Investigating the Effectiveness of Ongoing Professional Development Programs for EFL Teachers in Saudi Arabia

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This study focuses on investigating the effectiveness of Ongoing Training Programs (OPTs) designed for English Language Teachers (ELTs) in Saudi Arabia with the intent to see how successful these are in of their actualization and what challenges they pose to be addressed for a sustained educational development. Taking CIPO (Context, Input, Process, Output/Outcome) model as a theoretical framework, the programs offered by GAET (General Administration for Educational Training) were ransacked for their rationale, planning and implementation together with the trainees' practices after they receive the training. The data was collected and subjected to rigorous scrutiny for its validity and reliability and accentuated by the views of supervisors, trainee teachers, and the trainers. The findings revealed that in the ambit of a larger training program, ELTs get relatively fewer opportunities to benefit from OTPs. Certain inhibitions were found during the different phases of the process where English Language Teachers relatively go through conventional coaching without any follow-ups. Consequently, the outcome is fraught with challenges that need to be addressed to be in line with the vision 2030 that emphasizes sustainability in professional development in English language teaching.

Keywords: CIPO, English language teachers (ELTs), ongoing training programs (OTPs), initial teacher preparation program; pedagogical and linguistic preparation

INTRODUCTION

In their teaching careers, teachers face a variety of challenges because the training programs are either inadequate or are not implemented effectively enough to get the desired results (Ingersoll, R. M, 2020). The difficulties may be encountered while dealing with innovative curricula, implementing novel teaching as well as learning methodologies, managing classrooms, and applying advanced technologies (Asad et al., 2021). All these issues demonstrate how complicated the actual situation in a real classroom is and that these concerns may be beyond novice teachers' capabilities to manage the classroom (Wolff et al., 2021). Pre-service teacher programs might not be enough to produce competent instructors (Tekir & Akar, 2020). It was argued that these programs might encourage prospective teachers with a limited amount of instructing knowledge and abilities to join the field (Bamrungsin & Khampirat, 2022; Gnawali,

2014; Mahato, 2021). Moreover, several scholars have noted a similar issue, stating that preservice teacher programs in the Saudi context do not sufficiently train future teachers, particularly concerning their knowledge of curriculum content and instructional materials, as well as their use of technology in instruction (Al-Maini, 2009; Al-Seghayer, 2014). Despite all these contentions, continuing in-service training programs are necessary for teachers, regardless of their experience levels. These courses improve their academic achievement, knowledge, and abilities, as well as prepare them to adapt to changing circumstances and community needs (Bamrungsin & Khampirat, 2022; Gnawali, 2001; Mahato, 2021; Poudel, 2014). According to Bhan (as cited in Poudel, 2014), in-service programs can help instructors in several ways, including improving their expertise, upgrading their qualifications, preparing them for new responsibilities, giving them knowledge and abilities related to increasing curricular changes, raising their awareness of important topics, and helping them address the discrepancies and shortcomings of their initial education.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) in Saudi Arabia acknowledges the value of providing teachers with ongoing training. Since its founding, the MOE has prioritized teacher preparation and training and has pushed ELTs and staff members alike to enroll in in-service training programs to further their professions. Before taking on their present shape, Saudi Arabian in-service teacher training programs had undergone various phases. The MOE started offering teacher training programs in 1954 as part of a plan to retrain inexperienced ELTs, especially those working in primary schools, while also enhancing the expertise and performance of current ELTs. The MOE founded after-school institutions in 1955, intending to enhance the instructional skills of allocated teachers because of the lack of skilled instructors at the time. After achieving their objectives, these institutions shut down after just 10 years. For some teachers, two-month vacation training programs on instruction techniques, behavioral research, and public education challenges were organized in 1963. Approximately 1,025 teachers completed these two-year courses (GAET, 2022). The General Administration of Educational Training (GAET) was established by the MOE in 1965, and it still exists to date to assist with teacher training. To meet teachers' training needs, the GAET established teacher training centers across the nation, furnished them with the required tools, and hired certified instructors (GAET, 2022). The GAET states that the following are the primary goals of ongoing training in the Saudi setting:

1. Enhance workers' output and expand their capacity for fulfillment at work
2. Encourage certain beneficial outlooks in the workplace and interpersonal interactions
3. Equip participants with updated knowledge in science, technology, and theory so that they can adapt to change
4. Acknowledge that participants require practical methods to handle their work
5. Assist participants in putting new theories, viewpoints, and solutions into practice to close the knowledge gap in theory and application
6. Foster a more innovative mindset among trainees to enable them to solve new challenges and reorient them to changes in their professional lives
7. To save time and effort and to lessen the barriers to professional development

8. Give professionals the opportunity for ongoing training to help them learn while also boosting their self-esteem (GAET, 2022)

All teachers, including English language teachers (ELTs), are eligible to enroll in the training programs offered in training facilities across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Currently, the in-service training courses offered by the GAET are in the form of free, brief instructional sessions for instructors at training centers located throughout every educational zone (Al-Maini, 2009). These one- to three-day courses cover both general and specialized educational subjects. Even going through these spells of training, ELTs lack the required competencies in terms of pedagogy and linguistics as is documented in the supervisors' reports, and it was recommended to address this issue while making any reforms (Alsuhaibai et al., 2023). This necessitates a thorough investigation into the process to determine to what extent the intent of the GAET training is actualized by the ELTs in the face of challenges that they encounter while implementing the strategies that they learn to implement.

