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## Professionalism And Professional Development Of Teachers In English Language Teaching: University Of Gondar In Focus

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### Abstract:

*Professionalism is a complex term which remained to be illusive to come up with definitions. It is usually related to the formal and informal development of professional skill that occurs in the workplace. Research into professionalism in ELT deals with professional authority, research, collegiality, and working atmosphere, among others. In line with this, the current study attempts to asses Professionalism and professional development of teachers in English Language teaching at the University of Gondar. The researcher developed questionnaire based on the available literature in the area. The questionnaires were designed to have both open-ended and close ended type questions to measure the teaching personnel's rate of professionalism and professional development items. The findings of the study show that the teaching personnel have far lower access to journals to up-date themselves. They rarely engage themselves in reading such publications and trainings and workshops in ELT as well. In contrast, their responses show that they have very good professional authority in decision making related to teaching-learning activities. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher would like to recommend that the positively rated items should be kept up. Moreover, the institution shall arrange professional development trainings and workshops which are specifically targeted to ELT teachers' specialization. The institution shall also make some subscriptions to foreign as well as local journals so that the teaching personnel shall update themselves with current knowledge in teaching theories and methods to shore up quality and to develop professionally.*

### 1.Introduction

Professionalism is a complex term which remained to be misleading to come up with a single definition. Some scholars tend to use the term interchangeably with professional development. Also, the term remained to be a challenge for sociologists and other social scientists to come up with scientific and quantifiable instruments to measure it. However, the existing literature pertinent to this issue implies continuing effort by scholars across disciplines to analyze the issue of professionalism in various contexts.

Research into the professional development of English language teachers is justified from various perspectives. First of all, it is essential to know the status of the teaching personnel in light of the knowledge and skills they demonstrate in the profession. It is also essential to take note of the contribution of teachers in the provision of quality education because the latter remains a challenge in the current era of educational transformation from the elites to the mass (Eshiwani, 1999). Professional development of teachers also assists in the improvement of teachers' quality of life and working conditions which has socio-economic implications.

Research into professionalism and different models of teachers' professionalism suggest arrays of meanings for the terms professionalism, and professional development, among others. Thus, one should first have a clear understanding of what the term professionalism refers to. According to Hoyle (1974) professionalism refers to

... The strategies and rhetoric employed by members of an occupation in seeking to improve the status, salary and conditions, and professionally refer to the knowledge, skills and procedures employed by teachers in the process of teaching (as cited in Lester, 2011)

From the above it may make sense to argue that researching professional development embraces in it dual concepts of professionalism and professionalism

McCulloch, Helsby and Knight (2000) state that the idea of professionalism in relation to teachers is problematic as the meaning ascribed to the term is adopted and developed over time and in contestation between rival groups and interests. Eisenmann (1999) states

...teacher professionalism concerns the rights and obligations of teachers to determine their own tasks in classrooms, .... It is also stated that professionalization denotes issues of status... in relation to teacher status, obtaining security of tenure, clear provision of promotion in salary and pension schemes and the like. ( as cited in McCulloch, Helsby, and Knight, 2000; p. 14-15)

It can be clearly seen above that professionalism and professionalization seem to be coinciding terms. Also Hoyle's professionalism refers to what McCulloch, Helsby and Knight (2000) discuss as teacher professionalism. The above observation also requires us to take note of the caution by Crandall (1993, pp. 499-500) who stresses the need not to confuse professionalization (status enhancement through certification or credentialing, contracts, and tenure) with professionalism (professional practice, involvement in program development, continued learning).

In relation to the aforementioned terms, it is also essential to discuss the concept of professional development as it is quite related to the above mentioned points. Dall'Alba and Sandberg (2006) also agree that the term professional development is an "illusory" term. This seems to be in line with the usage of the term profession as is demonstrated above. These authors attempted to delimit the term as "the formal and informal development of professional skill that occurs in the workplace".

Based on the delimitation of the term, Dall'Alba and Sandberg (2006) carry on discussing different models for professional development, analyze the limitations of stage model and recommend an alternative model of professional skills development in the workplace. In general, the existing literature on the issue of professionalism and professional development seems to be inclined towards taking professionalism/ professional development as the convergence of rights, responsibilities, duties, knowledge and skills and the way these are practiced at the workplace.

