a love for humanity

	Having classroom management Showing Respect to the cultural differences Allowing students to make decisions Willingness to teach and learn the language
Knowledge of methods and techniques	Using gamification Activating students Using interdisciplinary approach Using materials in lessons Learning by doing and experiencing Using TPR method Using the Communicative Language Method Using primarily target language Creating a stimulus classroom atmosphere Integrating songs and videos into the lessons Using interactive boards
Communication	Explaining the necessity of the language Advising/providing appropriate online sources and materials Giving examples from prior experiences Arranging individual meetings Incorporating reinforcement Listening without interrupting Promoting peer learning Giving responsibilities Identifying the problems in the preceding learning process

Following the table, the relevant codes were utilised to illustrate the sub-theme of the process.

4.3.3.1. Process. The EFL teachers utilized continuing professional development opportunities and learning techniques to improve their abilities and preserve their proficiency in the teaching profession. The strategies for professional growth and continuous learning were introduced under the sub-theme of process. There were various codes under this subtheme; for instance, six participants described the influence of social media platforms as an essential source for obtaining information on developments in the field of English language education and professional development, though these platforms are informal, stating that:

- “I have learnt about the improvements in a language learning context by following English groups and foreign/native English teachers on social media”(P1)
- “....also I follow the social media platforms to get information in the context of English Language teaching” (P7)
- “I can learn about the changes in the language education field from social media, whatsapp groups or English teachers groups” (P9)
- “There may be notifications in different social media platforms about the opportunities to improve ourselves in language teaching and learning techniques” (P10)
- “I get information from the English pages/websites on social media platforms”(P11)
- “I stayed informed about the latest developments in language learning contexts via social media groups” (P13)

Additionally, a significant majority of participants identified the necessity of *attending in-service training courses* to be informed about current improvements in

the field of English, involving curricular changes, teaching methods, pedagogical strategies and innovative practices in the learning environment that would promote their professional growth. Regarding this code, seven participants articulated their perspectives with the subsequent statements:

“I stay updated about the changes in the curriculum via training sections in our field...” (P2)

“I enhance my professional development by actively following and joining in-service training courses”(P1)

“Occasionally, we attend in-service training courses. They inform and invite us to these sessions; for example, many instructors from the university have come for a session today”(P6)

“I usually attend in-service trainings to remain informed about innovations in both English teaching and learning methodologies.” (P8)

“I check the courses and seminars available on MEBBIS to see if there is anything that can help me improve myself, and I apply to them for my professional development” (P11)

“I follow in-service training courses to keep myself up-to-date”(P5)

“We attend seminars to stay current with the latest developments in the field” (P10)

Furthermore, the influence of the *interaction with colleagues* on professional development was incontrovertible. During the interviews, six participants reported that they foster a collaborative atmosphere to exchange experiences, innovative ideas, teaching and learning strategies and give advice on pedagogical issues that can assist them in effectively guiding students, citing that:

“We sometimes share teaching materials with my colleagues as a means of enhancing collaboration and fostering professional relationships”(P10)

“I maintain interaction with my colleagues by engaging with English-focused groups and foreign or native English teachers on social media platforms” (P1)

“I have some groups with my colleagues”(P12)

“I usually get information from my colleagues about the innovations in language learning context”(P3)

“Besides, I try to learn new skills by searching and following my colleagues”(P2)

“Online or face to face courses. Later on, our colleagues from our province join these courses and they present us these courses. I think these types of interactions are really beneficial”(P4)

Moreover, five participants clarified the code of *searching the net*, recognising the internet as a valuable and self-directed instrument to enhance their professional competencies in accordance with both personal interests and requisite skills of their occupation, at their own speed, by stating the following:

“As an English language teacher, I usually search the net for changes in the context of English language learning”(P3)

“I am good at using technology and enjoy searching on the internet “(P11)

“Internet is the primary source of obtaining data in the area of foreign language learning”(P10)

“I follow the internet to stay up-to-date and collaborate with my colleagues from other cities or all over the world” (P12)

“Technology is the fastest way to be informed about the innovations in the field of English language learning” (P13)

During the interviews, many of the participants underlined the critical *role of the Ministry of National Education*. Four of the participating teachers stressed the guidance of the Ministry of Education in offering formal training programs and updates on curriculum changes, education policies, and possibilities for the professional growth of teachers as follows:

“We are generally informed about the opportunities for training programs via official notifications and documents from the Ministry of Education” (P13)

“Our professional development is primarily supported by the Ministry of Education. The training courses provided by the Ministry, whether online or in-person, play a key role in our career path”(P4)

“I try to go every course that MEB opened in terms of English language teaching”(P7)

“Official documents were sent to schools about the changes in the field of English education from the Ministry of Education by way of DS (document management system) or different systems”(P9)

Under the subtheme of process, one participant highlighted the crucial function of *joining Professional Development Courses (PDC)* in the field for teachers to further improve language teaching skills through structured and focused content, remarking that:

“I usually attend PDCs in my field to collaborate with my colleagues and share experiences mutually while learning new things”(P8)

Besides, a small number of participants mentioned the code of *using applications related to language learning* aside from previously mentioned codes. Two teachers suggested applying applications as a way of incorporating technology into pedagogical practices, remaining consistent with contemporary, technology-oriented educational trends. In this regard, they shared their perspectives by articulating the following:

“...and I use applications designed for English language teachers”(P8)

“I generally find many programs while looking for the internet, and I use them in my lessons”(P11)

In addition to above mentioned codes, one participant explained *continuing education life* as an integral component of professional growth. The devotion of this teacher to lifelong learning might reflect her deep enthusiasm for the teaching profession as well as her desire to be informed about the recent advancements in language acquisition, as noted below:

“...and I pursue my master’s degree in English language teaching to stay up-to-date”(P8)

Another code obtained through the interviews was the positive *impact of the projects*. Two participants explained that projects such as Erasmus or E-twinning projects present new horizons for teachers to have collaborative, multicultural educational experiences in the following manner:

“We participate in projects such as Erasmus and E-twinning projects to share educational experiences with students from other countries”(P4)

“And the most important thing is the Erasmus projects that teachers have done individually with the collaboration of foreign teachers. The sessions we joined through the Erasmus projects are very valuable”(P6)

Subsequently, another participant emphasized the necessity of *following entertaining activities*, noting that teachers may integrate innovative and entertaining activities into the education process to boost both instructional effectiveness and personal fulfilment in the following way:

“...and also if you want to promote your English, promote your understanding, you have to listen to songs or watch TVs, movies, series. You have to follow such kind of things” (P7)

Overall, only one participant addressed the effects of *reading academic documents*, including articles, research papers and scholarly publications, on their theoretical comprehension of the language acquisition process and implementation of research-based practices in their classrooms, stating that:

“Occasionally, I read recently published articles and dissertations in order to learn new ways and implications in the English Language learning field” (P11)

4.3.3.2. Skills-abilities. In this sub-theme, the participants identified specific skills or abilities that they consider to be vital for efficient teaching and professional development, as well as fostering an engaging classroom atmosphere for the students in the language learning process. Eleven codes were identified within this subtheme; of these codes, having positive personal characteristics was one of the recurrent issues. Seven participants reported that teachers' efficacy in the educational setting greatly depended on their unique positive personality traits in their following statements:

“An English teacher must be extrovert, social and talkative”(P2)

“I think the most important skills or traits are “Patience and Empathy” as understanding and addressing the challenges students face in learning a new language requires patience and empathy”(P8)

“First of all, patience. Patience and the teacher will not easily get angry with his students”(P6)

“The first skill. I think you must be very, very patient. You must be very patient because you always repeat everything. You repeat the same thing ten times, twenty times”(P7)

“A teacher should be cheerful, active and definitely love the children and students”(P9)

“In reality, students can develop certain prejudices towards the language since English is taught as a foreign language. First, English teachers should be sympathetic towards the students to overcome their prejudices”(P10)

“English teachers should definitely be open to innovations. In particular, they must encourage students during speaking activities.”(P11)

In another aspect, several participants identified the necessity of *having proficiency in teaching* as one of the essential factors in fostering a stimulating and successful instruction atmosphere, asserting that:

“Additionally, as an English language teacher, you need to have a strong linguistic proficiency, pedagogical expertise and communication skills”(P8)

“We need to predominate every topic, follow the current developments, and stay updated. We must constantly improve our grammatical structures and speaking skills. We must have a higher level of language competency than the students so they trust us and learn the language effectively from us. Proficiency in four fundamental language skills is crucial for us, the teachers”(P5)

“In my opinion, the most important skill is to have mastery in language field; possessing both pedagogical and subject matter knowledge”(P9)

“I think a teacher should be well-rounded and versatile”(P7)

Apart from pointing to proficiency in teaching, two participants emphasised the role of *using the language accurately* to serve as a role model for students in the correct use of the language.

