

Identifying Training Needs of In-Service EFL Teachers in Inclusive Schools in Egypt

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Abstract

With the implementation of inclusion in public schools in Egypt, there are demands for improving the professional development programs provided to in-service teachers concerning inclusive education. To that end, this mixed methods study aimed to identify the needs and preferences of English as a Foreign Language teachers regarding working with special-need students. The study also sought to explore the relationship between participants' profile and their needs. Two hundred eighteen in-service teachers at primary schools in Egypt were selected by cluster sampling method to participate in a need assessment questionnaire while eight were interviewed. Participants reported lack of training in inclusive education, large class size, negative attitudes, shortage of time, heavy workload, and unfamiliarity with necessary strategies as barriers to inclusion. In addition, participants prioritized their needs for identification of language disorders, teaching methods, individualized instruction through curriculum adaptation and Individualized Educational Plans, and controlling behavioral problems. There were significant differences in participants' needs based on age, years of experience and qualifications. The teachers preferred face-to-face workshops, mentor-supported learning and project-based learning besides morning sessions in weekdays. Recommendations for professional development programs and future research were provided.

Keywords: EFL teachers, inclusion, in-service, needs assessment, professional development, special educational needs

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1. Introduction

With moves towards inclusion, new roles of teachers and administrators emerge and necessitate the design of up-to-date professional development (PD) programs to satisfy the needs of Special Educational Needs (SEN) students. According to Lasaten, Pacis and Villanueva (2014), teachers need six areas for professional improvement when dealing with SEN students: characteristics of disable students, formal and informal assessment, teaching strategies, individualized curriculum and instruction, direct follow-up and referrals among service providers, and use of instructional resources. To plan PD programs that address participants' needs and goals, needs assessment should be conducted as a preliminary stage for collecting data. There are many techniques for identifying needs such as observations, testing, interviews, analysis of existing data, and questionnaires. When choosing the needs assessment method, some elements should be considered like the purpose, scope (time, population, content), method (general/specific), and degree of sustainability to the profession. Needs analysis is not conducted to provide solutions; but to identify gaps and reasons and inform the stakeholders and policy makers with contextualized guidelines to create appropriate PD programs (Koç, Demirbilek & Yılmaz İnce, 2015).

1.1. Background and aims of the study

Through working as a former teacher in Ministry of Education (MoE) in primary schools and as a current teacher trainer in the Professional Academy for Teachers (PAT) in Egypt, the researcher found that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in public schools face challenges related to teaching SEN students. In addition, PD programs regarding inclusive education in Egypt are static, theoretical and not specific to teaching foreign languages. Therefore, the present study examined the PD needs of EFL teachers to effectively teach SEN students in inclusive classes in Egypt. The study also sought to specify teachers' preferences of future training programs and investigate the relationship between participants' profile and their needs.

1.2. Questions

The study examined these questions:

1. What are the professional needs of in-service EFL teachers in inclusive classrooms?
2. What are the preferences of in-service EFL teachers on methods, duration and time of future PD programs?
3. Do professional needs of in-service EFL teachers vary in terms of age, gender, experience, prior training and qualifications?

1.3. Study design

This is a mixed methods research; where qualitative and quantitative data collection instruments were used to gather numerical and descriptive information. Semi-structured interviews and a need assessment questionnaire were designed to explore the needs of EFL teachers in inclusive classes. Participants were selected by cluster sampling method to include EFL teachers in public primary schools in Gharbia governorate in Egypt.

1.4. Significance of the study

Findings will be beneficial to program designers in MoE and PAT to design new programs or tailor existing ones to meet the needs of in-service, novice or prospective teachers in inclusive schools. In addition, most of the research about inclusive education was conducted in western countries while few is done in Arab countries. Consequently, this study will expand on related research and fill this gap in literature concerning inclusive practices. Educators and decision makers are expected to make necessary adaptations in curriculum, and PD and teacher education programs to improve the quality of education provided to SEN students.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Inclusion of SEN students

Smith et al. (2016) argue that inclusive education is a philosophy and a practice. *Inclusion* means that SEN students added to the group rather than excluded if proper services are provided in general education schools. Parnell (2017, p.3) defines *inclusive education* as “the capacity of an education system to provide the academic and behavioral support needed for all students, regardless of disability or difference (i.e., gender, ethnicity, location, language), to participate and succeed in the academic, social, and extra-curricular activities of the school alongside their peers”. By doing this, students’ participation and social interaction in the school community and curricula will increase and the value of acceptance of differences and tolerance will be perceived as a virtue. In addition, problems will be dissolved, costs of segregated education will decrease, instructional practices will improve, and students’ achievement and graduation rates might increase. Likewise, Amr (2011) states that SEN students can develop friendships and gain appreciation from peers and teachers which will help in boosting their self-esteem and motivation. Encouraging peer modeling and collaborative practices contribute to the improvement of students’ academic as well as behavioral skills.