### *1.1.Objectives*

In light of the above, the current study attempts to describe the professionalism/ professional development of teachers in English Language Teaching (ELT) in Ethiopian higher education institutions with special reference to the department of English Language and Literature at University of Gonder. Specifically, the study attempts

- To describe professionalism at the workplace
- To look into the extent to which teachers engage themselves in professional development
- To assess the institutional atmosphere for EFL teachers at the University of Gonder.

### *1.2.Scope Of The Study*

This study is designed to deal only with EFL teachers at the University of Gonder. Teachers in other disciplines at the institution and teachers in the same discipline at other institutions are not considered in this study.

### *1.3.Significance Of The Study*

This study may serve as a springboard for those researchers and teachers who are interested to explore the different dimensions of professionalism and professional development of teachers teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The study may also be used as a baseline to generate data and to clarify the perspectives of professional development of teachers at the University of Gonder. Last but not the least, the study will provide concerned stakeholders with diverse recommendations concerning the status of professionalism/professional development of teachers and the current practices at the University of Gonder.

### *1.4.Limitations Of The Study*

This study, as it is developed following the call for papers from the University of Gonder, mentions financial and time constraints as limitations. Had it not been for both of these elements, the research should have included a larger number of the staff across disciplines.

## **2.Review Of Related Literature: Professionalism/Professional Development In ELT**

Scholars state that professions were defined not only by specialized knowledge but also with some sense of moral and societal responsibility. Professionals' work was believed to be especially important "for the well-being of individuals and society at large, In the early part of the 20th century" (Solbrette and Karseth, 2006, p. 97)

As it is stated in the background section of this study, professionalism and professional development are confusing concepts and they are often developing with the dynamism of time. Richards and Farell(2005) designed different perspectives of Foreign language teachers professional development. These perspectives include individual versus institutional perspective, collaborative versus self-directed perspective and novices and expert's perspective (pp. 7-14). Self-awareness, collegiality, research, experience, enhanced learning outcome, and pedagogical innovation are some of the items that fall under these perspectives (ibid).

In the same manner, Dall'Alba and Sandberg (2006) treat professional development from two perspectives: the formal and informal development of professional skill. The former refers to Formal professional education courses and programs for people who are inexperienced and seeking to gain entry to a particular profession or toward experienced professionals who seek some form of continuing education outside their usual place of work. The latter is a kind of on-the-job learning, typically a part of the day-to-day work of the professionals concerned.

Also, "Professional development, in a broad sense, refers to the development of a person in his or her personal role" (Eleonora, 2003 as cited in Hien, 2009). Based on the above points, it is possible to operationally define professional development for this particular study as follows.

Professional development is the engagement of individuals in any activity for the enhancement of their capacity at the workplace and to gain, improve, and share a body of knowledge and skills that are relevant to perform particular duties in their workplace.

Professional development should be based on the notion of teacher as learner and reflective practitioner (Schon, 1987). Professional development of teachers of English as a foreign language can be carried out based on the need of the individual teacher or on a large-scale, as a formal and institutional practice. Bolam (1993) teacher professional development refers to “any professional development activities engaged in by teachers which enhance their knowledge and skills (as cited in Hein, 2009). Similarly, Richards and Farrell (2005) state “Development generally refers to general growth not focused on a specific job. It serves a long-term goal and seeks to facilitate growth of teachers’ understanding of teaching and of themselves as teachers”(p. 4).

According to Hien (2009), professional development has different advantages. It enhances the competence of all members of a learning community to pursue their lifelong learning. In educational setting, teacher professional development becomes a landmark in teachers’ continuum of career development. Teachers’ professional development also helps out in improving quality of instruction, ensuring better learning outcomes, and updating teachers with the current developments in their discipline which are pertinent to the teaching duty.

Richards and Farrell (2005) argue that teachers need to expand their roles and responsibilities over time so as to continue finding language teaching rewarding. They also justify the need for regular professional development activities in view of the fact that language teaching is subject to rapid change. Such a change is inevitable because not only the profession responds to new educational paradigms and trends but also institutions face new challenges which emanate from changes in curriculum and students’ needs, among others (p. vii). The scholars also identified activities such as: engaging in self-reflection and evaluation, developing specialized knowledge and skills about many aspects of teaching, expanding their knowledge base about research, theory, and issues in teaching, developing collaborative relationships with other teachers and the like as important activities in professional development schemes (ibid). In an attempt to develop a quantitative model, Richard Hall had considered similar items in a fifty point likert scale questions employed to quantify professionalism (Snizek, 1972).