The significance of the study

There is always a gap between what is learnt and what is practiced. Theoretically, it is easy to learn teaching techniques and strategies but their actual implementation in the pedagogical setting is fraught with implications (Rose et al., 2021). Hence, English language teachers need continuous support during their work as teachers, especially in the early stages of teaching. Therefore, this research seeks to investigate the effectiveness of the training programs provided to English teachers and how efficient these are in enhancing teachers' performance. The focus is on determining whether these training programs bridge the gap that exists between language teachers' initial preparation and the realities of the classroom. This research seeks to ascertain whether opportunities for ongoing training assist English teachers in the Saudi setting. Literature review reveals that the effectiveness of training programs has been gauged in various studies, but specifically the training of ELTs under GAET has never been the focus of researchers. Hence, the findings of this study will benefit the policy makers, administrators, and educators as they are going to have better understanding of the actualization training programs and to address the challenges that undermine the desired results. Moreover, the results of this study can point to specific elements of a program for ongoing training that could apply to other comparable circumstances. Training centers in the Saudi context may benefit from the study's findings at the initial phase of the training program, particularly when creating the program's aims and purposes. The outcomes of this study can also enrich the literature on ongoing training in Saudi Arabia and highlight areas that require further investigation.

The Statement of the Problem

This study is intended to figure out the true a clear picture of the ongoing training programs particularly related to ELTs. The problem is that no specific evaluation is available of these vital programs that integrally go with the enhancement of the English proficiency of the Saudi learners in schools. In this scenario, it would be of crucial importance to see the actual implementation of these training courses, and issues that these trainees encounter during and after going through all these processes. Saudi

Arabian Vision 2030 envisages sustained educational policy in which training programs for English language teachers are meant to have optimal level of delivery that must manifest in the teaching and learning processes in educational institutions (Alqahtani & Albidewi, 2022).

Literature Review

The Notion of Ongoing Training

The term "ongoing training" refers to pertinent courses and activities that working teachers can take to improve their professional expertise, capacities, and competencies in the field of instruction. It involves all the instruction and preparation provided to instructors who are currently in the position of teaching (Osamwonyi, 2016). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines ongoing training as the entirety of instructional opportunities, regardless of the material's level and approach, whether formal or not, that either extend or substitute initial preparation in schools and colleges, as well as in apprenticeships (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Through these educational opportunities, teachers enhance their expertise and technical or professional skills or turn them into alternative paths. They can alter their mindsets or ways of acting in the context of full individual growth in line with emerging trends in technological, social, economic, and cultural arenas. Teachers can enhance the standard of teaching by learning novel methods of teaching via ongoing professional growth opportunities. Doing so gives them the freedom to alter how they instruct their students and use innovative approaches in their classrooms. As different students have different learning styles, it shows them how to accommodate a range of learning types. It also supports teachers in adopting new practices derived from reliable educational research, enabling them to modify their regular methods of instruction (Amadi, 2013). Ongoing training can be achieved through different strategies, such as lesson study, guidance, tutoring, groups of practice, reflective monitoring, and technical support (Amadi, 2013). However, to see how sustained the output is needs an objective, valid and reliable investigation into the existing ongoing training programs for the teachers who are supposed to bring about a tangible change in the classroom. Hence, the objectives of this study are:

a) To examine the effectiveness of the ongoing training programs for ELTs .
b) To evaluate the planning and implementation phases of these training programs in terms of their contribution to sustainability.
c) To determine how effectively the ongoing training programs are being implemented by the ELTs in Saudi EFL setting.

To achieve these goals, the following three research questions must be answered.

1. How effective are the ongoing training programs for ELTs?

2.   To what extent do the planning and implementation of these training programs

     contribute to achieving sustainability?

3.   How effectively are the ongoing training programs being implemented by ELTs in the Saudi EFL setting?

Rationale for Ongoing Teacher Training

Kpangham (1992) argued that the rationale for ongoing teacher training is based on the fact that although college initial preparation programs are generally excellent, they cannot fully provide prospective teachers with all the necessary tools for properly practicing their profession. Additionally, there is growing recognition of the effect of political, societal, and technological advancements, as well as the necessity for instructors to be informed of and adaptable to such changes, which necessitates continued training for teachers. Alabi and Ige (2014) emphasized the implications of ongoing teacher education for the overwhelming number of inexperienced teachers in schools, continuous curriculum development, and the quality of instruction.