Different terms were used synonymously to refer to SEN students like “*exceptional children*”, “*disabled*” and “*handicapped*”. *Special educational needs* are defined in the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act as a limitation of a person’s capacity to actively engage and make use of education due to a permanent physical, sensory, mental health, learning disability, or learning difficulty (NCSE, 2014). The term “*special education*” refers to the science specialized in diagnosis and assessing exceptional students to provide individualized instruction and programs that suit their needs (Rousan, 1998). Abdallah (2015) states that special education addresses students’ individual needs by providing personalized planning and guided arrangement of instruction, materials, and interventions to help learners receive better learning in regular classrooms.

Therefore, SEN students should have difficulties in listening, reading, mathematics, writing, handwriting and spelling. SEN students might have academic and language problems that affect their language comprehension and production. Students with special needs have primary deficit in reading and writing as they often exhibit difficulties in one of these areas: primary reading

skills, reading fluency, reading comprehension, written expressions, oral expressions, and listening. Reading difficulties encompasses inability to process phonological aspects (e.g. decoding) or problems in comprehension (e.g. difficulty in understanding main ideas or making inferences). Writing difficulties occur as a result of failing to combine content knowledge writing and physical skills. Dysgraphia happens when students reverse letters, write words backwards, irregularly write sizes and shapes, or unable to finish letters. SEN students might also delete words and punctuation or use inaccurate verbs or pronouns and word endings (Smith et al., 2016).

In this study, special educational needs are exclusive to students included in public schools and suffer from mild disabilities specified by the Egyptian Ministerial Decree of (No.252/2017) with emotional and behavioral problems, medical problems, and learning disabilities. Gifted students are out of the scope of the present study.

2.2. Inclusive Education in Egypt

Since the Salamanca Statement and Framework for action in 1994, inclusion has been a global trend aiming at providing a high-quality education for all students. In the Arab region, inclusion is newly implemented in education to include students with special impairments and disabilities in mainstream schools. Egypt was among the countries that approved the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) to make inclusive education a right for all SEN students (UNCRPD, 2006).

The first Ministerial decree (No. 42) for including SEN students in public schools in Egypt was issued in 2008. By this decree: a) students with mild disabilities can join schools that are prepared to receive those students, b) a committee for policy making of inclusion in the MoE was formed, and c) the Egyptian MoE mandated the admission of students with mild disabilities in public and private schools. This decree was updated in 2015 by specifying the types of disabilities that are eligible for enrollment in schools. The disabilities encompass: Pupils with vision disabilities, hearing disabilities, mobility and physical disabilities including moderate cerebral palsy, and minor mental disabilities (slow learning and autism). In 2017, a ministerial decree (No. 252) mandated that specific arrangements and facilities should be provided to SEN students in exams. It also specified the number of students with disabilities in each class (no more than four students of the same disability). Nevertheless, no laws has been passed concerning monitoring the implementation of inclusion in public schools in Egypt. Nowadays, there is a discussion on adding a law about rights of disable people to the constitution.

According to the Egyptian MoE statistics (2017), the number of SEN students all over Egypt was 17.229. In Gharbia governorate there were 1344 students with disabilities; wherein mental retardation was the highest disability 71.8% followed by physical impairment 6.7%,

hearing impairment 6.5%, autism 6.2%, visual impairment 4.43%, cerebral palsy 2.26, and Down Syndrome 1.9%.

However, Egypt is still struggling to provide high-quality inclusive education and equal education to marginalized groups of students with disabilities. Amr (2011) states that the notion of inclusion is still new and it is not fully integrated into the educational system in Egypt. Due to the lack of infrastructure and financial resources, not all schools have equipped resource rooms and few students in these schools have access to these rooms. Moreover, teachers fail to provide individualized instruction to SEN students as they have limited chances to collaborate with special education teachers and school psychologists to discuss students' progress and make decisions about educational interventions.

2.3. Programs regarding inclusive education in Egypt

There are two kinds of teacher education programs in Egypt: Pre-service and in-service. The pre-service programs are usually provided in universities or higher education institutions along with practicum training. On the other hand, in-service programs are mainly provided by the MoE or other academic institutions to in-service teachers. A review of the courses taught in the Egyptian universities on inclusive education, the researcher found that few courses about special education and the psychology of exceptional children are taught in Cairo University, Alexandria University, and Zagazig University but no courses about inclusive education are taught in any faculty of education in Egypt. In addition, teacher education programs in universities are based on the medical model of disability; which fails to recognize the problem and provide high-quality educational programs (El-Zouhairi, 2016). In addition, Awad (2016) has found that teachers' inadequate competency and efficacy are due to insufficient pre-service programs which provide little information or introductory knowledge about inclusive education.

The researcher analyzed in-service PD programs about special education that were provided to EFL teachers by the MoE with partnership with other agencies concerning inclusion (MoE, 2015-2016). Table 1 demonstrates the plan for PD programs provided by the General Director of Special Education Office (GDSEO) to school staff in inclusive and special education schools for 2015/2016.