In discussing professional development of language teachers, it is essential to consider the institutional atmosphere. That is, it is essential to assess what arrangements are made for second or foreign language teachers so that they can develop professionally. In line with this, Richards and Farrell (2005) also state

Language teaching institutions are also expected to maintain high professional standards, to provide opportunities for their teachers to pursue professional development, and to provide conditions where teachers cooperate to achieve higher levels of learning among their students (p. ix).

A number of articles related to professional development and English language teaching are available across countries and institutions. Relevant studies justified the research gap as well as the status of professional development for ELT. For instance, Farmer (2006) states that English Language Teaching (ELT) has no professional body controlling entry to the profession. The UNESCO’s recommendation (UNESCO, 1996) generally states that teaching in higher education by itself is a profession. It is a public service which “... calls for a sense of personal and institutional responsibility for the education and welfare of students and of the community at large and for a commitment to high professional standards in scholarship and research”.

It is hardly justifiable to comment on the current status of ELT Professionalism in Ethiopia without substantial national data to back up such view point. However, it is possible to describe the status of professionalism and professional development in a particular Higher Education institution which can serve as a springboard and as a source of information to sketch a broader picture of the issue.

### **3. Study Contexts**

The current study is conducted at the University of Gondar, one of the relatively oldest state-owned institutions in Ethiopia. The university has 60 years of service and excellence in teaching students in a number of disciplines reaching over fifty undergraduate and postgraduate programs. It is about a decade since the university launched department of English Language and Literature as part of the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Humanities. The department has 26 teaching personnel currently on duty and close to 10 PhD candidates on study leave and only two PhD holders and one Assistant professor of English. The researcher would therefore attempt to look into the professionalism in ELT at the university in view of the issues identified in the theoretical and related literature above. Data was obtained by using a questionnaire and observation drawn from the literature available as well as accessible to the researcher. Though the researcher attempt to interview all the teaching personnel who are on duty, due to the inconvenience (i.e. many of the teaching personnel are working beyond regular workloads), it was hardly possible to do so.

### **4. Methods Of The Study**

#### *4.1. Study Design*

The research design for this particular study is a cross-sectional survey design as it attempts to describe the state of professionalism and professional development of teachers in higher education ELT with special reference to the department of English language and literature at Gondar University.

#### *4.2. Questionnaire Design*

The questionnaire for this study is designed after a thorough investigation of the review of related literature. Reference is also made to Richard and Farrell’s (2005) professionalism perspectives and the likert scale items developed by Richard Hall (1969), and the recommendation of Snizek (1972) on how to use Hall’s professionalism scale. As a result of this, about 16 open-ended questions in three categories with seven questions each: namely, questions about professional authority, questions about career development and

questions about the institutional atmosphere for career development were used to get the responses of the teaching personnel on diverse issues of professionalism. These categories of questions were integrated with the responses to open-ended questions which provided the respondents with opportunities to express their opinions about and their feelings for extreme ratings of the close-ended questions. A pilot testing of the questionnaire was made which helped the reshaping and rewriting of the questions to fit the purpose of the study.

#### 4.3. Response Rate

Fifteen questionnaires were distributed among the study subjects. 11 (73%) of the teaching personnel filled out and returned the questionnaire. One returned a questionnaire totally unfilled and the remaining didn't return the questionnaires timely. Thus, their questionnaires were not considered for analysis.

#### 4.4. Survey Population

The result of the study would be inferred to all the teaching personnel in the department of English Language and Literature at University of Gonder during the study period.

#### 4.5. Sampling Design

The sampling design used for the study is the Simple Random Sampling method so as to insure equal probability of selection of respondents.

#### 4.6. Selection Of Respondents

Respondents were randomly selected by using lottery methods from a notebook which consists of the contact address of the teaching personnel of the department. Those members of the department who grant study leave are not part of this study. The study is conducted taking the teaching personnel in the department of English Language and Literature at University of Gonder as a unit of analysis.

#### 4.7. Plan Of Data Processing And Analysis

The quantitative data are analyzed employing descriptive statistics manually (i.e. tallying). The Lickert type questions were analyzed by using the mean rating of the overall responses and frequencies and percentage proportions of responses. Five Lickert scale points (strongly agree= 5, agree= 4, undecided= 3, disagree= 2 and strongly disagree= 1) were assigned to the close-ended items. In addition, the open-ended questions were analyzed qualitatively.