“I think speaking fluently can be important in language acquisition”(P12)

“Teachers must use language properly in terms of pronunciation and vocabulary”(P1)

Moreover, *being multifunctional* was one of the codes that two participants expressed as a fundamental ability for teachers in addressing the diverse needs of students while managing curricular requirements in the following way:

“Being versatile is necessary since we are teaching the English language. Sometimes, we turn into a drama teacher, sometimes become an art teacher or even a science teacher”(P5)

“Each teacher embodies many professions and uses them whenever they need in the classroom, sometimes becoming an orchestra chef and sometimes a guide. Hence, they have good communication with their students”(P13)

Furthermore, three participants mentioned the function of the teachers as *being able to adapt students' level* to ensure flexibility for effective language learning as follows:

“Teachers must understand students at their levels”(P1)

“...we need to be a playmate for the students and make them enjoy the learning process”(P5)

“..therefore, English language teachers have a good way of communication with their students”(P13)

Another significant issue was *acquiring the affection of the students, which two participants recognised as a characteristic* of successful teaching. They stressed that students experience motivation and concentration in the learning process once they develop an emotional bond with their teachers by asserting that:

“I think it’s being loved by students. What I have learned from my experience so far is that it is not possible to teach English to students who do not love you”(P3)

“First, English teachers should be sympathetic towards the students to overcome their prejudices and make their students love them”(P10)

Similarly, one of the participants explained *having a love for humanity* as a vital skill of the EFL teachers using the following statement:

“Actually, rather than focusing solely on being an English teacher, the most important skill for any teacher is a genuine love for humanity. She indicated that an individual with a deep affection for others can succeed and excel in any profession.”(P4)

Moreover, two participants recognised *classroom management* as a key factor within the subtheme of skills required to maintain a peaceful and productive learning environment for students with diverse language acquisition capacities and proficiency levels.

“Classroom management, maybe you have to control all of the students. You must have classroom management skills and be good at your job. If you have blanks, students can fill those blanks with negative attitudes”(P7)

“The teachers should have control over the classroom to be effective in the language teaching process”(P11)

Finally, a limited number of participants expressed their perspectives within the subtheme of skills and abilities, including several codes such as *respecting cultural differences, allowing students to make decisions, and willingness to teach and learn the language*. They showed their viewpoints in the following manner:

“An English teacher should welcome to the other cultures respectfully and must not be prejudiced”(P2)

“Some of our colleagues make students write words ten or twenty times or heavily loaded homework. This turns into torture for the students rather than learning the language appropriately. Instead, give them twenty words, let them choose five or ten, and have them create sentences with the words they choose in other words, give them the opportunity to make their own choices”(P6)

“First of all, we should be willing to teach and learn the English language and follow the current changes in the field”(P5)

4.3.3.3. Knowledge of methods and techniques. Regarding the analysis of the qualitative data, eleven unique codes occurred relevant to the subtheme:

knowledge of methods and techniques employed by EFL teachers to develop their personal and professional practices. Besides methods and strategies, they expressed various approaches that they implemented to encourage students' participation, foster productive teaching settings and facilitate language learning. In this context, three participants emphasised the importance of using gamification as a significant way of teaching that integrates game aspects, including rewards, challenges and competition. Consequently, teachers may stimulate a more interactive and enjoyable educational experience, as stated below:

"In my classes, I mostly use gaming. Mostly, we use gaming. Try to make games, simple games, but games. Because students are at the age of eight to ten, they also play. They always like playing games. So in the "English Together" project, you know, we all do it as games or interactive activities"(P7)

"All kinds of student-centered methods, such as gamified activities, are useful in English lessons"(P13)

"I teach subjects by playing games and doing various word exercises. If the teacher is actively taking part in these activities, the students will become motivated intrinsically, and it will turn into an efficient atmosphere for teaching"(P5)

Notably, *activating students* emerged as one of the most commonly mentioned codes, with six participants noting that the incorporation of motivational activities leads to more enthusiastic involvement of students in their own learning process. This approach not only enhances linguistic abilities but also strengthens student confidence since they implement their acquired knowledge in real time. They articulated their perspectives as follows:

"Students should be active while they are learning English"(P12)

" So, the most effective teaching method, it actually changes depending on the subject or the curriculum, but I think the most influential and entertaining ones are the activities that students experience and carry out themselves"(P5)

"I think the most effective way to teach English is to create learners an environment to use the language. We must not force learners to memorise new info or vocabulary, and we must make them use these words in their own sentences"(P2)

"And the activities that students take part in actively. For instance, unit nine is about technology, and we teach the related vocabulary of this unit in the classroom, but it becomes more efficient if a student takes the responsibility of preparing a presentation about it. They learn the subject permanently, using lots of pictures and also creating their own sentences..."(P4)

"I use interactive activities and apply a mix of teaching methods to appeal to different learning styles. I try to create a positive classroom atmosphere by encouraging and providing constructive feedback."(P8)

"Primarily, I mostly employ a warm-up exercise to engage my students in lessons and attract their attention. It is a good way to make them wake up if they are sleepy, prepare them for the lesson or motivate them for the class" (P9)

Similarly, one of the participants stressed the need of *using an interdisciplinary approach* that enables teachers to integrate English language learning with other

subjects, including science, history, and art. The EFL teachers can cultivate an exceedingly appropriate and significant context for learning through providing opportunities to employ language skills across many fields of knowledge while additionally improving the critical thinking and problem-solving abilities of students.

“I appreciate the way of teaching with an interdisciplinary approach. For example, when students are learning vocabulary related to the home, I ask them to create their dream house with furniture and label these items in English or design the clothes using the labelling process, then write a few sentences about them. I believe that this way of learning makes students more enthusiastic about learning the language”(P11)

The majority of participants recognised the impact of *using materials* to enhance the acquisition of the language. Four participants reported that adopting diverse resources, including realia, worksheets, and flashcards that offer visualisation and tactile stimulation, facilitates the comprehension of new concepts. Also, they added that the teachers may respond to various learning ways and interests of the students, citing the following viewpoints:

“I believe that the methods including visual or audio materials are the most effective way of teaching”(P10)

“Equipping the classroom environment with the materials relevant to the target language is effective”(P1)

“...for example, one of the materials I have used through my teaching career is a ball. A small ball. I use it while giving students a chance to speak or play games and so on”(P4)

“We sometimes use posters or crayons. Students feel more concentrated to learn the topic in this way since they are just secondary school students”(P5)

Additionally, three participants mentioned the principle of *learning by doing and experiencing*, which enables the connection between theory and practice, rendering the learning process more concrete. This approach also emphasises the significance of active participation in the learning process, requiring students to attend activities, simulations, or real-life situations to reinforce their comprehension, as noted by these participants as follows:

“To be honest, the most effective and enjoyable learning methods are the ones that include the activities students experience or they do themselves. The activities we do outside the classroom, in other words, learning by doing, are very fruitful, though preparing them may be challenging for us. For example, in the seventh-grade "environment" unit, there is a task that involves planting trees. First, I had students memorise the sentences in the classroom, and then we went outside to plant trees in the school garden. Therefore, they applied whatever they learnt and realised that English lessons might be much more enjoyable”(P5)

“...however, I think that students learn much better through activities that are integrated into their daily lives”(P4)

“If a student enjoys being active in the lesson, learning by doing and experiencing is the best method to use. However, some students are introverted and hesitate to express themselves; therefore, different teaching methods can be implemented...”(P9)

In addition, the code of *utilising the Total Physical Response method (TPR)*, which incorporates bodily movement in reaction to verbal stimuli, was recognized by two participants as a successful learning strategy, presenting their perspectives in the following statements:

“...in other words, the learning strategies vary from student to student, situation to situation or subject to subject; however, for primary school students, I think the most important learning style is kinesthetic learning, particularly TPR.”(P9)

“...Let’s evaluate total physical response. You have to give them instructions first, and you have to get the response. So, I think TPR is efficient nowadays because we can use boards, mobile phones and tablets actively”(P7)

During the interviews, three participants expressed the issue of *using the communicative language teaching (CLT) method*, which prioritises practical language application via interaction. In this approach, teachers focus on communication rather than grammatical accuracy and encourage students to practice the language in authentic contexts. As students acquire the ability to engage in real-life conversations, they develop their self-confidence and proficiency in language learning. In this regard, the participating teachers voiced their perspectives as follows:

“To me, there is no single effective teaching method for English language teaching. It changes according to the students’ needs. However, I mostly prefer “Communicative Language Teaching” as this method emphasises interaction and communication as the main goals of language learning”(P8)

“When I first began my career in teaching English, it was about 25 years ago; everybody said that the communicative approach was the best one. As the language learning process evolves, the communicative approach adjusts as well...”(P7)

“I think it is Communicative Language Learning is the best way of teaching English (CLL)”(P3)

Furthermore, *using primarily the target language* was one of the codes that emerged during the interviews. Two participants indicated that employing the target language solely as the primary means of teaching, instead of the student’s native language, promotes immersion in English, creating a climate that compels students to consider and react in the language, claiming that:

“Definitely, do not use Turkish in the classroom. Do not force students to translate into Turkish. Never do it. If you make students translate the language, they will become professional translators in the future; however, they can not succeed in being proficient in the target language. In your lessons, you need to encourage them to speak English. You have to select your own strategy while teaching...”(P6)

“...preparing appropriate learning environments for the four main skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing in the target language should be the main responsibility of the EFL teachers”(P1)

“We need to master the basic skills, specifically the four fundamental skills in the target language”(P5)

Instead of simply focusing on teaching methods and techniques, three participants highlighted the relevance of *creating a stimulating classroom atmosphere* for English language acquisition. They claimed that an encouraging, dynamic, and visually attractive atmosphere could assist students to engage more actively in classes and experience the language easily. The participants supported their opinions with the following statements:

“I try to create a positive classroom atmosphere by giving encouragement and providing constructive feedback”(P8)