Teachers frequently encounter developments in their profession. Ongoing training is a crucial component of teacher preparation that never ends. There will inevitably be some gaps in preservice training, regardless of how effective it is. Teachers' ongoing training will address these shortcomings, such as those in pedagogical methods, assessment methods, counselling, guidance, and other services. All these issues should be considered in in-service training courses so that successfully completing these courses will result in improvements to the teaching and learning process. Kazmi et al. (2011) claimed that ongoing training helps instructors become more systematic and sensible in their instruction approaches. Omar (2014) argued that the improvement of teachers' professionalism in relation to their goal of improving the level of their teaching is largely dependent on ongoing training. Teachers who receive ongoing training can thoroughly recognize and assess the environment at work—a capacity that has the potential to alter the atmosphere at work. Ekpoh et al. (2013) demonstrated that teachers who participate in ongoing training are more successful at their jobs in terms of subject matter proficiency, managing a classroom, instructional strategy, and student assessment. Jahangir et al. (2012) also demonstrated the significant impact that ongoing training has on enhancing the efficiency of teachers in the classroom. Therefore, in-service education will continue to bridge the areas that are missing between preservice education and teachers' efficacy in the workplace, which is a result of society's evolution (Osamwonyi, 2016).

Qualities of a Successful Ongoing Training Program

1. A crucial aspect of a successful ongoing training program is the focus on the individual's requirements and choices. Considering individuals' choices regarding program execution, material, and assessment can ensure greater trainee engagement (England, 1998; Uçar Duzan, 2006).

2. A quality ongoing training program should place a strong emphasis on the participants' cooperation. England (1998) stated that an ongoing training course ought to offer opportunities for exchanging concepts among trainees and trainers. The training course will be more efficient if there is a sense of unity and shared expertise in the aim of professional growth.

3. A good ongoing training program should prepare trainees to become reflective practitioners by applying techniques that help them examine and assess their teaching practices (Abdal-Haqq, 1989; Uçar Duzan, 2006).

4. A training course that integrates theory with practice, feedback, and instruction for implementation is the most helpful because it ensures that each trainee gains something personal (Craft, 2000).

5. An essential component of an ongoing training program is continued appraisal. The results and impact of a program are assessed as part of its effectiveness (Uçar Duzan, 2006).

Theoretical or conceptual framework

Multiple theories exist for evaluating training programs. Humphrey's SWOT analysis bears four components i.e. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats to evaluate various planning and training programs in the realm of business and management (Johnson & Scholes, 2002). On the other hand, Malcolm Knowles' theory of adult learning envisages teachers to be trained effectively needs "self-concept" for self-directed learning, "experience" as a driving force, "readiness to learn" for updated knowledge, "Orientation to learning" to solve problems, and finally "motivation to learn" in terms in internal motives. This theory more focuses on self-directed learning rather than analyzing the effectiveness of a training program. ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation) is another model that is considered useful for the development and evaluation of a training program (Jonnalagadda, Singh, Gogineni, Reddy, & Reddy, 2022). For analyzing a training program effectively, Kirkpatrick evaluation model provides a four-level structure involving reaction (the participants' response), learning (the participants' acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitude), behavior (the participants application of what they have learned), and results (the overall impact of a training program in terms of objectives and outcomes of the organization) respectively (Alsalamah & Callinan, 2022). However, Cahapay (2021) alluded to the limitations of this model's application in higher education training programs. With this comes Guskey's framework that bears a start similarity to Kirkpatrick with one additional component of the organizational assistance (Chamblee, 2020). For evaluating educational programs, CIPO (Context, Input, Process, and Outcome) framework has been used widely as each phase is subjected to rigorous scrutiny to find the reliable a valid results (Alhajia et al., 2020). Although an overview of the above-mentioned models reveals that all of them have commonality in terms of conducting qualitative evaluation of training programs, CIPO is considered the most appropriate and relevant framework for the current study.
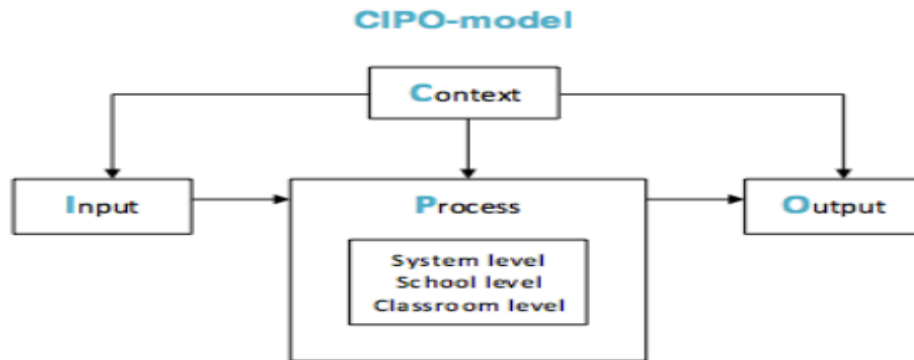
Figure 1
Adapted from Hand Wiki