Table 1. PD programs about special educational needs 2015/2016

Program	Aims	Number of trainees/ Time	Program	Aims	Number of trainees/ Time
Makaton Dictionary for Verbal Communication	Providing teachers in inclusive schools with communication skills to deal with SEN students	400 teachers in 24 directorates Time: <u>Phase I:</u> 21/7/2015 to 22/12/2015 <u>Phase II:</u> 31/1/2016 to 24/5/2016	Inclusive Education Caravan	Raising teachers' awareness of inclusion and its laws and regulations	About 1100 teachers in 12 directorates (1 st semester of 2016)
Training in inclusive pre- and primary schools to teach blind students	Qualifying teachers in inclusive schools to communicate with blind students	50 teachers from Cairo and Giza (September 2016)	Refresher course of Readability	Enhancing special education teachers' skills of readability	1300 teachers from intellectual schools (Mid-year vacation 2016)
1. Teacher Preparation Program to Deal with SEN Students 2.PD Program for Developing Teachers' Skills of Special Education	1. Training teachers in inclusive schools on communication skills. 2. Enhancing teachers' skills in inclusive schools.	1500 teachers in inclusive schools and 1000 teachers of special education (27/2/2016 to 3/3/2016)	Integrating Technology in Education	Training teachers of the deaf on using the interactive board	75 teachers of the deaf in Cairo and Giza (14/2/2016 to 17/2/2016)
Ministry of Communications and Information Technology Training	Improving the skills of teachers and psychologists in inclusive schools	5400 special education teachers and psychologists (April 2016)	UNICEF-Egypt Teaching aids for teachers in inclusive schools	Preparing resource room teachers/special education teachers to design teaching aids for SEN students in limited-resourced schools	About 522 teachers and special education specialists in directorates & schools (November 2017)

Source: General Director of Special Education Office (GDSEO)

As demonstrated in table 1, the PD programs provided to in-service teachers are limited in scope and duration. For example, in the training conducted with partnership with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology in 2016, only 28 EFL teachers out of 1040 teachers, principals and school psychologists in Gharbia received the program. As a result, the inability to prepare teachers to deal with SEN students makes it difficult to achieve the goals of Education for All (EFA) (UNESCO, 2010). This requires a large-scale, ongoing, and contextualized teacher training programs.

2.4.Related studies

Studies investigated teachers' attitudes in Egypt found that they had negative attitudes and perceptions towards inclusion (Ghoneim, 2014; El-Zouhairi 2016). The studies that investigated the needs of teachers in inclusive settings in Egypt showed lack of sufficient knowledge, skills and support to teach SEN students (Ghoneim, 2014; Awad, 2016; Alkahteen et al., 2016). No study has explored the needs of EFL teachers in Egyptian public schools; an area which the present study tackled.

Awad (2016) interviewed school administrators, teachers, and parents of SEN students to examine the extent to which private schools in Egypt apply inclusion and challenges faced by the involved parties. She found unsatisfactory implementation of inclusion in these schools due to inadequate funding, lack of support services and educational tools, and insufficient professional development programs. In addition, Alkhateeb et al. (2016) reviewed the studies about inclusion in 21 Arab countries. Researchers showed that attitudes towards inclusion depended on the quality of teacher preparation, teaching loads, funding and resources, school accessibility, and teacher support.

Alkhateeb (2014) examined the knowledge and skills of female general education teachers and principals in elementary schools in Qassim in Saudi Arabia through surveys. Results indicated that teachers have basic knowledge about teaching to SEN students, while principals thought that they lack adequate knowledge and need further training to improve their knowledge and skills. Similarly, Kamkari, Mehdizadeh, and Yayachi (2013) investigated the knowledge of elementary school teachers, principals and teaching assistants' about learning disabilities. Teachers showed more understanding of learning disabilities than principals and assistants. The researchers suggested offering more training programs to teachers and school staff as well. Likewise, Feng and Sass (2013) concluded that general education teachers had few in-service professional development and little support to improve their knowledge and skills, which influenced academic achievement of SEN students.

3. Methods

3.1. Participants

Two hundred eighteen (218) EFL teachers who work in public primary schools in Gharbia, Egypt participated in this study. Participants were selected by cluster sampling; a probability sampling in which large clusters are selected, then smaller clusters are chosen within the selected large clusters, and so on until finally specific elements are selected. The researcher divided the population (EFL teachers in Gharbia) into separate groups or clusters; (EFL teachers in 10 educational directorates). Then, a simple random sample of clusters was selected; EFL teachers in 3 educational directorates in Gharbia (Tanta West, Tanta East, El-Santa). Next, EFL teachers in primary schools in these directorates were drawn. Finally, the researcher selected all EFL teachers in these directorates who deal with SEN students and who are willing to participate in this study. Participants were 88 teachers from East Tanta, 76 from West Tanta, and 54 from El-Santa.

3.2. Instruments

3.2.1. Semi-structured interviews

The researcher created the interviews to identify the strategies that teachers use when teaching to SEN students and the challenges they face. The interviews were conducted before collecting data by the questionnaire to help reach an agreement on the topics of the questionnaire. After reviewing the literature and the questions of the current study, the researcher constructed the interview questions to include broad questions as well as follow-up and clarification questions to elicit further information.