“I create an engaging learning environment by making my students feel happy and relaxed”(P3)

“By creating an entertaining atmosphere in the classroom, being joyful, understanding and relaxed teachers. When they feel relaxed, they are more likely to learn”(P2)

Among the findings, *integrating songs and videos into the lessons* was one of the most common codes. Five participants advocated adding authentic resources involving songs and videos to the lesson. In this way, the courses can become more engaging and pertinent to students' interests, particularly attracting auditory and visual learners and enhancing their language acquisition. In this perspective, for instance, five participants expressed their opinions as follows:

“I love rock music, and my students love it, too. I start the lessons and every activity with rock music. I become their friend and help them reach their level so they can succeed in learning English. We used the videos as a visual input in the past...”(P6)

“...we record videos and watch them together rather than sharing anywhere else. It is a useful method. Then I love teaching the language with songs. I use songs in every situation. For example, when the subject is simple present tense, I bring a simple present song into the classroom”(P4)

“...I used different techniques in high school. For example, I played music. We generally started the lesson by listening to a song”(P5)

“...I think, sometimes, starting the lesson with a completely random or even unexpected song helps students in gaining motivation for the course”(P10)

“I motivate my students in lessons by guiding the students during and after the lessons and using the activities such as games, songs and videos that direct them to express themselves”(P13)

Lastly, one of the codes determined by the two participants as an essential component of methods and techniques was *using interactive boards* that enable teachers to bring technology into the classroom, representing the indispensable reality of contemporary society and younger generations. These technological devices can provide multimedia content, allow cooperative tasks, and assist students in hands-on

learning. Also, teachers employ them as a means of evaluating the comprehensive learning experiences of their students. Accordingly, the participants shared their perspectives by stating the following:

“Thank God, we have these smart boards. We can access the internet whenever we need. I can show any visuals I want. For instance, we mention about England, at the same time we open the videos or the images of this country”(P6)

“Smartboards are one of the vital components during the English lessons since students can easily have a chance to practice the language”(P4)

4.3.3.4. Communication. The participants also revealed numerous codes under the subtheme of communication, which was the final aspect of the theme of professional competencies. Regarding this subtheme, communication is the core of effective teaching, ensuring EFL teachers develop meaningful relationships with students on intellectual, emotional and interpersonal dimensions beyond imparting knowledge. In this context, one of the participants addressed the issue of explaining the necessity of the language as follows:

“While learning English, first I explain to my students the importance of focusing on four main skills, creating an appropriate environment for acquisition and how to study these four skills and so I help them set a goal for their future. I constantly monitor their progress”(P13)

In addition to the above-mentioned code, many participants pointed out the constructive impact of *advising/providing appropriate sources and materials* in building a strong bond between the students and the EFL teachers. The teachers exhibit their professional awareness, expertise and determination to support different academic requirements of their students by recommending proper resources to their level, thereby enriching the learning process. As an example of this aspect, four teachers expressed their ideas in the following manner:

“I recommend them the suitable and safe online speaking sites and enable them the chance to practice the target language in every situation”(P13)

“I guide successful and concerned students to the materials based on their targets-whether they want to speak in English, learn the language from different aspects or study for the LGS exam. I recommend them resources for solving tests, whether it can be from the internet or online platforms such as EBA”(P5)

“I give students some books. Later, there is an application called Voscreen on the internet, and I advise them to follow it. Also, I suggest them some movies from the ones I watched beforehand that will help them to improve their progress a bit more”(P6)

“I present additional sources for students when they need”(P4)

Furthermore, two of the participants underlined the necessity of *giving examples from prior experiences* that foster a sense of understanding and trust between teachers and

students since this strategy humanises the learning process and inspires students to gain insights from other's experiences, particularly those facing similar conditions and challenges by noting that:

"I provide examples from my previous students who have the same difficulties"(P12)

"I present similar experiences and situations from my own life"(P11)

Similarly, one of the in-service EFL teachers noted that *arranging individual meetings* with the students, which resulted in a more customized learning plan was an effective way of communication, stating that:

"I prefer calling the student and having a one-on-one conversation about how to improve language learning by giving examples from my old students' experiences"(P11)

A significant majority of participants emphasized the vital value of good communication, reporting the unavoidable influence of *incorporating reinforcement* into their practices. Six of them stressed that providing positive feedback and appreciating students' big or even small attempts serves as a means of stimulating and assisting them in the language acquisition process. They clarified their thoughts with the subsequent statements:

"I try to make them participate in activities and give them positive feedback to encourage them"(P3)

"I celebrate small achievements and progress. I think the most effective motivation resource is positive reinforcement as positive feedback and encouragement can boost students' confidence and motivation"(P8)

"Students like competitions. When we learn a new subject, we organize a competition about new words, and I give them small presents"(P12)

"I often use a variety of small motivation materials such as stickers or clapping the student who gives the correct answer in small classes. Sometimes, I buy them small presents and put the tick sign while checking their homework. In this way, students take a closer step into the lesson"(P9)

"I lead students into different extracurricular activities; however, in lessons, I try to motivate students by asking quite simple questions related to their interests and encourage them using verbal reactions such as "let's try, you can answer it"(P5)

"....I congratulate them on their tiny successes and give positive feedback on their good behaviours"(P2)

The principle of *listening without interruption* was recognized by one participant as a key component of successful communication and an opportunity to enhance teacher-student interaction, hence fostering a productive setting for learning by indicating the following statements:

"I believe that listening to the students exactly what they want to state, whether their sentences are correct or fully wrong, irrelevant or full of grammar and other mistakes, makes them feel relaxed. That is to say, if I immediately correct the sentences when the student has made an error, the conversation is interrupted right away. It stops the learning process. The student becomes aware of making a mistake and realizes how

hard to make a sentence in English. However, I think they feel much more engaged in the course when we just listen to them without being included in the flow”(P10)

Moreover, some participants mentioned *promoting peer learning* as a cooperative facet of language learning in which students acquire knowledge from their teachers as well as one another. Two of the teachers emphasized that mutual learning and group interactions enable students to handle the issues from many viewpoints, developing their analytical reasoning and problem-solving skills, thereby cultivating a feeling of community belonging. In this sense, two participating teachers voiced their points of view as follows:

“...We make groups with students, a-b groups or one-to-one groups. It facilitates peer learning”(P7)

“For example, we have group work while doing in-class activities. In these activities, students want to be in the same group with the friends they decided themselves. However, I attempt to avoid this way because hardworking and more active students typically gather together while the others who are hesitant and less dedicated remain alone. I determine the groups randomly and allow them to support each other. In fact, they inspire each other using peer correction”(P5)

Referring to the code of *giving responsibilities*, two participants highlighted the significance of improving autonomy, activating decision-taking mechanisms and as a result promoting a feeling of accountability among students in the context of language acquisition, as articulated in their following utterances:

“I give my students short-term goals to provide their active participation to the lesson”(P2)

“I try to get the students who are unwilling to learn in the class by playing games and giving responsibility to them in the classroom”(P7)

Overall, another two participants focused on *identifying the problems in the preceding learning process which impede students'* future educational progress. They emphasised that by implementing an effective communication strategy, teachers may assist students in overcoming their past challenges and realizing their current learning objectives. Reflecting on this issue, they stated as follows:

“A student having difficulty in learning the English language has undoubtedly experienced challenges at certain points in the past. She did not like the language. Thus, she could not learn English and found it impossible to make progress. Initially, discover the fundamental cause of the problem, then eliminate the source of the problem, and the rest can be fixed autonomously”(P6)

“I establish a deep emotional bond with my students, and following that, I ask them to explain why they are reluctant to learn English. In other words, I listen to the reason that prevents their ability to acquire the language. And if they need my guidance, I help them...”(P4)

4.3.4. Main theme 4: professional burnout. The final theme acquired in accordance with the qualitative data analysis was professional burnout, a major concern for most in-service EFL teachers that adversely affects their entire job satisfaction, willingness for professional development, professional commitment and even their mental well-being. This theme was categorized into two sub-themes: difficulties and coping mechanisms. The distribution of sub-themes and codes within this main theme is illustrated in the following table.

Table 17.

Characterizing the Professional Burnout: The Analysis Framework of Main Theme 4

Themes	Sub-Themes	Codes
Professional Burnout	Difficulties	Unfavourable attitudes of the various education stakeholders
		Negative aspects of the education system and regulations
		Loss of professional image
		Worsening economic conditions, low salaries
		Heavy paperwork, extra responsibilities
	Coping mechanism	The pressure of the national exams
		Quality of the coursebooks and supplementary materials
		Insufficiency of the teaching programs
		Monotonicity of the profession
		The role of the Ministry of National Education
		Retirement plans
		Focusing on the joy of teaching
		Maintaining a constant passion for teaching beyond challenges

The relevant codes specified in the table were employed to express the sub-theme of the difficulties.