Previous Studies

Because of the importance of ongoing training programs in enhancing teachers' teaching practice, many studies have been conducted in various contexts to investigate the effectiveness of these programs and suggest some processes for improving them. According to Konings and Vanormelingen's (2015) study on public training in India, the effectiveness of a training program relies on the proper execution of each stage of the training, including the prior examination of training needs and the implementation of a sufficient training strategy and assessment. A study by Johnson (2011) in the UK shows that improving the communication and understanding between training centers and workplaces regarding the purpose and process of training, as well as regarding the follow-up processes of training, is necessary. According to a survey conducted by Gunawardhane (2011), short-term ongoing instruction is not completely ineffective and has, in fact, significantly helped in the introduction of revisions to the curriculum and educational advancements. Nonetheless, the study found that teachers' expertise and abilities are not positively impacted by training; the effectiveness of training programs is limited. A study by Michael (2017) in Tanzania revealed that trainers suggest carrying out an assessment of needs to help training organizations. Another study by Sedega et al. (2019) found that the majority of principals believe that nearly all teachers who participate in ongoing training do not do their jobs well enough, particularly when it comes to identifying students' mistakes, developing teachers' knowledge, creating effective instructional materials, and choosing and utilizing the right teaching aids. Alshareef (2022) conducted another investigation within the Saudi context. The teachers made it evident that training courses do not meet their current demands. The study also found that the obstacles to continuous training include a lack of structures and regulations, problems with availability, and low incentives. As is clear from previous studies, most of the ongoing training programs in various contexts suffer from certain shortcomings, whether in the preparation stage, implementation stage, or evaluation stage.

The CIPO model (Context-Input-Process and Output) is a theoretical model used to investigate and analyze educational programs by looking at four key features: the context (environment and conditions), input (resources and arranging), process (execution), and output (results and outcomes). It gives a comprehensive, organized approach to explain how different factors collaborate to impact educational results. Comparatively CIPO model is favorable because of its detailed and systematic approach to evaluate and analyze the various phases of the program and identifying the interconnections between each phase of a program. This makes it particularly viable for complex settings like education. The strength of CIPO models lies in its systematic and structured approach in examining the dynamic interaction between inputs (resources) and processes (teaching procedures). Moreover, many other relevant models merely focusing on inputs or outputs separately, but CIPO links these stages together providing, information to understand how resources interpret the outcomes through teaching strategies. The present study therefore investigates the effectiveness of ongoing training programs at training centers in the Saudi context, which is consistent with the local educational directive to focus on the training programs introduced to English teachers.

METHOD

Inquiry

CIPO needed four elements, i.e., context element, input element, process element, and outcome element (Alhajia et al., 2020). These elements involve multiple instruments. In this research content analysis rested on the available documents, and thematic analysis came from interviews and focused group discussions (FGD). Understanding and interpreting the messages conveyed by those involved in teacher training are recommended for the results of the present study to be relevant. As the study's inquiry centers on comprehending the educational processes that take place in a social setting, it is interpretive and naturalistic in nature in qualitative terms. This means that by looking at how individuals perceive the social environment and how they create meaning in natural environments, this research will enable the social realm to be understood. The study therefore adopts two steps: (i) description of the current situation and (ii) interpretation of this description (Punch, 2009). This study presents an initial description of the current training programs available at GAET centers and then explores the factors that might affect the efficiency of these training programs.

Population and Sample

As a combination of content and thematic analyses, this qualitative study is based on rigorous document scrutiny, and the resultant emergence of themes and their investigation. Despite the bulk of the research involved a plethora of documents, a convenient and comparatively small sample of population was selected from three groups to achieve complete comprehension of the investigated problem: English teachers or trainees for whom the training programs are prepared, the trainers who implement the training programs, and educational supervisors who mentor trainees at the stage of applying what they have learned. The current study, therefore, employed a convenient or purposive sampling method focusing on the participants with relevant direct experience and knowledge related to the research questions enriching the

findings. This approach aims to gather in-depth insights that develops understanding of the research problem, ensuring that the data collected is rich and significant. The sample consisted of 12 participants who were selected randomly by applying the stratified probability sampling technique to include four representatives from each group.

Data Gathering

Two approaches were used to obtain the data: data generation (interviews/focused group discussion) and data collection (document analysis). Thus, the study started to analyze the content of the training plans at the GAET centers, followed by interviews/FGD with the study sample. During the course this course interesting themes came to the fore to be codified in the thematic analysis. The emerging themes were divided into sub-themes to have a deeper insight into effectiveness of the programs which are at the core of this study.

Analyzing Data

There were two phases in the data analysis. The initial stage was to reduce the amount of data by memoing, coding, editing, segmenting, and summarizing. Data were depicted using networks, tables, and diagrams in the second stage of analysis, as well as written under selected themes. This process allowed the data to be arranged and summarized.

FINDINGS

Ongoing Training Options for English Teachers in Saudi Arabia

Based on the study data, most of the continuous professional development courses for Saudi Arabian teachers are offered by the GAET in its training centers around the country. These courses are generally one to three days long and focus on pedagogy. A thorough examination of the list of training plans (Table 1) in a teachers' training center in Riyadh showed that English teachers are provided only a very small number of training opportunities. In fact, only three of the 110 training courses offered in the training center were designed with ELTs in mind, offering courses on common English language instruction, directives in reading and writing instruction, and directives in speaking and listening instruction. The findings also revealed that in response to the recent introduction of a new textbook series for English instruction as part of the latest communicative curriculum, the publishers of such textbooks organized short interim training sessions within the MOE's directive to clarify how the books were put together and which teaching strategies would work appropriately with them. However, the question that remains is as follows: do these training courses sufficiently support ELTs in the Saudi context?