The interview consisted of five sections. In the first section, teachers were asked about their pre-service and in-service activities regarding inclusive education, its usefulness and the extent to which they contributed to the improvement of teachers' confidence to teach SEN students. The second section explored the strategies teachers use to teach, manage, and assess SEN students. Section three questions addressed teachers' ability to identify disabilities and their degrees. In the fourth part of the interview, teachers were asked to describe the challenges they face in teaching in inclusive settings and ways to overcome these barriers. The interviews concluded by section five where interviewees were asked about suggestions to further improve the quality of in-service training. Interviews were audiotaped and thematic analysis was used to categorize the data. The validity of the interview questions were checked by submitting them to jurors specialized in TEFL.

3.2.2. Needs assessment questionnaire

The questionnaire aimed at giving a descriptive account of the needs of EFL teachers in primary schools in Egypt. It is a 35-item questionnaire that consisted of three sections: demographic information, professional needs, and PD preferences. The first section contained three multiple-choice questions (age, gender, and experience) and two open-ended questions (PD activities and qualifications). In the second section participants were required to specify their level of need on a 3-point Likert scale (high need =3, medium need=2, low need=1). In the third section,

participants' preferences on the format of future training activities and appropriate time and duration were examined. The questions in this section were multiple-choice and participants were allowed to choose more than one choice.

Content validity was measured by submitting the instrument to jurors in the field and revisions were made. Then, the questionnaire was piloted to a group of teachers other than those participated in the current study to explore the reliability of the instrument. For construct validity, Principal Component Analysis which is an explanatory factor analysis, was calculated. To guarantee that data set was suitable for factor analysis, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Barlett Tests of Sphericity were measured. KMO value was .652 which indicated a satisfactory factor analysis. Barlett Tests value were significant ($\chi^2=3.655$, $df=.59$, $p=.000$); as it is less than 0.05. To specify the number of factors eigenvalue criterion and scree plot were utilized. It was found that 35 items were categorized under five factors with eigenvalue above 1. Eigenvalues of the factors were between 6.626 and 1.025 and the common variance was between 54.1% and 73.8%. Therefore, the five factors were important for the analysis.

Based on Varimax rotation results, it was found that there were nine items grouped under the first factor (items 1-9), seven in the second factor (10-16), seven in the third (17-23), six in the fourth (24-29), and six in the fifth (30-35). Factors were given their names based on the characteristics of the items combined in each factor: a) instructional strategies used with SEN students; b) classroom management techniques; c) evaluation strategies; d) identification of disabilities, and e) non-academic skills and general knowledge. Factor loadings of the items from factor one through five changed between (.45-.66); (.35-.54); (.74-.44); (.38-.55); and (.50-.73) respectively. The first factor explained 28.9% of the total variance, the second factor explained 8.06%, the third factor explained 6.82%, the fourth factor explained 6.29%, and the fifth factor explained 5.75%.

Cronbach's alpha were used to measure the internal reliability and were found to be .83 for the whole questionnaire; that indicated that the items have relatively high internal consistency. The values of Cronbach alpha for the five factors of the questionnaire were respectively: .94; .83; .84; .88; and .72.

4. Procedures

After reviewing the literature, the researcher analyzed the current in-service PD programs related to inclusive education and SEN students to determine their objectives, contents, and formats. The researcher also analyzed ministerial decrees, strategic plans and statistical yearbooks about inclusion in Egypt. Moreover, the researcher met two supervisors of English to know about the training that EFL teachers in their directorates received about inclusive education. The researcher concluded that in-service programs offered to EFL teachers at the directorates and ministry levels are insufficient in terms of content, duration and capacity to prepare teachers to

deal with SEN students. With the beginning of first semester of the academic year 2017/2018, the researcher interviewed eight EFL teachers-who didn't take part in the questionnaire- individually face to face for 30 minutes per interview. The questionnaire took around 15 minutes to complete. The questionnaire was administered offline as no complete database was available for all participants.

5. Data analysis

5.1. Interviews

Nvivo 10 was used to analyze the participants' responses and generate patterns. To establish the inter-coder reliability of the interviews, the researcher with the help of another rater agreed on the proposed themes and examined the responses and their relevance to the research goals. Cohen Kappa coefficient was carried out to calculate a proportion of corresponding codes. The reliability index was (0.84); which shows high inter-coder reliability. As for the pre-service and in-service preparation, an interviewee stated that he received one formal PD training on inclusion at the directorate level; which he perceived as "*generic and irrelevant to EFL teaching*". Other interviewees reported that they didn't receive any training neither through their pre-service preparation nor within their in-service profession about inclusion. Only one teacher reported reading articles online about learning disabilities.