### 5. Results

This section presents the analysis of the data collected. It begins with background information of respondents. The teaching personnel were provided with 17 Lickert scaled items to be rated. These were accompanied by open-ended questions which provided respondents with opportunities to express their feelings for and justify why they have extreme ratings (i.e. strongly agree or strongly disagree).

#### 5.1. Background Information Of Respondents

The entire study subjects consisted of 11 teaching personnel 10 of whom were Ethiopians, and one of them was an Indian. Table one below summarizes the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents.

#### 5.2. Data Analysis

##### 5.2.1. Socio-Demographic Profile Of Respondents

S.No	Socio- demographic variable		Number of respondents	percentage proportion
1.	Sex	Male	6	64
		Female	5	36
		Total	11	100
2.	Marital Status	Married	7	64
		Single	6	55
		Divorced	2	18
		Total	11	100
3.	Qualification	BA/BSC	1	9
		MA/MSC	9	91
		PHD	1	0
		<b>Total</b>	11	100

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Profile Of Respondents

TABLE 1 presents a summary of the socio-demographic profile of respondents. There were six male and five female teaching personnel who responded to the questionnaires distributed to them. Compared to other departments in the faculty of social sciences and humanities at the university, this is a good proportion which probably puts the department at the few fronts with a proportional number of female academicians.

#### 5.2.2. Academic Rank Of Respondents

S.No	Academic Rank	Frequency	Percent
1.	Graduate Assistant	1	9.1
2.	Lecturer	8	81.8
3.	Assistant Professor	2	9.1
4.	Associate Professor	0	0
5.	Professor	0	0
6.	Total	11	100

*Table 2: Academic Rank Of Respondents*

TABLE 2 presents the academic rank of respondents. The department is characterized by young staff members. As can be seen in the table below, about eighty per cent of the respondents are M.A degree holders, with a single graduate assistant and assistant professor, and no one associate as well as full professor. This is probably because of the young age of the department as it is no more than a decade since it is established as a full-fledged department.

#### 5.2.3. Employment Condition

S.No	Employment Condition	Frequency	Percent
1.	Full timer	11	100
2.	Voluntary	0	0
3.	Contract employment	0	0
4.	Total	11	100

*Table 3: Employment Condition*

TABLE 3 summarizes the employment condition of respondents. Though there are some volunteer expatriate staffs who usually stay for a semester or a year working in the university, the sampled respondents here are all full timers as can be seen in the summary table below.

#### 5.2.4. Work Experience

S.No	Work Experience	Frequency	Percent
1.	0-5	4	36.4
2.	6-10	6	54.5
3.	>20	1	9.1
4.	Total	11	100

*Table 4: Work Experience*

TABLE 4 is a summary of the work experience of the respondents. As can be seen in the table below, only four respondents (36.4) have a work experience of up to five years, whereas about 54 per cent of the respondents have experiences ranging from six to ten years. In contrast, the department has no well experienced senior staff who is professionally developed and the sample might prove this as there is only one individual who provide a response to over twenty years of experience.

#### 5.3. Data Analysis And Presentation

The data that was collected by using questionnaires was computed by making use of descriptive statistics and the output of the data is summarized and presented hereunder. Moreover, an attempt is also made whether there are emerging patterns across variables.

### 5.3.1. Career Development

S.No	Statements about career development	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Reading journal articles	1	1	2	4	3
2.	Engagement in research	1	1	3	4	2
3.	Certainty for one's duties	2	2	2	3	2
4.	Workshop participation	3	3	1	2	2
5.	Attending trainings	3	4	1	2	1
6.	collegiality	0	1	4	5	1
7.	I enjoy seeing my colleagues because of the ideas that are exchanged.	1	2	3	4	1

Table 5: Statements About Career Development

Note: (a) Table headings are as follows (1) percentage proportion rating as Strongly agree (2) percentage proportion rating as Agree (3) percentage proportion rating as Undecided (4) percentage proportion rated Disagree (5) percentage proportion rating as Strongly disagree (b) The total number of respondents (11) is used as a base for calculating the percentage proportions indicated in the table.

TABLE 5 summarizes the responses to questions about career development. As can be seen in the table, the majority of the respondents (64 percent or 7 out of 11) expresses disagreements to the question whether they read journal articles with three of them in a strong disagreement. Similarly, six out of eleven expressed that they do not engage in research duties. In contrast to such polarities in responses, the academicians seem to be divided regarding their views about the certainty of their duties with four out of eleven (36 percent) participants expressing agreements and five out of eleven (45 percent) participants expressing disagreements (three of them agree and two of them strongly agree).