Table 1
Training plans at the main teachers' training center in Riyadh

No.	Program	Focus group	Time
1	Case study	Student counselors	O.
2	Literacy	Primary teachers	3
3	Autism disorders and methods of diagnosing them	Special education teachers and student counselors	3
4	Learning resources	Learning center technicians	4
5	Skills in teaching reading and writing		3
6	Skills in teaching listening and speaking	English Teachers	3
7	General directives in teaching English		3
8	Active learning in science	Science teachers	3
9	Image processing (Photoshop)	Art education teachers	3
10	Dealing with primary school students	Primary school teachers	3
11	Dealing with middle and high school students	Middle and high school teachers	3
12	How to design effective questions		3
13	Class management		3
14	Charisma	Teachers	3
15	School press		3
16	Solving problems in creative ways		3

Efficiency of English Teachers' Ongoing Courses

I used a structured assessment process that included the planning, implementation, and follow-up phases of the training programs to obtain data from the participants about the effectiveness of ongoing classes for English teachers in Saudi schools.

The Planning Phase

The results show that some of the existing ongoing training courses for English teachers in the Saudi setting have certain drawbacks that could be viewed as shortcomings in the preparation phase. These flaws manifest in various ways:

i) There is no collaboration between the GAET, training centers, and schools in determining the goals, objectives, and subject matter of the training programs. The GAET mandates and controls most of the training programs. As an illustration, a supervisor claimed the following:

"The GAET and the training centers don't work well together when it comes to organizing training programs. We were never consulted for our opinions on these programs, and the GAET hasn't planned or arranged the syllabus of any of the ongoing training courses with trainers from the training centers." (Trainer 1)

ii) Most of the English teachers' allotted workshops are quite old and have not undergone any kind of update. For instance, according to one of the trainers at a training center, "Most of the classes offered in our center are 10 years old, and regrettably, they're still being taught using the same objectives, materials, and techniques as before" (Trainer 4).

iii) In the organization of the ongoing training programs, the requirements and circumstances of the English teachers were not considered. A manager said that "these programs were developed based on the directions of the GAET without doing a review of current English teachers' training requirements" (Supervisor 3). The outcomes of the trainees' interviews corroborate this assumption, as per the assertion made by one of the trainees that "the items of the ongoing training programs are incompatible with our demands" (Trainee 2). These findings align with those of previous studies in different settings, such as El-Laithy's (1989) research in Qatar, Ozer's (2004) and Uysal's (2012) investigations in Turkey, Abdelhafez's (2010) study in Egypt, and Ulla's (2017) study in Myanmar. The results of these studies showed that the subjects of teacher training programs are typically mandated, and the real requirements of the trainees are not considered prior to the creation of the English teacher training programs.

The Implementation Phase

The data gathered for this study suggest that there might be some flaws in the way English teachers' training programs are implemented in Saudi Arabia. These flaws manifest as follows:

i) Trainer qualifications: The participants reported that less-seasoned trainers, who were chosen solely on the basis of their prior work as instructional supervisors, appeared to be in charge of most training programs at the local training centers. For instance, a supervisor who was also employed as a coach at the training center asserted that "most trainers in the local training centers are regular supervisors who've been freed from their supervisory tasks to conduct training programs for English teachers, despite not having sufficient experience to deliver successful training" (Supervisor 4).

ii) The type of material covered in the training sessions: Most of the training programs at the training centers, based on the research sample, appeared to be conducted by imparting theoretical expertise that lacks any chances for practical application. One trainee said, "I attended some of the training programs, but regrettably, they were solely focused on theory, with no practical component" (Trainee 1).

Furthermore, most of these programs appeared to be somewhat out of date and did not often include tasks that related theory with practice. As a supervisor asserted, "The training programs are brief, of age, and hardly include tasks that connect what the participants learned (theory) with what they truly perform during class (practice)" (Supervisor 1).

iii) Delivery style used in the training courses: The results indicate that most of the syllabus appears to be delivered using conventional display styles, which show the material theoretically and prevent trainees from participating fully during the study (i.e., by not allowing them to apply the knowledge they acquired or to reflect on their experiences). It seems that the coaches mostly employed a lecture approach with a question–answer format, and the participants' involvement was rather infrequent. A trainee taking part, for example, contended that "trainees continue to play an inactive part in the training program (i.e., recipients of information). Most of the time, our coaches tell us that they simply don't have enough time to allow application, so they

instruct during the training course and leave participants to apply what they've learned in their classes with no monitoring from the trainers" (Trainee, 2). These outcomes align with those found in other research projects conducted in various settings, showing that most training sessions focus only on imparting theoretical information without providing any opportunity for execution or contemplation (Abdelhafez, 2010 [Egypt]; Bayrakc, 2009 [Turkey]; El-Laithy, 1989 [Qatar]; Kucuksuleymanglu, 2006 [Turkey]; Uysal, 2012 [Turkey]).

Follow-ups and Application of Training to Practice

The outcomes of the study show that, in many of the training programs offered by the training centers, trainees and trainers appeared to have a one-and-done relationship at the conclusion of the program, with no procedure in place for post-training tracking to assess the program's effectiveness. A supervisor explained, for instance, that "monitoring the training programs' effects is crucial to the assessment of their effectiveness. Unfortunately, though, it's ignored in our centers" (Supervisor 2).