4.3.4.1. Difficulties. This sub-theme extensively reflects both internal and external challenges within the theme of professional burnout. During the interviews, a number of distinctive codes were obtained that lead to professional burnout syndrome among in-service EFL teachers, including the pressure of changing education policies and systems, education stakeholders, perception in the society and socio-economic elements. Considering these factors, unfavourable attitudes of the various education stakeholders, ranging from students and parents to school administration, emerged as the most recurring code. Seven participants expressed that the negative thoughts, as well as criticism of the stakeholders, may cause a heavy emotional burden for them and result in dissatisfaction and a decreased level of

professional fulfilment. The following statements were expressed by the participants to clarify their viewpoints:

“I feel professional burnout syndrome more and more in recent years because of the students’ unwillingness to the lessons”(P3)

“The school administration is occasionally inadequate in fulfilling its responsibilities and exhibits weaknesses in communication skills.”(P2)

“...sometimes parents and school administration can be annoying factors in our profession”(P11)

“I partly experience professional burnout driven by students’ reluctance to learn, laziness and tendency to take the easy way out along with the persistence of the society in displaying a negative attitude towards learning English”(P13)

“...since my students do not want to do anything in lessons and therefore, I feel exhausted”(P12)

“Unfortunately, I sometimes feel the burnout syndrome. Some students have barriers to language learning and resist learning even simple things. It is really tiring for me as seeing demotivated students lessens my motivation, too”(P8)

“I sometimes feel burnout syndrome. Especially I have experienced much more in the last five years. Students do not attach enough importance to English lessons and show unwillingness to learn due to the changes in the regulations for passing a higher grade. These facts make me demotivated, and there are times that I question to whom I'm teaching, what I'm teaching, and what I'm trying to succeed”(P5)

Additionally, four in-service EFL teachers discussed the code of *negative aspects of the education system and regulations* as systemic obstacles that restricted their decision-making and creative thinking capacities in adjusting their teaching methodologies to accommodate the students better, uttering the following statements:

“...and also the system of education in teaching foreign languages. They constantly change the system, resulting in a lack of stability in teaching foreign languages. They all cause burnout in our professional life”(P2)

“...Our education system does not allow teaching and learning English or the other foreign languages”(P13)

“I think, firstly, the impositions. The pressure deriving from the Ministry of Education or the regulations make it difficult for us; in other words, we could not do our job effectively”(P10)

“In these circumstances of Turkey, I don't think people will be happy in this education system, unfortunately, with the system and regulations of Education Ministry, of course”(P7)

Furthermore, some participants indicated the *loss of professional image*, considering an erosion in the value and respect given to the teaching profession through the years. Three teachers referred to this code as another reason for professional burnout in the following way:

“Loss of the respect for the teaching profession as well as the negative attitudes of the society towards learning English are the main reasons for feeling professional burnout”(P13)

“...in our county, the teachers are not provided with the value they deserved, and recently teachers expose a class discrimination as expert teacher, dead teacher and just teacher”(P9)

“Nowadays, people do not respect our profession as much as they used to. However, I respect my own career. Teaching is precious to me. It does not bother me whether the others value my profession or not; in other words, their negative thoughts do not affect me as I must properly perform and fulfil my responsibilities for my students in the classroom”(P4)

From another standpoint, five of the participants mentioned the worsening *economic conditions, mainly low salaries*, as a source of financial stress that considerably affects their standard of living, compelling them to work extended hours or take on extra responsibilities, stating that:

“I feel stressed and even frustrated with the low salaries”(P7)

“Low salaries push me to the professional burnout”(P9)

“There are many reasons to be happy or unhappy, for instance, the income and working conditions in Turkey are among the reasons of unhappiness”(P5)

“There are plenty of factors that influence our devotion to our profession, for example, economic, social and cultural dimensions”(P4)

In addition, *heavy paperwork and extra responsibilities* were among the codes determined by two participants, including extracurricular activities such as preparing international or national projects, completing administrative duties and participating in meetings. These additional obligations may minimise the amount of time and energy allocated to lesson planning and preparation, turning a stress source for the teachers. Taking this perspective, two participating teachers expressed their viewpoints as follows:

“I can say that the most important reason is the paperwork. I think all of them are unnecessary”(P2)

“For instance, seminars. Attending most of the seminars in person is frequently time-consuming. It is challenging to obtain information from an official document, as it requires attendance at the seminar at the time scheduled. However, it is easy to direct teachers who are interested in learning about the subject to media sources. And also projects. In every school I work, there is a common assumption that English teachers should manage all the written materials or projects that involve even a single English word”(P10)

Many codes covering the *pressure of the national exams, quality of coursebooks and supplementary materials, insufficiency of the teaching programs, the role of the Ministry of National Education and professional monotony* were the least frequently used ones. For instance, one of the participants underlined the consistent *pressure of national exams* that compelled EFL teachers to prioritise the students’ test performance instead of educational objectives in a broader sense. Teachers were evaluated primarily based on the student’s exam scores regardless of their mastery of four main language skills. The participating teachers reflected their viewpoints as follows:

“The central exams are applied in test format and are not designed to assess four language skills”(P13)

The same participant also emphasised the determinant impact of the *quality of coursebooks and supplementary materials*, specifically highlighting the compulsory resources on teacher productivity and instructional effectiveness, by noting that:

“Being unable to utilise the materials, coursebooks or the other supplementary publications that we want affect both my colleagues and me negatively”(P13)

Insufficiency of the teaching programs was another code that one participant highlighted as a factor contributing to his burnout syndrome with a sense of professional exhaustion or dissatisfaction in the following way:

“I experience professional burnout heavily because of the insufficiency of the teaching programs”(P3)

A further difficulty that triggered the loss of teaching passion was the *monotony of the profession*. One of the in-service EFL teachers expressed that many variables, comprising of using the same materials for years, teaching the same topics or dealing with the same age groups in more extended periods, may cause emotional exhaustion and overwhelming feelings of stagnation among teachers. As an example of this perspective, the participant expressed his point of view in the following manner:

“Relying on the same resources and repeatedly teaching the same themes are the factors that restrict my potential” (P1)

Last but not least, during the interviews, one of the participants stressed *the role of the Ministry of National Education*, indicating the lack of harmony between the national education policies, regulations and the facts of the classroom dynamics, stating that:

“The problems in the Ministry of National Education played a role immensely in my experience of professional burnout”(P3)

4.3.4.2. Coping mechanism. Under the subtheme of the coping mechanism, in-service EFL teachers highlighted many ways that they employed to maintain their dedication to the teaching profession while experiencing burnout syndrome. They identified three codes related to personal strategies involving retirement plans, focusing on the joy of teaching and continued passion for teaching beyond challenges during the interviews. The initial personal approach recognised by the two

participants was retirement plans, in which the teachers made future plans that provided them with a feeling of stability over the long term and an organized route ahead. They stated their opinions through the subsequent remarks:

“If I feel professional exhaustion one day, I get retired since I keep my retirement petition in my drawer. I deserved the retirement right...” (P4)
 “In fact, I can retire. I qualified for a pension, but I don't want to get retired right now”(P7)

One of the other significant personal strategies was that *focusing on the joy of teaching* as a coping mechanism. Two participants prioritized the intrinsic worth and positive qualities of their occupation that restore their feeling of responsibility towards their students rather than emphasising external factors, asserting that:

“There are many reasons that stop me from quitting being a teacher. I love my students, I love my friends, and I love to be active. I can't sit down and just relax. This is not me. So I have to be active. I have to do something. I have to do something new. I have to work”(P7)
 “...however, teaching is probably a way of living for me, my point of view on life. I would feel myself really bad without my occupation since teaching is in my soul. For example, I love teaching something to a stallholder when I go to the bazaar or a salesperson when I visit the school canteen. In fact, I genuinely enjoy teaching to the extent of my knowledge and ability”(P4)

Finally, another two participants underlined the fact of *maintaining a constant passion for teaching beyond challenges* as a means of managing their professional exhaustion. They highlighted that they acquired emotional fulfilment and contentment from completing the tasks required by their professional positions while experiencing numerous forms of stress during their careers. Reflecting on their personal strategies during their interview, the participants stated the following statements:

“...sometimes, a small number of students exhibit interest in the class and verbalise their enjoyment of it; thus, the unpleasant impact of professional burnout disappears. I do not bother the other issues including working conditions or income problems in Turkey as we can be content in our profession regardless of the circumstances, or we can identify numerous reasons to be dissatisfied”(P5)
 “There might be numerous reasons to experience dissatisfaction in our profession; however, they never discouraged me from fulfilling the responsibilities of my position”(P11).

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter deals with the findings of the current study in the context of the literature review analysed in Chapter II. The discussion seeks to examine both the similarities and the distinctions between present research and prior studies, with a special emphasis on the attitudes of in-service EFL teachers towards their profession.

5.1. Discussion

This chapter specifies an in-depth discussion of the major findings of the current study through quantitative and sequential qualitative data analysis. The fundamental objective of this study was to investigate in-service EFL teachers' attitudes towards the teaching profession and to analyse the influence of the variables such as age, gender, teaching degree and teaching experience on their professional attitudes. Furthermore, in-service EFL teachers reflected their perspectives regarding their occupation. A mixed-method research design was employed in this study. Primarily, the quantitative data was collected by the participation of 79 in-service EFL teachers working in state schools located in the city centre of Burdur province. During this phase, a 28-item attitude scale with four subsections was used for data collection in Spring Term 2022 and analysed descriptively utilising the statistical program SPSS. Quantitative data provided a comprehensive overview of the participants' demographics and preliminary insights into their professional attitudes. Following that, semi-structured interviews were implemented with the participation of 13 volunteer in-service EFL teachers from diverse state school levels, including primary, secondary, and high school, for the qualitative data-gathering procedure. These participants contributed to the initial phase of the research, and this methodological procedure encouraged an enhanced awareness of the teachers' viewpoints regarding their profession; in addition, content analysis was performed on the qualitative data. Furthermore, the responses to the open-ended question included in the final section of the attitude scale were analysed and synthesised into

qualitative data. In light of these aspects, the findings of the study were discussed with respect to the relevant research questions and compared with those in the existing body of literature in the following order.