In contrast to the responses to those items, the majority of the respondents expressed agreements to workshop participations and attending trainings which also contribute a lot to their professional developments. As can be seen in the table, six out of eleven respondents (55 per cent) expressed agreements for participation in workshops out of which three of them expressed agreements and three more of them expressed strong agreements. Similarly, seven out of eleven respondents (64 per cent) expressed their agreements for attending trainings out of which four of the seven respondents and three of the seven respondents expressed agreements and strong agreements, respectively.

Respondents provided lowest rating for the item dealing with collegiality. As can be seen in the summary table below, six out of eleven respondents (55 per cent) expressed disagreements about the existence of collegiality. Out of these respondents, five of them (45 per cent) express disagreements about the issue. Moreover, four out of eleven respondents (36 per cent) remain unable to decide about the issue which would probably imply preference of the respondents to be reserved. A similar item which attempts to address the issue of collegiality (i.e. the seventh item in table 5) emerged to have very similar response pattern.

As can be seen in the summary table, three of the eleven respondents remained unable to decide about the item and five out of eleven respondents (45 per cent) expressed disagreements as to whether they like to see their colleagues for the sake of the ideas exchanged among them. The similarity of the responses to indirect way of asking about collegiality may be taken as a proof that collegiality and staff collaboration is at stake. This has its own bearing on the professional development of teachers as they do not engage in an exchange of ideas and sharing their experiences.

### 5.3.2. Institutional Atmosphere For Career Development

S.No	Statements about the institutional atmosphere for career development	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Availability of up-to-date journals	0	0	5	4	2
2.	Provision of sufficient fund for research	2	1	3	2	2
3.	Organization of trainings to develop the knowledge of staff	1	2	3	3	2
4.	Accounting for professional say during staff recruitment (My comments have value, they are heard during staff recruitment to preserve professionalism)	0	3	4	3	1
5.	Institutional arrangements for Participation on workshops (The institution makes arrangements for ELT teachers to attended workshops)	1	1	1	4	3

Table 6: Institutional Atmosphere For Career Development

Note: (a) Table headings are as follows (1) percentage proportion rating as Strongly agree (2) percentage proportion rating as Agree (3) percentage proportion rating as Undecided (4) percentage proportion rated Disagree (5) percentage proportion rating as Strongly disagree (b) The total number of respondents (11) is used as a base for calculating the percentage proportions indicated in the table.

TABLE 6 summarizes the participants' response about the institutional atmosphere for career development. As can be seen in the table, 55 per cent of the respondents (6 out of 11) expressed their disagreements about the availability of up-to-date journals in their area of specialization. Moreover, 45 per cent of the respondents (5 out of 11) remained unable to decide about the issue. In contrast, no respondent expressed agreement as to whether up to date journals are available for them. This implies that the teaching personnel seems far removed from access to current knowledge in their area of expertise and this will greatly downplay their professional progress and development.

As to whether the institution provides them with sufficient fund, three of the eleven respondents (27 per cent) expressed agreements and four out of eleven respondents (36 per cent) expressed disagreements. Three respondents (27 per cent) remained unable to decide about the issue. Similarly, responses to the item about organization of training to develop knowledge of the staff show that five of the eleven respondents (45 per cent) expressed disagreements and three of the eleven respondents expressed agreements (27 per cent) with the same proportion of respondents (27 per cent) being unable to decide about the issue.

The teaching personnel were also asked to rate if they have professional say during staff recruitment. As can be seen in the table above, four of the eleven respondents (36 per cent) expressed disagreements about the issue and the same proportion of respondents remained unable to decide about the issue. In contrast, only three of the eleven respondents expressed agreements with no respondent rating the item as strongly agree.

The last but not the least item in the above category requires respondents to rate whether the institution makes arrangements for ELT teachers to attend workshops. Seven out of the eleven respondents (64 per cent) respondents express disagreements to the idea with three of the respondents (27 percent) expressing strong disagreement and four of the respondents (36 per cent) rating the statement as disagrees. In contrast to this, two of the respondents (18 per cent) expressed agreements with one of these respondents rating the item as strongly agree. A single individual remained unable to decide and another one didn't rate the item at all.