The findings suggest that there could be several explanations for the inattention to follow-ups. For instance, the coaches asserted the following: "Trainers mostly don't have opportunities to check out the participants at their workplaces and observe whether they're implementing what they've learned because of job stress" (Trainer 4).

The fact that training programs primarily focus on theoretical topics is another factor contributing to the lack of follow-ups. Coaches at regional training centers contend that trainers are obligated to reduce the syllabus to just the theoretical parts because of time constraints when conducting training programs. Because the trainees have not received practical training, trainers believe that there is no advantage to having follow-up monitoring. For example, one coach said, "Trainers are compelled to deliver training sessions by offering only theoretical information with no application element because of the short duration of most of our training programs. We're unable to monitor their influence in schools as a result" (Trainer 1).

DISCUSSION

The Planning Phase

The outcomes of this study demonstrate that the GAET in Saudi Arabia appears to be centralizing the offering of ongoing training programs. The GAET is responsible for determining choices regarding the objectives, goals, and subject matter of the training programs, which is a clear instance of this centralization. Because of the GAET's ignorance of training centers' views regarding trainees' training requirements, the discrepancy between the GAET and training centers in terms of instructors' training may consequently grow (Alshareef, 2022; Atay, 2007; Fullan, 2001; Hayes, 2000; Sandholtz, 2002; Uysal, 2012). El-Laithy (1989) claimed that the primary goal of ongoing training programs ought to be established based on the characteristics of the audience for which the program is intended. Trainees' understanding of their instruction will grow as a result of this engagement, and their trust as professionals will grow as well (Alshareef, 2022; Daloglu, 2004; Hayes, 2000). Therefore, increasing trainees' understanding will boost their desire to take part in ongoing training, which is one sign

that ongoing training is having an effect on ELTs' professional growth. The findings of the current study align with those of Alshareef, (2022), Uysal (2012) and Atay, (2007) by highlighting the importance of incorporating ELTs' perspectives into training programs. Like Alshareef, (2022), it underscores that ongoing professional training to ELTs enhances understanding and builds professional confidence. Additionally, it identifies the concerns raised by Alshareef (2022) and others regarding the disconnect between GAET and training centers, emphasizing the need for a collaborative approach to improve training effectiveness.

Additionally, as English instruction advances (i.e., through the adoption of novel curricula, techniques, and tools), the goals of ongoing training programs become more complicated, combined, and overlaid (El-Laithy, 1989; Sedega et al., 2019). Given this variety, training programs need to be varied and numerous, rather than being determined solely by GAET. It's vital to take into account the needs of communities and educators, in addition to those of schools, to confirm these programs are effective and meaningful.

The finding of the study determined that the training requirements of English teachers appear to be disregarded because of the centralization in determining the goals, objectives, and subject matter of ongoing training sessions in the Saudi setting. Furthermore, the availability of training courses seems to be very limited in number; for instance, the three training programs on basic English teaching focus on guidelines rather than on the need of essential professional training for English as foreign language (EFL) teachers. The understanding that English teachers operate in a complicated educational context and, consequently, that their training objectives also become complicated has been largely overlooked in this situation. The more complicated the context, the greater the demand for such training courses (Alshareef, 2022; El-Laithy, 1989).

The study results show that English teachers have multifaceted training requirements in the Saudi context, but training centers lack the capacity to meet these demands. The following are some components that are lacking in local training institutions:

i) Initial courses: To familiarize themselves with the context and nature of the school organization, novices in any occupation typically require an initial training course. A variety of topics might be covered in the initial training programs, such as an overview of the organization, pupils, and what the job entails (Rabinowitz, 2014).

ii) Induction programs: These are programs meant to assist novice ELTs by giving them structured assistance; enhancing their knowledge, understanding, and abilities; and helping them make up for any prior experience deficiencies. Additionally, the program can assist teachers in overcoming any new obstacles, such as managing classes (Alshareef, 2022; El-Laithy, 1989).

iii) Further educational training: English teachers at Saudi public schools require additional training, with a primary focus on assisting them in managing situational changes. According to some ELTs, the pedagogical training programs that English teachers could participate in include, for instance, programs that introduce them to

novel curricula, course materials, strategies, and methods; programs that help them create inventive instructional materials and employ technologies in the classroom; programs that teach them how to measure and test pupil achievement; and programs on how to keep abreast of the latest advancements in psychology, sociology, and cultural growth (Alshareef, 2022; El-Laithy; Sedega et al., 2019).

iv) Language training programs: Ongoing training programs ought to be among the solutions to the pressing demand for assistance regarding the linguistic shortage that Saudi English teachers face. The outcomes of the research suggest that more language instruction is necessary for Saudi English teachers. However, as the outcomes of this research and a detailed analysis of the training program schemes in local training centers show, language training programs themselves are also lacking. The absence of language training programs in the Saudi setting and the language deficit on the part of English teachers can be considered major barriers to the implementation of modern methods of teaching and instruction for communication purposes. Furthermore, based on the findings, in order to enhance training for EFL teachers, incorporating curriculum innovations like technology tools and culturally responsive teaching should be considered. Additionally, training workshops on effective assessment strategies inviting international scholars for guest lectures need to be initiated. Finally, peer observation programs and online communities for resource sharing and support to be established.