Concerning instructional methods, four strategies were identified: cooperative learning, simplifying the materials, individualized learning, and using multisensory techniques for presenting materials. In this regards, one teacher agreed that: "*I usually try to stress the intelligences that are strong for each student. For example, with my visually impaired student, I use auditory materials and verbal instructions and enhance memorization and rehearsal*". When strategies for classroom management discussed, all teachers noted that they tried to build cooperation and acceptance among students and prevent behavioral problems to maintain discipline. A teacher said: "*The classroom environment might cause extra problems to students with disabilities. Martina, the disabled child in my class, acquired violent behaviors from her peers like physical violence and using bad language. I always work on preventing such problems*".

As for evaluation strategies, all interviewees stated that they depended on the objective final exams created by the MoE to evaluate the achievement of SEN students. However, interviewees stated that they didn't prepare SEN students to pass these exams. In this regard, an interviewee implied: "*Why to give those students exams while they will take objective exams prepared by the MoE. I don't have time to train students on these exams and I am not even trained to do so*". In the third section of the interviews, participants were asked about their ways of identifying disabilities, all respondents demonstrated that they have no roles in assessing students' disabilities as they are informed by the SEN coordinators in schools about each student disability. Three respondents stated that they were dealing with mentally retarded students, two teachers had a physically impaired student, two teachers had visually impaired students, and a teacher had an autistic student.

In addition, interviewees highlighted a list of challenges in implementing inclusion like: shortage of time, unfamiliarity with students' disabilities and needs, managing students' behavioral problems, limited opportunities to cooperate with special education teachers, heavy workload, and difficulty to individualize instruction in large classes. Only two interviewees stated that they sometimes ask the help of school psychologists to overcome these challenges. Regarding recommendations for improving PD programs, interviewees mentioned the following topics: Evaluation strategies; planning lessons for individualized instruction; instructional strategies; and strategies for dealing with behavioral problems of SEN students as well as negative attitudes of normal students towards SEN students.

5.2. The needs assessment questionnaire

Section A: Demographic characteristics

The variables age, gender, years of experience, PD activities, and qualifications constructed the profile of the participants in this study. 53.2% of participants were females and 46.8% were males. The age of the participants varied from 30 to 51+ with a mean age of 2.28 ($SD=.874$); whereas their years of experience ranged from 1 to 25+ with a mean years of 2.54 ($SD=.880$). Out of the 36 participants who received PD in pedagogical instruction; 34 have engaged in formal workshops provided by their educational directorates, whereas one participant read some articles and another attended a conference. Noteworthy, only 6 of those who received formal PD activities reported participated in training about IE or special education. More than three-quarters of the participants stated having Bachelor in Education (77.5%), followed by those with Bachelor of Arts (18.3%), and those with MA in education (4.1%). Demographic characteristics of participants were summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of participants

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age	30-40	42	19.3
	41-45	92	42.2
	46-50	65	29.8
	51+	19	8.7
Gender	Female	116	53.2
	Male	102	46.8
Years of Experience	1-5	24	11
	6-15	86	39.4
	16-25	75	34.4
	25+	33	15.1
PD activities	Yes	36	16.5
	No	182	83.5

Qualifications	<i>Bachelor of Education</i>	169	77.5
	<i>Bachelor of Arts</i>	40	18.3
	<i>Master</i>	9	4.1

Section B: Professional development needs

As for the second section, descriptive statistics for each item were calculated. The means of items 1-9 presented in figure 1 shows the pedagogical knowledge and strategies that participants needed. The most needed instructional strategies were knowing about teaching methods appropriate for SEN students (84.4%) followed by the need to make curriculum adaptations (83.3%) then developing IEPs (78.1%). In addition, about half of the respondents (44.8%) reported their high need for providing appropriate scaffolding and learning strategies to SEN students while the other half indicated a medium need for the same item. The majority of teachers (74%) recorded medium need for a training to provide further tuition and supplementary resources and (41.7%) indicated a medium need for using strategies to gain and maintain students' attention. While (43.8%) stated their low need for using technology and multimedia in inclusive classrooms, (32.3%) indicated that they highly recommend training in this area. A good section of respondents (54%-57%) reported that they highly require using peer-mediated instruction and cooperative learning (61.5%) as well as using multisensory presentation of information.