5.1.1. The overall attitudes of in-service EFL teachers towards the teaching profession. The first research question was organised to investigate the overall attitudes of in-service EFL teachers towards their profession. Analyses of the attitude scale in the quantitative phase as the subsections of the attitude scale indicated that in-service EFL teachers had a high level of favourable attitudes in terms of the teaching profession. In other words, they revealed a strong and positive inclination towards their career, selecting the items mainly from the attitude scales' two main subsections: professional commitment and willingness to engage in professional development. This result aligned with numerous similar research in the literature through different sample populations. A wide array of factors were applied to investigate the attitude level of EFL teachers concerning the teaching profession. For instance, Akyl (1999) highlighted that the attitudes of Turkish EFL teachers from five distinct high schools were positive towards the teaching profession, which were aligned with their intrinsic motivations. Specifically, the harmony between their personal beliefs, talents and the professional competencies necessary for teaching significantly contributed to shaping these positive attitudes. It might be posited that individuals with intrinsic qualities such as a passion for teaching and requisite professional skills are more likely to cultivate and sustain favourable attitudes towards the teaching profession. Likewise, research by Almacioğlu (2014), Alsalihi (2019), Mehmood et al. (2013), Şener (2015) and involving student teachers at diverse universities revealed favourable attitudes towards teaching, which suggests that an understanding of teaching as a noble and fulfilling profession is frequently fostered during pre-service training and may proceed into professional life. In line with these findings, Masadesh (2022) identified factors, including the recognition of teaching as a noble profession and an enthusiasm for engaging with children as major contributors to favourable perceptions of prospective teachers regarding their occupation. Furthermore, the studies by Ağcam and Babanoğlu (2016), Ertaşoğlu and Gürsoy (2019), and Haddad (2019), which focused on experienced English teachers,

also that the majority of EFL teachers held positive attitudes toward the teaching profession. These favourable attitudes might stem from the belief that EFL teachers can effectively integrate the professional knowledge and abilities gained during their university education into real-world education contexts. This actual implementation of their training could promote teaching efficacy while reinforcing confidence and satisfaction in their profession, ultimately creating positive attitudes towards teaching.

Contrary to these findings, Al Abiky (2020) reported in his survey that a significant number of pre-service EFL teachers exhibited negative attitudes towards the teaching profession. A probable explanation for their negative attitudes might arise from prospective teachers having a low level of professional experience in comparison to experienced EFL teachers. In-service EFL teachers, considering their extensive experience in the teaching profession, may exhibit a stronger professional identity, enhanced self-efficacy, and more satisfaction with their jobs since they have years of practice, which might favourably affect their professional attitudes. On the other hand, preservice teachers may encounter multiple challenges, including cognitive, emotional, and psychological problems during their education life, which could adversely impact their self-efficacy and result in less favourable views towards the profession. In another study, Smadi and Al-Ghazo (2013) emphasised that female EFL teachers exhibited moderate attitudes towards their roles as English language teachers. This suggests that factors beyond experience, such as gender or contextual challenges, might influence attitudes to varying degrees.

Consistent with these findings, Abbas (2015) noted that a large sample group of fourth-year EFL student teachers displayed unfavourable attitudes regarding their occupation. Furthermore, their professional attitudes positively correlated with academic motivation and TEFL knowledge variables. Given the significant connection between professional attitudes and academic motivation, and even TEFL knowledge, prospective teachers with low academic motivation or inadequate TEFL knowledge may find it challenging to recognize the significance of their training. This might lead to diminished confidence in their capacity to fulfil professional obligations, further leading to their unfavourable attitudes towards their occupation.

In another study, Muhammet and Sarıgöz (2018) found that the attitude level of prospective teachers regarding the teaching profession was below expectations, indicating that they possessed unfavourable professional perceptions as a result of many factors. One of the possible reasons for these negative attitudes might be due to the fact that pre-service teachers, still in the process of bridging theoretical knowledge with classroom applications, have insufficient actual teaching experience. This gap between theory and practice may lead to negative feelings such as inadequacy, dissatisfaction, and confusion over their future roles as teachers. Another probable reason might be the impact of academic challenges, and the pressure associated with their undergraduate studies on pre-service teachers' professional attitudes (Chambers, 2017). To put it another way, high expectations to succeed academically, combined with the complexity of learning both pedagogical strategies and subject matter knowledge, may contribute to feelings of stress and burnout, which could negatively impact their perceptions of the teaching profession.

5.1.2. The impact of demographic characteristics on in-service EFL teachers' attitudes towards their profession. The second research question was formulated to examine the influence of the four main factors on the attitudes of in-service EFL teachers concerning their occupation. The statistical analysis of the quantitative data revealed that the age factor did not have a significant effect on the professional attitudes of in-service EFL teachers. In this regard, participants aged 40 and above exhibited the lowest level of professional attitude compared to other age groups. This might be explained by the fact that increasing the number of the youngest participants can alter the impact of the age factor on their professional attitudes. The results corresponded with prior studies, demonstrating no substantial differences between the age factor and views of prospective EFL teachers in terms of their profession, though the researchers conducted their studies with different numbers of participants (Atmaca, 2015; Alsalihi, 2019; Güryay, 2016; Haddad, 2019; Yasan-Ak& Yılmaz-Yendi, 2020; Yıldırım, 2012). For instance, Yıldırım (2012) examined the viewpoints of practicing teachers, utilising variables such as age, gender, kind of educational program, and type of high school graduated from. The results demonstrated that gender had a significant influence on their professional

attitudes, though there was not a substantial variance between the other factors, including age and their attitudes. It was suggested that the restricted age range of the prospective EFL teachers, only 18 to 23, determined the study's result. Subsequently, Almacioğlu (2021), in her mixed-method study, achieved parallel results concerning the relationship between age and gender aspects and student teachers' attitudes towards their careers, similar to Yıldırım (2012), though administering the attitude scale to a distinct age range of 18 to 41. These results could imply that age might not be a decisive factor shaping prospective EFL teachers' professional attitudes, a perspective that appears to align with previous research despite the varying sample sizes and demographic scopes across those studies.

Considering the gender factor, 63 female and 16 male teachers were involved in the study. After conducting a T-test for data analysis, no significant variation was observed between gender and the attitudes of EFL teachers regarding their careers. In other words, both gender groups had an equivalent degree of professional attitudes. One of the possible reasons that illustrated the influence of gender in this study may derive from the limited number of male participating teachers; introducing a wider group of male participants might alter the results for one of the gender categories. The result of this study aligned with many of the previous studies that indicated no substantial differences between the variable of gender and the professional attitudes of the EFL teachers (Coşkuner, 2001; Ertaşoğlu & Gürsoy, 2019; Güryay, 2016). On the other hand, many studies analyzed a relationship between the gender and professional attitudes of EFL teachers at a high level (Atmaca, 2015; Bahreini & Zamanian, 2017; Muhammet & Sarıgöz, 2018; Şener, 2015; Yasan-Ak & Yılmaz-Yendi, 2020; Yıldırım, 2012). The common finding of these studies was that female teachers tended to have a high level of positive attitudes towards their occupation. One possible explanation might be that in some contexts, societal expectations and cultural norms influence female teachers' engagement and satisfaction more strongly, thereby contributing to more positive attitudes toward the profession. In many cultures, teaching is traditionally perceived as a suitable profession for women, which may lead to greater familial and community support for their career choices. Such support could manifest in tangible ways, such as providing encouragement to pursue professional development, creating a sense of collective pride, or offering a

more flexible work- life balance to accommodate family responsibilities. Consequently, female teachers may experience a heightened sense of belonging and validation within their communities, fostering an inherently more positive attitude toward their work. These cultural dynamics can thus operate as reinforcing mechanisms, elevating job satisfaction and professional commitment, and highlighting how broader social and cultural contexts shape individual attitudes in the teaching profession.

In the analysis of the variable referring to teaching degree, which represented the types of schools where in-service EFL teachers were employed, primary school EFL teachers had the smallest number of participants, yet they exhibited the most favourable attitudes towards the teaching profession compared to secondary and high school teachers ($M=108.62$). Nonetheless, one-way ANOVA statistics revealed no significant association between this variable and in-service EFL teachers' professional attitudes. This might account for the source of primary school teachers' positive professional views, which may be related to the age level of students. In contrast to current study's findings, Ağçam and Babanoğlu (2016) examined EFL teachers from primary schools, secondary schools, and higher education institutions and found a strong link between teaching degree and teachers' professional perspectives. They categorized grades 2–8 as primary and 9–12 as secondary, revealing that primary school teachers held notably different views. While EFL teachers at secondary schools and instructors in higher education institutions found the profession engaging, primary teachers viewed it less favorably. One plausible explanation for the apparent discrepancy in attitudes across different educational levels might lie in the varying roles and responsibilities EFL teachers encounter. Moreover, societal perceptions of teaching multiple levels of students could also play a role in shaping teachers' sense of commitment and job satisfaction. Collectively, these factors may highlight how institutional context and professional expectations may intersect to influence EFL teachers' overall outlook on their profession. In the same vein, Coşkuner (2001) examined the attitudes of EFL instructors on the university level. She found a positive relationship between the attitudes of EFL instructors and teaching degree. This positive relationship might stem from powerful

social bonds since individuals live in smaller cities along with the prevalent acceptance of teaching at the university level as having higher value in these cities.