The Implementation Phase

Based on the information gathered in this research, it can be argued that the GAET is not giving adequate attention to the implementation of the wide range of training programs being offered in local training institutions. For instance, it has given unqualified instructors who lack the necessary training credentials the task of providing the courses. Less-trained or unequipped coaches might not have the necessary background in teacher training to conduct successful training sessions, so they may continue to employ conventional methods of instruction. This is precisely what takes place at the centers of training, in which most training programs are conducted using a scientific approach to teaching/training, and the lessons are primarily presented by showcasing information theoretically and allowing the participants to carry out tasks during their own time. Consequently, the assistance of peers is scarce, and trainees are not encouraged to reflect on what they have learned in this kind of approach. The current study also pointed out that the training sessions are carried employing conventional strategies and approaches, the ongoing training program only assists to reinforce current teaching practices rather than change Saudi English teachers' assumptions on how to teach EFL classes. Saudi English teachers anticipate that their perspectives on instructing EFL will change as a result of the training programs. However, their hopes are dashed because of the actual state of these training programs.

It appears that training programs in Saudi Arabia do not employ comprehensive and practical methods that apply a range of instruments and strategies, and do not give students the chance to apply and reflect on what they have acquired in a supportive and encouraging environment. The use of these techniques is considered efficient in such

programs, according to studies on ongoing training (Alshareef, 2022; Bax, 1997; Hockly, 2000; John & Gravani, 2005; Sedega et al., 2019; Uysal, 2012).

The analysis also suggests that there is little variation in the kinds of training programs provided and their approaches; that is, most of these programs are conducted through traditional means of delivery, such as workshops or classes. On the other hand, the results suggest that a number of approaches should be used for professional development. For instance, Lieberman (as cited in Wichadee, 2011) concluded that the following kinds of teacher training could be adopted:

i) Traditional training techniques, such as lectures, meetings, forums, and workshops, can be used to facilitate instantaneous training. In the Saudi setting, most training places offer this kind of instruction.

ii) School-related training: This type of instruction focuses on helping trainees develop their reflective abilities by providing them with practice in reflection. For instance, empirical research, critical friends, portfolios, peer coaching, and responses from pupils could all be used to carry out this training.

iii). Autonomous self-training: This allows ELTs to engage in a subject network while reading widely and intently in order to enhance their teaching techniques.

Follow-ups and Application of Training to Practice

While it is true that training is a common approach to improving performance and increasing productivity, it is not considered effective unless learners gain new knowledge and skills (Goldstein & Ford, as cited in Grossman & Salas, 2011). What matters most is that training is successfully transferred to the workplace, which helps to improve productivity at work (Goldstein & Ford, as cited in Grossman & Salas, 2011). Despite organizations investing huge budgets in training annually, numerous trained individuals apparently struggle to apply their learning to the workplace (Alshareef, 2022; Grossman & Salas; Sedega et al., 2019).

On the other hand, it appears that the Saudi context presents challenges in the provision of training in classrooms or schools. Several barriers that might prevent training from being successfully transferred exist. These impediments are described in the following:

i) Separation of teacher training: Based on the findings, ongoing training programs in the Saudi setting are decontextualized and separated from actual school situations during both the implementation and monitoring phases. This is comparable to situations in various settings, such as the Chinese (Wen & Ren, 2010) and Qatri (El-Laithy, 1989) contexts. This separation, or the gap between the training center and the work environment, may negatively affect the ability to provide training successfully because it eliminates possibilities for monitoring to ensure that the participants are putting the information they gained into practice.

ii) The lack of follow-ups: Training programs are implemented through one training session that is not followed up on. A training course may become less effective if it is conducted in only one session with no monitoring, according to Wichadee (2011). It is also claimed that with no follow-up training and system of assistance, previous conduct

occurs again, and individuals go back to their previous practices (BreakThroughs Inc., 2014).

Therefore, follow-ups facilitate greater transmission of training to the place of work while also aiding in the evaluation of training programs' effectiveness. This is done by obtaining data (from classroom feedback) regarding what makes the training program efficient and what needs to be changed in order to make better choices about it in the coming years. Waters and Vilches (as cited in Uysal, 2012) contended that school-related follow-ups are components that support collaborative work, boost teacher trust, and assist in integrating theory with practice. They are also thought to be effective metrics for demonstrating the effectiveness of training sessions.

iii) discomforted with change: Perceiving that training courses are unrelated to their present circumstances and do not assist them in adjusting to teaching practice is one of the main excuses put forth by some participants for not implementing what they acquired in these programs in their classrooms.

A few trainees provided specific reasons why they were opposed to ongoing training, and one of the reasons was the barrier (insignificant material). Participants who chose not to engage in training also said that an important obstacle to going to training was their management and instructing workloads.