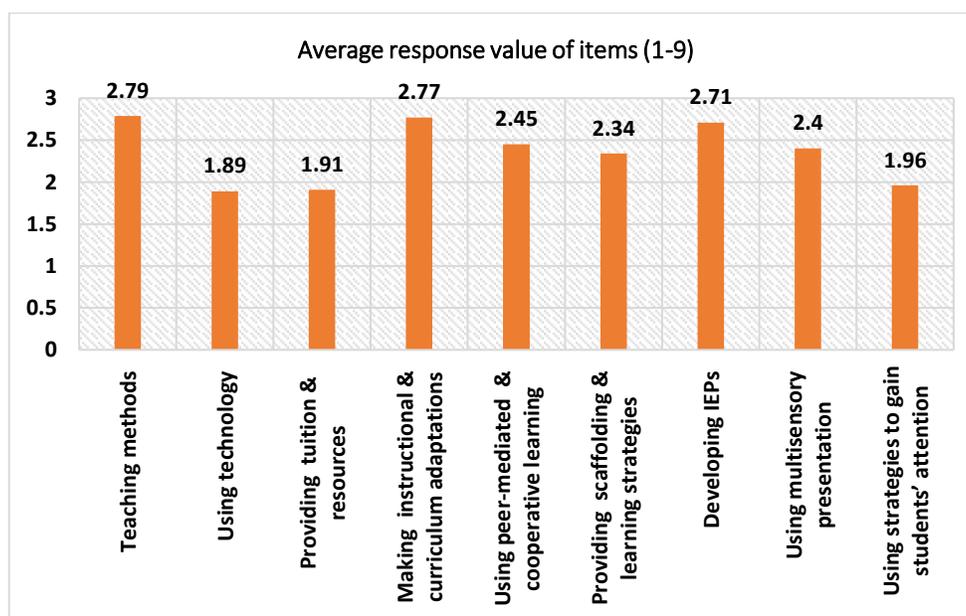


Figure 1. PD areas for instructional strategies

As for classroom management (items 10-16), results indicated that 76.5% of the respondents highly demanded preventive techniques for problem behaviors of SEN students ($M=2.69$, $SD=.638$) and 61.5% ($M=2.43$, $SD=.791$) greatly desired to teach and monitor classroom rules and routines to manage the behaviors of SEN students. Moreover, 40.6% ($M=1.95$, $SD=.773$) acknowledged their medium need for using appropriate classroom design, groupings and seating arrangements. High needs (42.7%, 57.3%, 59.4%, and 63.5%) were respectively reported for increasing students motivation and positive behaviors ($M=2.20$, $SD=.790$); creating a positive classroom climate where students feel accepted, valued, and able to interact ($M=2.42$, $SD=.749$); providing distraction-reduced learning environment ($M=2.49$, $SD=.724$); and using effective management strategies ($M=2.59$, $SD=.573$).

When asked to identify the level of needs about evaluation techniques (items 17-23), the respondents prioritized their needs as follows: adapting the questions to students' needs ($M=2.67$), using summative evaluation ($M=2.50$), using classroom-based assessment ($M=2.48$), using appropriate evaluation tools ($M=2.42$), using diagnostic evaluation ($M=2.39$), providing adjustments in exams ($M=2.36$), and using formative evaluation ($M=2.26$).

When the items about identification of needs were analyzed, it was found that participants had high level need for differentiating between learning disabilities and language and communication disorders (84.4%), identifying the needs of students with emotional and behavioral disorders (65.6%), meeting the needs of sensory disabled students (66.7%), and identifying the needs of students with intellectual disabilities (68.8%). Moreover, medium level need were identified for facilitating the learning of physically impaired students and meeting their needs (57.3%) and identifying the needs of students with autism (53.1%). Figure 2 depicts the means of the needs under this theme (items 24-29).

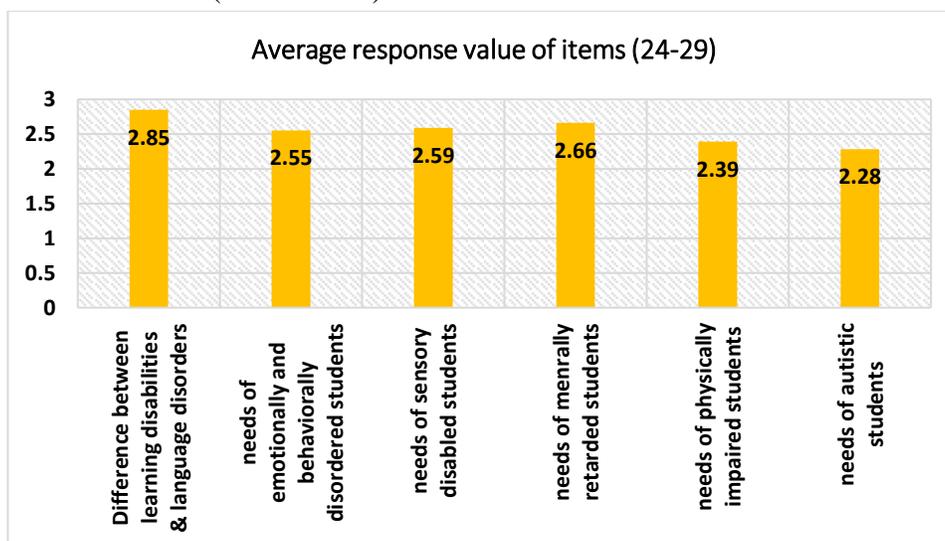


Figure 2. PD areas to identify needs of different disabilities

As for the non-academic skills and general knowledge (items 30-35), a good section of participants (54.2%, $M=2.36$, $SD=.769$) indicated that they highly need to enhance their knowledge about techniques for overcoming challenges encountered in inclusive classes. In addition, a high percentage of teachers (62.5%, $M=2.52$, $SD=.680$) acknowledged their high need for knowing the special education acts and ministerial decrees. As for non-academic skills, nearly half of the respondents indicated their high need for collaboration with school psychologists and SEN coordinators ($M=2.35$, $SD=.696$) and communication with parents of SEN students ($M=2.28$, $SD=.764$). Medium need was reported by 44.8% for collaboration with school administration to provide effective learning for SEN students ($M=2.14$, $SD=.790$). In addition, about 45% ($M=2.31$, $SD=.715$) recorded their interest in teaching social and daily living skills to SEN students.