The final variable in this study was teaching experience, representing the number of years teachers had spent in the profession. Though a one-way ANOVA analysis did not reveal a statistically significant difference between the professional attitudes of in-service EFL teachers and their teaching experience, descriptive statistics demonstrated that EFL teachers with 5 to 11 years of teaching experience exhibited a higher level of attitudes towards their profession. Nevertheless, the group with the most volunteers was those with over 11 years of experience. In a similar vein, a few researchers clarified that there was no association between the professional attitudes of EFL teachers and their teaching experience (Coşkuner, 2001; Haddad, 2019). For instance, Haddad (2019) found that highly motivated teachers in their profession could positively impact their students' progress and can be labelled proficient and effective without considering many variables. Building on these findings, the higher levels of positive attitudes observed in teachers with 5 to 11 years of experience may stem from a balance between professional maturity and manageable workload, as these teachers are typically well-acquainted with their roles but have not yet encountered the potential burnout often associated with longer careers. Additionally, the predominance of volunteers with over 11 years of experience could indicate that experienced educators are more likely to participate in research studies, possibly reflecting their dedication to continuous professional development despite facing greater challenges.

5.1.3. The impact of in-service EFL teachers' viewpoints towards the teaching profession. A comprehensive understanding of the quantitative data was achieved through an extended discussion of the qualitative findings. They indicated that in-service EFL teachers have positive attitudes towards the teaching profession, particularly expressing their agreement on the items in terms of professional commitment and their willingness to engage in professional development subsections of the attitude scale. However, certain ambiguities emerged regarding the attitude scale's subsections: professional apathy and professional burnout among the EFL

teachers. Specifically, participants revealed their hesitation concerning two items related to their ability to continue in the profession despite challenges and their willingness to encourage their own child to pursue teaching profession. To gain a deeper understanding of these nuances, the qualitative phase provided rich, explanatory insights into the underlying factors contributing to these ambiguities as well as the challenges limiting their ability to fulfil the requirements of their current position effectively. The findings were structured into four primary themes: description of the teaching profession, professional challenges, professional competencies and professional burnout. The content analysis of interviews yielded various subthemes and associated codes.

The findings of the current study were discussed in an intertwined manner, highlighting the theme of the teaching profession's descriptions, which covers motivations, emotional reactions, expectations, professional characteristics and the theme of professional competencies incorporating process, skills, knowledge of methods and techniques, and communication subthemes. Numerous codes under these themes were closely examined with one another in the literature. EFL teachers positively articulated their inspirational role models and how these people led them to decide their future job under the sub-theme of motivations. Several studies incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments reinforced the findings of the current study (Güray, 2016; Uygun & Karakaş, 2023; Ünsal et al., 2023). In line with the motivation theme, Güray (2016) analyzed the presence of a teacher's family member as a demographic variable. She highlighted that student teachers with a family member in the teaching profession demonstrated markedly more favourable attitudes towards the English language and their occupation compared to those without any educators in their family though a detailed analysis did not establish a direct relationship between the variable and their professional attitudes. It might be deduced that individuals were significantly impacted by role models in their professional decision-making processes. Specifically, the favorable perception of the teaching profession may be associated with the extensive hours individuals spend in educational settings from early childhood. In this context, this could be attributed to the fact that the presence of role models may function as a subtle yet impactful factor in professional decision-making, with prolonged exposure

to educational environments from a young age reinforcing the favorable perception of teaching as a profession. Such exposures to educational environments, for example, interactions with inspiring teachers or family members in the teaching profession, might shape individuals' perceptions of the role of educators and instill a sense of admiration and respect for the profession. On the contrary, Üstüner et al. (2009) identified the presence of a teacher among the family members as an extrinsic factor; therefore, it may be less effective on the professional attitudes of the prospective teachers. It seems probable that while extrinsic motivators may initiate interest in teaching, they might not necessarily foster sustained positive attitudes or a strong professional identity. This finding is also not surprising, given that intrinsic motivations are more likely to provide a durable foundation for long-term commitment to the teaching profession.

Most of the studies underlined the importance of professional characteristics, which also fulfil emotional reactions and expectations themes concerning EFL teachers in the teaching profession. Aligned with this study, many researchers mentioned the same finding (Masadesh, 2022; Üstüner et al., 2009). In this perspective, Uygun and Karakaş (2023), described many factors that influence preservice EFL teachers' preferences for the teaching profession, categorised into intrinsic, altruistic, and extrinsic ones. The study concluded that preservice teachers were primarily motivated by intrinsic reasons towards the teaching profession. Contrary to the findings of the current study, many factors including teaching as a prestigious profession, facilitating interaction with other educational stakeholders and highlighting the inspirational roles of family were framed under the umbrella of extrinsic factors. A possible explanation for these findings could be related to the career phases of the participants, as preservice teachers may retain idealistic views and inherent motivations due to their limited exposure to the realities and challenges of teaching. These perspectives might shift over time as they gain practical experience in educational settings. It also seems probable that the emphasis on positive attributes during teacher training programs, such as societal contributions and personal fulfillment, may reinforce these attitudes while minimizing the potential difficulties of the profession. This could result in a perception of teaching that is somewhat disconnected from its complex realities. Furthermore, Lomi et al. (2011)

found that preservice English teachers expressed positive perceptions regarding their profession, emphasising the necessity of achieving proficiency in language teaching through adequate content and pedagogical knowledge. They identified teaching as a secure, well-respected, and easily attainable occupation, along with numerous other positive attributes. These favorable attitudes might be related to the image of the profession created in teacher training courses, which tend to emphasize the positive features of teaching, including its contribution to societal progress, personal fulfillment, and employment security, rather than the actual realities of the teaching profession. In another study, Şener (2015) demonstrated that the qualitative data corroborated the findings of the quantitative section, indicating that trainee teachers chose to pursue teaching on the basis of their perception of it as an ideal profession and their favourable attitudes towards the field. The code of job availability emerged as a motivating factor for becoming an English language teacher in this study; however, she analysed the ease of job acquisition in addition to family/teacher guidance and coincidence as negative determinants in the decision-making process for the teaching profession. These findings might be explained by the fact that prospective teachers could view teaching as a stable career choice, particularly in contexts where job security is a significant concern. The emphasis on job availability could also be attributed to socioeconomic conditions, where individuals are likely to prioritize professions that offer immediate and consistent employment opportunities. Additionally, the negative impact of factors such as ease of job acquisition and external influences like family or teacher guidance might be due to the perception that such reasons undermine the intrinsic motivation or passion required for teaching. These results may reflect broader societal or cultural values that shape attitudes toward teaching as a profession, suggesting that the decision to enter the field might not always stem from a genuine interest in education but rather from external pressures or circumstantial factors. Additionally, Smadi and Al-Ghazo (2013) used an observation checklist with six criteria to evaluate EFL teachers' attitudes in a detailed way. They assessed numerous factors that exemplify EFL teachers' outstanding professional attitudes. Similar to the current study, each student's unique learning style was accepted as a challenge in the classroom environment. They emphasised the crucial role of establishing a stimulating classroom atmosphere and

utilising multimedia technology for teaching English though the absence of instructional media devices in their classroom. In contrast to the findings of this study, they assessed the content of the coursebooks and the principal teaching material as suitable and effective for language acquisition. This discrepancy might be attributed to contextual differences, such as variations in curriculum design or the availability of resources across educational institutions. Applying different methodologies in the qualitative data collection process of both studies may explain the findings, as observation-based research can reveal practical tactics and qualities, including adaptation and favorable viewpoints toward available resources. It is also possible that teachers' perceptions of coursebook suitability in the current study could be influenced by limitations in institutional support or by individual preferences for supplementary materials. Furthermore, the findings may be due to differences in the demographic or cultural backgrounds of the teachers involved in the studies, which could affect their attitudes toward instructional tools and classroom strategies. It is also likely that the rapid evolution of educational technology and pedagogical tools since Smadi and Al-Ghazo's research has shaped contemporary teachers' expectations, making them more critical of traditional materials. This could be explained by the fact that modern classrooms can demand more dynamic and interactive resources to engage diverse learners effectively.