While discussing the various phases with the administrators, supervisors and trainers, various themes and sub-themes were singled out. Cultural competence, language instruction strategies, technology integration, classroom management, assessment and evaluation, and professional development specifically remained the focus of debate. There was consensus in the FGD that English Teachers' training programs must take into consideration the cultural awareness and empathy at the planning stage. During implementation stage, effective teaching strategies and techniques such as communicative language teaching, TBL (task-based learning), vocabulary instruction, grammar-focused instruction need to be streamlined with the changing teaching paradigms. Simultaneously, the training program must incorporate technology and digital tools into the teaching practices of ELTs. With the phenomenal advent of artificial intelligence (AI), online resources, educational software, multimedia materials, and blended learning required to be updated in consonance with the emerging trends. Finally, the follow-up phase of TTPs is required to arrange for continuous assessment and professional development because assessment methods and the literacy of the teachers about the new technological advances change with each coming day.

All these themes and sub-themes that instantly emerged during the interviews and FGD are tabulated for better understanding.

Table 2
Thematic analysis in interviews/FGD

Sr. No.	Themes		Sub-themes
1.	Cultural Competence	a)	Saudi cultural context
		b)	Teachers' orientation with cultural empathy that they need.
2.	Language Instruction Strategies	a)	Communicative language teaching (CLT).
		b)	Task-based learning (TBL).
		c)	Vocabulary and grammar-focused instruction
3.	Technology Integration	a)	Online resources and educational software.
		b)	Orientation with AI (Artificial Intelligence) in language teaching.
		c)	Laying off the support structure
4.	Assessment and Evaluation	a)	Authentic and standardized testing.
		b)	Language proficiency scales
		a)	Teachers' self-directed learning (SDL)
5.	Professional Development	b)	Reflective and collaborative learning.
		c)	Ongoing support

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The teachers' training programs (TTPs), though essential in every discipline, gain special focus for English language teachers (ELTs) because of the phenomenal changes and advancements in the global environment. Technology-ridden communication necessitate rapid alternations in the language teaching curricula and adaptations of new paradigms to make English language teachers competent enough to prepare the learners to meet the emerging demands in the arena of global communication. That's why the evaluation of TTPs has been the focus of investigation for decades. However, because of the uniqueness of each program, many dimensions often go unexplored. This study has attempted to bridge the gap as alluded in the review of previous studies. For this purpose, CIPO provides the basis for dissecting the dynamics of the Ongoing Teachers' Training Programs (OTTPs) in Saudi Arabia whereas the thematic analysis emerging through interviews/FGD not only provides insight into the currency of these programs but also shed light on the modifications that are desperately needed to cope with the emerging global scenario that is well envisioned in Saudi Vision 2030. Hence, the incorporation of themes and sub-themes at various phases of the programs on the anvil will make a positive difference.

The complicated environment in which Saudi English teachers operate and the changes they must adapt to, such as implementing novel interactive curricula and using cutting-edge teaching strategies, have resulted in extremely complicated training goals or demands for them. They rely on ongoing training to help them discover answers to the issues they face in their day-to-day instruction (Huang, 2011). However, the complicated training needs of Saudi English teachers have not been adequately recognized because of the separation and lack of contact between the GAET and educational institutions (schools) in the Saudi setting. Therefore, ongoing training has very little effect on English teachers' methods of instruction. For beneficially assisting English teachers in their jobs as educators and improving their language competence,

ongoing training in the Saudi setting needs to be immediately reformed at several levels—at the planning, implementing, and follow-up phases. The emerging themes and sub-themes also shed light on the parameters that are essential for streamlining the existing Teachers' Training Programs (TTPs) to produce better results.

Novice ELTs need comprehensive training to follow the designed curriculum and to practice strategies and techniques to align the leaners' outcomes with the 21st century leaning paradigms and skills. So, GAET needs to keep going with TTPs but the weaknesses that were observed during the qualitative analysis of the data must be removed together with the plan to keep them updated with effective monitoring.

Finally, the study alludes to the fact that further research should be conducted to see as to what extent these programs promote self-learning in terms of teachers' autonomy after they go through such rudimentary training. Another aspect that needs an immediate probe is the effectiveness of Saudi training programs for English teachers in relation to transversality (if put in most modern terms) of teaching and testing to discover deeper epistemological dimensions in view of the new concept of translanguaging. The study is conducted to prepare future teachers for integrating professional trainings into their English teaching practices. It addresses teacher deficiencies, promotes tech-savvy EFL teachers, enhances personalized learning, supports multilingual classrooms, and trains teachers to manage their teaching effectively. The findings of the current study can be applied to other educational contexts like STEM, where AI tools assist in explaining complex concepts, and special education. Also, it can fill language gaps, while in professional development, it helps train tech-savvy teachers across subjects. This extends the relevance of the study to diverse educational settings.

LIMITATIONS

Multiple factors were responsible for limiting the findings of this study. First, this study required access to documents and statistical data from GAET that is a centralized organization for teachers' training. Second, the parameters were confined to various phases of the programs. Third, a limited number of participants were available for interviews/FGD. However, the intent of the study was to fill the gap that was discovered in the review of the previous such studies with the novelty to use FGD as a formidable instrument.

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