Section C: Preferences

These methods were identified as beneficial to be used in training sessions respectively: face-to-face seminars and workshops, mentor-supported learning, project-based learning and teamwork, individual learning, online conference/webinars, and lectures. As for the training time, morning training was chosen by 68.16% of the participants whereas 24% preferred afternoon training. About half of the participants preferred the training session/workshop to last 3 hours while nearly 21% preferred a 45-minute or 90-minute session. 48.9% chose weekdays for conducting PD programs and 43.2% agreed that weekends would be convenient for training.

To answer the third research question and identify the relation between participants profile and needs, it was found that the variables met univariate and multivariate normality and linearity assumptions. Statistical significance level was specified as .01 by using Bonferroni correction in order to prevent increase of Type-1 error due to the examination of five subscales (dependent variables) together. MANCOVA analyses were calculated to identify the relations of demographic information of the participants and PD needs. As presented in table 3, PD needs statistically varied in age [$F(15.486)=26.916$, $p < .01$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .188$, partial $\eta^2 = .427$], years of experience [$F(15.486)=22.702$, $p < .01$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .231$, partial $\eta^2 = .386$], and qualifications [$F(10.352)=8.367$, $p < .01$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .653$, partial $\eta^2 = .192$]. However, there was no statistically significant difference in terms of gender [$F(5.176)=3.031$, $p > .01$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .921$, partial $\eta^2 = .079$] and PD activities [$F(8.176)=.325$, $p > .01$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .991$, partial $\eta^2 = .009$].

Table 3. MANCOVA results for differences in needs by participants' profile

Profile	Wilks' Λ	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	P	η^2
Age	.188	26.916	15.000	486.000	.000	.427
Gender	.921	3.031	5.000	176.000	.022	.079
Years of experience	.231	22.702	15.000	486.000	.000	.386
PD activities	.991	.325	8.000	176.000	.897	.009
Qualifications	.653	8.367	10.000	352.000	.000	.192

The follow-up ANOVA were conducted to find out where the differences occurred between variables that were significant with needs; namely age, years of experience and qualifications. As for age, significant differences were found in the five subscales ($p=.000<.01$). Bonferroni tests were used to identify in which age group there were differences. The needs of the participants aged 30-40 (means ranging from 2.49-2.74), 41-45 ($M=2.33-2.54$), and 46-50 ($M=2.31-2.56$) for the five subdomains were greater than the needs of the participants aged 50+ ($M=1.51-2.21$); with the lowest needs for general knowledge in all age groups. Therefore, the needs of teachers aged 50 and below were greater than those whose age was 50+ in terms of strategies for teaching, classroom management, evaluation, identification of needs and general knowledge.

In addition, according to the follow-up ANOVA results, years of experience were found to be significant for the five subscales ($p=.000<.01$). Bonferroni tests revealed that the needs were high among participants with 1-5 years of experience with means ranged from 2.55 to 2.73 followed by 6-15 years of experience (from $M=2.52$ to $M=2.60$), then those with 16-25 (from $M=2.21$ to $M=2.53$). The lowest needs reported by the group of 25+ years of experience with a range of $M=1.87$ and $M=2.36$.

In addition, there were significant differences on the follow-up ANOVA between qualifications and needs for teaching methods, classroom management techniques, evaluation tools and identification of needs ($p=.000<.01$), but not in general knowledge ($p=.226>.01$). According to Bonferroni tests, participants with master degrees had the highest means on the four

subdomains respectively ($M=2.70, 2.65, 2.67, 2.64$); which indicated higher needs compared to participants with bachelor degrees.

6. Discussion

As shown in the data analysis section, differentiating between learning disabilities and language disorders, knowing about teaching methods, making curriculum adaptations, developing IEPs, and using preventive techniques for problem behaviors were respectively the most in-demand needs specified by the respondents to the questionnaire. These needs are consistent with the suggestions of the interviewees in this study. In accordance with these results, Sadioglu, et al. (2013) identified adapting curriculum, providing one-to-one activities, using teaching equipment, developing IEPs, and encouraging SEN students' engagement with ordinary students as the most used strategies by participants in their study. Similarly, Tanyi (2016) and Batista-Arias (2011) concluded that curriculum accommodation influence teachers' attitudes towards teaching SEN students and reported that EFL teachers felt PD programs should train them on developing IEPs, using methods for teaching foreign languages, understanding special education terminology, and adapting curriculum.