Taking into account the other two themes of this study, it can be inferred that professional challenges experienced by EFL teachers encompassing subthemes of the education system (applications), education policy, school and student-related problems may lead to their professional burnout, which was characterized by the subthemes of difficulties and coping mechanism, as determined through the analysis of the difference between the subsections of the attitude scale in the quantitative phase. Keeping this fact in mind, two of the six main themes highlighted by Kasapoğlu (2022) on issues adversely impacting the status of teachers closely corresponded with these two topics and the pertinent codes of the study. Numerous factors were identified within two main themes: the MEB (system) and the society. Similar to the findings of the current study, only two of the issues indicating loss of popularity and importance in society, the surrounding pressure were included into the society theme. These findings might be explained by the fact that differences in

theme and coding could arise from variations in focus, population, and research scope. For instance, the emphasis on the education system and policy in this study may reflect the systemic challenges specific to the participants' working environments, which might not align precisely with societal-level pressures captured in broader studies like Kasapoğlu's. It could also be attributed to the evolving dynamics within educational institutions, where localized problems, such as overcrowded classrooms and inconsistent policy implementation, are likely to have a more immediate and profound effect on teachers' attitudes. Furthermore, the identification of fewer issues within the society theme might be due to the study's narrower focus on internal professional challenges rather than external societal perceptions. This difference could also be a result of participants prioritizing systemic problems over societal concerns in their responses, potentially indicating that day-to-day professional struggles are more salient in shaping their attitudes. Additionally, the variations may be due to methodological distinctions, such as differing data collection tools or analytical frameworks, which likely influenced the themes and codes identified in each study. Last but not least, Ünsal et al. (2023) reported that EFL teachers' commitment to their profession decreased as a result of detrimental aspects of the education system, the restrictive stance of the Ministry of National Education, unacceptable behaviours and attitudes of students, and deteriorating economic conditions. Consistent with this research, Soleimani and Bolourchi (2011) examined the relationship between EFL instructors' dedication and job satisfaction. Numerous reasons were identified as contributors to burnout syndrome such as pupils' lack of motivation and disruptive behaviours, negative critiques of school management, insufficient remuneration, inadequate lesson hours for a heavy-loaded curriculum, and additional responsibilities. The intensity and numerous kinds of professional challenges leading to burnout syndrome among EFL teachers may differ across various financial, social, and policy-based circumstances within nations or regions. These findings could be attributed to the unique economic pressures faced by teachers in specific contexts, which might intensify the feelings of dissatisfaction and stress. Additionally, the restrictive policies of education authorities may limit teachers' autonomy and creative expression in their profession, which could contribute to reduced job satisfaction. The lack of student motivation

and classroom misbehavior might be explained by the fact that external factors, such as sociocultural influences or inadequate parental support, likely impact students' engagement. Furthermore, the inadequate compensation and excessive workload might be a result of systemic inefficiencies within education systems, which may fail to adequately address the needs of teachers. These challenges could also be linked to broader societal undervaluation of the teaching profession, which might negatively influence teachers' morale and long-term commitment.

5.2. Conclusion

This study set out to examine in-service EFL teachers' attitudes towards their teaching profession, seeking to gain a better understanding of the complexities surrounding their professional outlook. The research has shown that these teachers generally exhibit a high level of positive attitudes, shaped by their unique experiences and perspectives within the profession. This optimism manifests in their strong commitment to teaching and their capacity to inspire student engagement. The investigation further revealed that while demographic characteristics such as age, gender, teaching experience and teaching degree did not significantly affect their attitudes, professional commitment emerged as a pivotal factor, closely linked with their willingness to engage in professional development.

The findings also underscored the nuanced relationship between professional commitment and occupational challenges. Specifically, teachers who demonstrated higher levels of professional commitment were more resilient in the face of challenges, maintaining a constructive outlook towards their roles despite potential difficulties. Conversely, the relationship between occupational burnout and professional apathy highlighted the pressing need for fostering environments that support teachers emotionally and professionally. The qualitative phase of this study enriched these observations by providing deeper insights into how teachers conceptualize their profession, often drawing from personal inspirations, professional competencies, and the broader socio-cultural context in which they operate.

Moreover, the study highlighted that the professional identity of in-service EFL teachers is not static but evolves in response to the demands of the teaching environment, advancements in educational practices, and their own reflective practices. This adaptability is a testament to their dedication to improving the quality of language education, even in the face of systemic and individual challenges. Teachers' positive attributes, such as flexibility, tolerance, and a sense of humor, not only enhance the classroom environment but also contribute to their ability to sustain long-term engagement with the profession.

Returning to the aim of the study, which was to explore the attitudes of in-service EFL teachers towards their profession, it is evident that these attitudes are both multidimensional and dynamic. The findings reinforce the idea that teaching is not merely a vocation but a reflective and adaptive process influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic factors alike. By cultivating professional competencies and maintaining a strong sense of purpose, these educators are able to navigate the challenges of their profession while remaining committed to their students' growth and learning.

In conclusion, this study has highlighted the critical role of attitudes in shaping the professional identities and practices of in-service EFL teachers. By acknowledging their challenges and celebrating their commitment, it emphasizes the importance of continuous support for these educators, fostering a profession that is both rewarding and sustainable. The study's findings serve as a valuable foundation for future research, aiming to deepen our understanding of how to support teachers in maintaining their professional enthusiasm and effectiveness in an ever-evolving educational landscape.

5.3. Implications of the Study

The current study highlights that in-service EFL teachers generally hold positive attitudes towards their teaching profession. This finding seems to align with previous research (e.g., Ağçam & Babanoğlu, 2016) and underscores the lack of significant differences in attitudes when analyzed against demographic variables such as age, gender, teaching degree, and teaching experience (Haddad, 2019). These outcomes provide meaningful insights into various aspects of educational practice and policy.

From a policy perspective, fostering and sustaining positive attitudes among EFL teachers necessitates systemic attention to overarching strategies that benefit all educators, irrespective of demographic distinctions. Such strategies could encompass comprehensive professional development opportunities, a focus on enhancing teaching methodologies, and initiatives aimed at promoting teacher creativity and well-being. By addressing these areas, education systems can contribute to the maintenance of a motivated and resilient teaching workforce.

At the institutional level, educational institutions play a pivotal role in fostering favorable professional attitudes. Institutions that prioritize inclusivity and collegiality can create environments that enable mutual respect and collaboration. Facilitating teachers' active involvement in decision-making processes further enhances their sense of agency and professional value, which are critical for sustaining positive attitudes towards their work.

The implications for EFL teachers themselves are also significant. Engaging in continuous professional development remains a cornerstone for maintaining enthusiasm and adaptability in their profession. Such endeavours enable teachers to stay abreast of evolving trends in language education, thereby enriching their practice and contributing to their professional satisfaction.

Finally, this study offers directions for future research. Exploring additional variables beyond the demographic scope examined here could provide deeper insights into the multifaceted factors influencing teacher attitudes. Comparative studies across diverse geographical, institutional, or socio-cultural contexts could further enrich our understanding of how varying conditions shape educators' perspectives. These avenues of inquiry hold the potential to inform more targeted and effective strategies for supporting EFL teachers in their professional journeys.

5.4. Recommendations for Future Research

This study has provided significant insights into in-service EFL teachers' attitudes towards their teaching profession and the various factors influencing these attitudes. Despite these contributions, numerous areas for further exploration remain, offering opportunities to deepen understanding and broaden perspectives. Future research

could extend its focus beyond the in-service EFL teachers in the city centre of Burdur province to include participants from diverse educational institutions, such as private schools and universities. Including teachers from different geographical contexts, such as rural areas, could enrich the understanding of how varying conditions shape professional attitudes. Comparative analyses of these groups may uncover valuable distinctions that contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the influences shaping teachers' perceptions.

Expanding the geographical scope of research to include EFL teachers from various regions of Türkiye and other countries could yield important cross-cultural and systemic insights. Such studies would facilitate the identification of broader patterns and trends, offering a wider applicability of the findings. Longitudinal studies represent another promising approach to understanding the evolution of professional attitudes among EFL teachers. Tracking changes from their pre-service education through various stages of their careers could reveal how experiences, challenges, and professional development shape attitudes over time. This approach would provide a dynamic perspective on professional growth and its impact on attitudes.

The qualitative methods employed in this study, such as interviews, could be expanded to include approaches like classroom observations and focus group discussions. These methods would allow for the capture of real-time experiences and provide a richer contextual understanding of teachers' professional attitudes. Integrating qualitative and quantitative data could lead to stronger and more comprehensive findings, enhancing the overall depth of the research. Further exploration of the relationship between teachers' professional attitudes and their classroom practices would be a valuable addition to the field. Understanding how attitudes influence teaching methods and student outcomes could offer practical insights for educational policies and teacher training programs.

These suggested research directions emphasize the need for continued investigation into the complexities of in-service EFL teachers' professional attitudes. Such studies would not only advance academic knowledge but also inform initiatives to support teachers in their professional endeavors, contributing to the overall improvement of educational practices.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Approval from MAKU Research Ethics Committee



ARAŞTIRMA PROJESİ DEĞERLENDİRME RAPORU

Toplantı Tarihi: 05.04.2022 Çarşamba

Toplantı No:2023/04

Karar No: GO 2023/223

Üniversitemiz Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Yüksek Lisans öğrencisi Yasemin ÇAKICI' nın Doç. Dr. Ali KARAKAŞ danışmanlığında yürüteceği *"İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Mesleklerine Karşı Olan Tutumlarının İncelenmesi- Burdur İli Merkez İlçe Örneği"* başlıklı proje önerisi araştırmanın gerekçe, amaç, yaklaşım ve yöntemleri dikkate alınarak incelenmiş olup, çalışmanın fikri, hukuki ve telif hakları bakımından sorumluluğu araştırma ekibine ait olması koşulu ile etik açıdan uygun bulunmuştur.

APPENDIX 2

**Permission from the Provincial Directorate of National Education in Burdur
to Apply the Attitude Scale**



T.C.
BURDUR VALİLİĞİ
İl Millî Eğitim Müdürlüğü

Sayı : E-39958266-605.01-74027914
Konu : Araştırma Uygulama İzni
(Yasemin ÇAKICI)

07/04/2023

VALİLİK MAKAMINA

İlgi : 28.03.2023 tarihli ve 260433 sayılı yazı.

Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencisi Yasemin ÇAKICI'nın, Doç. Dr. Ali KARAKAŞ danışmanlığında yürüttüğü "Burdur İl Merkezinde Görev Yapan İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Mesleklerine Karşı Olan Tutumlarının İncelenmesi" konulu çalışması kapsamında hazırladığı ölçekleri il merkezindeki İngilizce öğretmenlerine uygulamak istediğine dair Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi Öğrenci İşleri Daire Başkanlığının ilgi yazısı ve ekleri ilişikte sunulmuştur.

Ölçeklerin, Bakanlığımız Yenilik ve Eğitim Teknolojileri Genel Müdürlüğünün 2020/2 sayılı Genelgesi doğrultusunda, eğitim öğretimi aksatmayacak şekilde COVID-19 pandemisi nedeniyle gerekli ve yeterli tüm önlemlerin alınarak gönüllülük esasına göre il merkezindeki İngilizce öğretmenlerine uygulanması, Müdürlüğümüzce uygun mütalaa edilmektedir.

Makamlarınızca da uygun görülmesi halinde, olurlarınıza arz ederim.

Nesrin KAKIRMAN
İl Millî Eğitim Müdür V.

O L U R
İbrahim ÖZKAN
Vali a.
Vali Yardımcısı

Ek: Yazı ve Ekleri (18 Sayfa)

Adres : Şekerciler Mah. Topraklık Cad.No : 6 BURDUR
Tefahat No : 0 (248) 233 11 19
E-Posta : stranaj@istatim155.gov.tr
Kop Adresi : msh@istatim155.gov.tr

Bu belge güvenli elektronik imza ile imzalanmıştır.
Belge Doğrulama Adresi : <https://www.turkiye.gov.tr/msh-elys>
İmza İsmi: N. BOZDEMİR
Ünvan : Veri Bütçeleme ve Kontrol İşletmeni
İnternet Adresi : <https://www.turkiye.gov.tr/msh-elys>
Faks:2482331343

Burdur İl Millî Eğitim Müdürlüğüne 3388-b5fb-3f68-bc67-d9bd kodu ile tebliğ edilmektedir.

APPENDIX 3

Permission to Use the Attitude Scale

ölçek izni  etik kurul 



Yasemin Çakıcı <

Alici: nevrüz44 ▾

13 Eki 2022 Per 20:35



Sayın Demirel,

Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi İngiliz Dili Öğretimi Yüksek Lisans öğrencisiyim. Burdur ilinde görev yapan İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin mesleklerine yönelik tutumlarını çalışacağım yüksek lisans tez araştırmamda, izniniz olursa sizin ve Sayın Ünışen'in ortak çalışması olan "Öğretmenlerin Öğretmenlik Mesleğine İlişkin Tutum Ölçeği"nizi kullanmak istiyorum. Şimdiden teşekkür ederim.

Saygılarımla,

Yasemin ÇAKICI

Nevruz TAŞDEMİR <

Alici: ben ▾

13 Eki 2022 20:52



Sayın Hocam,

Ölçeği çalışmanızda kullanabilirsiniz. İyi çalışmalar diliyorum.

APPENDIX 4

Attitude Scale For in-service EFL Teachers

Dear colleagues,

This study is carried out to examine the attitudes of in-service EFL teachers towards the teaching profession and whether their attitudes towards the teaching profession differ across their demographic characteristics. The participation lasts approximately 10 minutes. There is no correct or wrong answer, and your answer will be kept confidential and will be analysed by the researcher. Your patient and sincere responses are significant since they will affect both the reliability and validity of the study. For more information about the study, you can easily contact me through my e-mail address

Thank you in advance for spending your time, contribution, and sincere answers.

Yasemin ÇAKICI

Assoc.Prof. Dr. Ali KARAKAŞ

Türkiye Yardım Sevenler Derneği

Thesis Advisor

Secondary School

Mehmet

Akif

Ersoy

University,Burdur

English Language Teacher

General Information

a. Gender

☐ Female

☐

Male

b. Age

☐ 22-29

☐ 30-39

☐ 40+

c. Teaching Degree

☐ I teach at a primary school

☐ I teach at a secondar school

☐ I teach at a high school

d. Teaching Experience

☐ 1-5 years☐ 6-11 years☐ 11+ years**e. Level Of Education**☐ Bachelor degree☐ Master Degree☐ Doctorate

This study is carried out to examine the attitudes of Turkish English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers towards the teaching profession. Please indicate your ideas by choosing the number that corresponds to your perception.

1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=neutral 4=agree

5=strongly agree

ITEMS	1	2	3	4	5
1. Teaching is the most appropriate profession for me.					
2. I dedicate my whole life to teaching.					
3. Doing the tasks related to my profession never satisfies me.					
4. Teaching is a passion for me.					
5. As I have gained experience in teaching, I become more attached to this profession					
6. The spiritual satisfaction I get from teaching is indescribable					
7. Nobody can stop me from doing this profession					
8. Teaching is an inappropriate profession for my personality					
9. Choosing teaching profession(among lots of professions) as a career is nothing but despair.					
10. The enthusiasm I get from teaching makes me forget the challenges I have ever experienced in this profession					
11. I dislike teaching profession					
12. If I was asked to decide on my occupation again, I would still choose to teach					
13. I assume that I would no longer be enthusiastic about learning and teaching in this profession					
14. The more I work, the more I am getting devoted to the teaching profession					

15. I keep up the teaching profession because I have no other choice					
16. I'm constantly improving myself to do my profession better					
17. I also want my child to do this job.					
18. I understand the importance of the profession better as I get more and more experience.					
19. Teaching is a honourable profession.					
20. Interacting with the students makes me relaxed and understanding.					
21. Teaching is a monotonous profession that stereotypes humanbeing					
22. I feel peaceful in the teaching profession.					
23. I feel tired of teaching.					
24. If I had another chance, I would resign from the teaching profession					
25. Teaching profession is too degenerated to be fixed again					
26. Lodging into a classroom constantly makes me nervous, tensed					
27. Spending time with the students steadily stresses me out					
28. Being a teacher makes me happy.					
Would you like to add anything else about how you view the teaching profession?					
Would like to participate in a follow-up interview to discuss your responses to the questionnaire? If yes, please write your email address below.					

APPENDIX 5

Semi-structured Interview Questions for in-service EFL teachers

(English version)

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me and participate in this interview.

Please note that this interview will be recorded. Ethical approval and institutional permissions have been obtained for this study. The data collected through your participation will be used solely for academic purposes, and your identity will remain confidential in all reporting.

Interview Questions

1. What motivated you to become an English language teacher?
2. How do you feel about your role as an English language teacher?
3. What are your favourite aspects of teaching the English language?
4. What do you find most challenging about teaching the English language?
5. What do you think are the most important skills or traits for an English language teacher to possess?
6. How do you stay up-to-date with changes in the English language teaching field?
7. What do you think are the most effective teaching methods for English language teaching?
8. How do you create an engaging and stimulating learning environment in a classroom?
9. How do you motivate students who are struggling to learn the English language?
10. What advice would you give to someone who is considering a career as a language teacher?
11. Do you experience Professional burnout syndrome? What are the factors that contribute to your professional burnout syndrome?

APPENDIX 6

İngilizce Öğretmenleri için Mülakat Soruları (Türkçe Versiyonu)

Benimle görüşmek ve bu mülakata katılmak için zaman ayırdığınız için teşekkür ederim. Bu mülakatın kaydedileceğini lütfen unutmayın. Bu çalışma için etik kurul onayı ve kurumsal izinler alınmıştır. Katılımınız aracılığıyla toplanan veriler yalnızca akademik amaçlar için kullanılacak olup, kimliğiniz tüm raporlamalarda gizli tutulacaktır.

Mülakat soruları

1. Sizi İngilizce Öğretmeni olmaya iten, motive eden şey neydi?
2. İngilizce öğretmeni olarak sorumluluklarınızın, üstlendiğiniz rolün ne olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz?
3. İngilizce öğretmenin, farklı bir dil öğretmenin en sevdiğiniz yönleri nelerdir?
4. İngilizce öğretim sürecinde en çok zorlandığınız şey nedir?
5. Bir İngilizce Öğretmeninin sahip olması gereken en önemli beceriler veya özellikler sizce nelerdir?
6. İngilizce öğretimi alanındaki değişikliklerden nasıl haberdar oluyorsunuz, mesleki gelişiminizi nasıl sağlıyorsunuz?
7. İngilizce öğretiminde en etkili öğretim yöntemleri nelerdir?
8. Sınıfta ilgi çekici ve teşvik edici bir öğrenme ortamını nasıl yaratırsınız?
9. İngilizce öğrenmekte zorlanan öğrencileri motive etmek için nasıl bir yaklaşım izliyorsunuz?
10. İngilizce öğretmeni olarak kariyer yapmayı düşünen birine ne gibi tavsiyelerde bulunursunuz?
11. Mesleki tükenmişlik hissediyor musunuz? Sizi mesleki tükenmişliği iten sebepler nelerdir?

CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

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EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

2021-2024: (MA) Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University

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2004-2008: (BA) Balıkesir University, Faculty of Education Department of Foreign Languages Education, Program of English Language Teaching, Balıkesir

WORK EXPERIENCE

2010-2024: Türkiye Yardım Sevenler Derneği Secondary School, Burdur (EFL teacher)

2008-2010: Mimar Sinan Secondary School, Siverek/Şanlıurfa (EFL Teacher)

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