Concerning classroom management, the majority of the respondents desired to be trained on how to use preventive techniques with the behavioral problems of SEN students. By the same token, Hristovskaa and Jovanova-Mitkovskaa (2010) concluded that supportive learning environment, positive attitudes towards SEN students, and proper school physical conditions and equipment contributed to the successful implementation of inclusion. In addition, Lucia Potgieter-Groot, Visser, and Beer (2012) found out that participants in their study used good practices to deal with SEN students, including giving individual attention, maintaining security through well-established routine and reinforcing positive behaviors.

The results also revealed that respondents specified some techniques to be beneficial for evaluating SEN students including using adapted questions, different types of evaluations, and appropriate assessment tools. Comparably, Sadioglu et al. (2013) indicated that teachers made adaptations in evaluation of SEN students in the lights of IEPs followed by using suitable grading systems and evaluation tools. Furthermore, Batista-Arias (2011) and Pinar (2014)'s findings agreed with current findings in that EFL teachers need to be prepared on identifying disabilities and methods of meeting the needs.

Teachers in the current study noted their need to increase their knowledge about acts and decrees about special education and ways to overcome challenges in inclusive classes. Communication and collaboration with special education specialists and parents were reported to be the most vital non-academic skill to deal with SEN students. In the same way, Pinar (2014) found out that knowing general knowledge, learning about learning disabilities, and teaching social

skills are critical in PD programs about inclusion. However, Pinar (2014) reported that the participants considered teaching academic skills, instructional methods, controlling students' behaviors, preparing IEPs, and assessment techniques not very important. He attributed this finding to the lack of awareness of the significance of these skills at the participants' side; which might be due to the inadequate pre-service preparation programs.

The majority of the participants preferred future training to be arranged in a face-to-face format and to take part in weekdays. They also preferred constructive teaching methods (group works, project based learning). This is in accordance with Moeini (2003) and Siddiqui (2006) who found that professionals preferred PD activities in workshops over online training as the former gave them opportunities to practice what they learned. Furthermore, the findings revealed that there were significant relationships between participants' professional needs and age, years of experience and qualifications. However, gender and previous training didn't influence participants' needs. The younger the participants, the more passionate about satisfying their needs. Likewise, participants with less experience were found to be more curious about knowing about inclusive education than colleagues who are more experienced. Participants with master degrees recorded the highest needs in comparison to bachelor holders. Khan and Sarwar (2011) concluded that academicians with less experience tend to be more open to learning and need more training than do more experienced colleagues. Similarly, Moeini (2003)'s findings showed that professional needs decrease as age and years of experience increase.

7. Recommendations and pedagogical implications

In the light of the findings, the researcher offered some recommendations for decision makers, teachers and researchers. First, systematic and high-quality PD programs should be prepared for in-service EFL teachers to familiarize them with necessary strategies and knowledge to deal with SEN students. Second, PD activities should be provided at school level to foster ongoing PD communities among co-workers at schools. Third, to improve professional practices and practical skills, teachers should be encouraged to observe more experienced colleagues when teaching SEN students and collaborate with special education teachers and experts. Fourth, it is recommended that all PD programs for in-service teachers be evaluated to provide necessary improvements to tailor them to teachers' needs. Furthermore, rules and regulation that guide the implementation of inclusion in schools should be made clearer and flexible and should be monitored to ensure appropriate implementation. Inclusive Education and Special Education courses should be compulsory to pre-service teachers at university level. Last but not least, integrating technology can upgrade teachers' knowledge and skills and facilitate their access to updated materials along with rich experience of professional networking with other teachers overseas.

Further research should explore the factors for effective inclusion. More research is needed to identify the needs of EFL teachers in other contexts to design or tailor PD programs to anticipate their needs. It would be interesting to compare how teaching practices differ with other countries that implement inclusion and investigate teachers' experiences and needs. Further research to examine the effect of a proposed PD program based on the findings of this study on the participants' performance and attitudes are highly needed.

This study is geographically limited to one governorate; Gharbia. Participants were selected by cluster sampling technique; though less precise, it is more cost-effective and time-efficient than the other methods. This research can be replicated to include other governorates in Egypt, other primary and preparatory schools, larger number of EFL teachers to maximize the opportunity of generalizing the findings. The study is also limited to the instruments used to collect data; therefore, utilizing more instruments for collecting data like observations and journals will help in understanding the gaps in teachers' practices. Another limitation resulted from the aspects specified in the questionnaire and the needs specified by the participants.

8. Conclusion

The Egyptian ministerial decree (No.42/2017) posited that PD training should be provided to school staff on inclusion with collaboration with private sector and social communities. Special Education Department in the MoE provided a variety of PD training to teachers, however; none of these PD dealt with adapting EFL content area or instruction to the needs of SEN students. To address this deficiency, MoE should offer PD directly applicable to EFL teachers and support them with resources and facilities. To that end, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews, reviewed archival data, and administered a need assessment questionnaire to collect qualitative as well as quantitative data about teachers' needs concerning inclusive education. Data analyses showed that PD programs must provide EFL teachers with adequate knowledge in teaching methods, individualized instruction and creating IEPs, classroom management techniques, evaluation methods, knowledge to identify and meet the needs of SEN students, and non-academic knowledge and skills.

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