### 5.3.3. Statements About Professional Authority

S.No	Statements about professional authority	1	2	3	4	5
1.	I have Professional authority in my decisions related to teaching-learning (students score and the like).	4	4	2	1	0
2.	I feel that what I do is relevant.	4	6	0	0	1
3.	I am assigned to tasks which are in my area of specializations	4	5	0	2	0
4.	My Supervisor accommodates my opinion.	4	2	1	3	0
5.	Conception of the institution in view of professional development (The institution is a good place to develop professionally)	2	3	1	4	0

Table 7: Statements About Professional Authority

Note: (a) Table headings are as follows (1) percentage proportion rating as Strongly agree (2) percentage proportion rating as Agree (3) percentage proportion rating as Undecided (4) percentage proportion rated Disagree (5) percentage proportion rating as Strongly disagree (b) The total number of respondents (11) is used as a base for calculating the percentage proportions indicated in the table.

TABLE 7 summarizes teaching personnel's rating of professional authority. At-a-glance look at the summary table shows that the teaching personnel seem to provide a more favorable response to the items in this category. As can be seen in the table, teaching personnel's rating of whether they have professional authority is more than fifty per cent agreements with 36 per cent of responses rating the item as strongly agree and equal proportion of respondents rating the item as agree. Two respondents remained unable to decide about the issue and only one respondent expressed disagreement in the rating of the item.

In relation to the aforementioned item, respondents were also asked to rate the level of their feel as to whether what they do is relevant or not. It seems that the respondents are in the same line of thought as far as their response to this item is compared with that of professional authority. Almost all of them (90 per cent) expressed their agreements with four out of eleven (36 percent) rating the item as strongly agree and six of them (55 per cent) rating the item as agreed. A very similar pattern emerged in ratings about assignment in one's area of specialization with 81 per cent of the respondents expressing agreements out of which four respondents (36 percent) rated the item as strongly agree and five of them (45 per cent) as agree. Only two respondents expressed disagreement in their rating of the item.

Respondents were also asked to rate whether their supervisor accommodates their views. As can be seen in the table, six of them (54 per cent) expressed agreements with four out of eleven (36 percent) retain the item as strongly agree and two of them (18 per cent) retain the item as agreed. A respondent remained unable to decide about the issue and three respondents (27 per cent) rated the item as agreed. In addition, a respondent didn't rate the item at all.

As a summary, an overarching item was provided for the respondents to rate whether they conceive of the institution as a good place to develop professionally. Five of the teaching personnel (45 per cent) expressed agreements with two of these five respondents rating the item as strongly agree and three of them rating the item as agreed. In contrast, four of the eleven respondents (36 per cent) rated the statement as disagrees. No respondent rated the item as strongly disagree. Of the remaining two respondents, one of them didn't rate the item and the other remained unable to decide about the issue.

#### 5.4. Qualitative Responses

S.No	Item rated	summary	Direct expression of the respondents
1.	Availability of journals	Unavailable/inaccessible	The staff members have no access to journals Probably this is the culture of Addis Ababa University only Internet asks for payment even to read articles and we can't. Who cares? Teachers run to win their daily bread
2.	Collegiality	Non-existent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instructors are not interested to stay here. How can they share experiences?</li> <li>We don't have that habit.</li> <li>We failed even to sustain the social committee of the department.</li> <li>Some of the younger staff members are more energetic, and enthusiastic to learn from seniors though we don't have the sense of seniority in general.</li> </ul>
3.	Reading Journals	We don't	The library is disorganized and I do not like going there. There is no journal and the existing journals belong only to medical and health sciences. How can a teacher who works over 12hrs. read journals? ...too ideal it seems.
4.	Workshops	Available but not relevant	University hosts workshops but usually it is for professionals in medical and health sciences. We've never had a single in a decade about ELT
5.	Professional authority	Well exercised	I decide what I feel is relevant. My decisions are respected. My professional authority is respected. The only thing to complain is that sometimes leaders are not participatory and we see minor but significant errors in institutional publications and banners. "Language is the dress of any thought". And, the head and even the academic commission respect what we do and what we decide.

Table 8: Summary Of Qualitative Responses

TABLE 8 shows the summary of qualitative responses. As indicated in the methods section, the questionnaire consisted of open ended items to provide respondents with the opportunity to state why they rate some items with extreme values such as strongly agree or strongly disagree. Many of the respondents seem to neglect the issue. Only a third of the respondents expressed why they have such ratings and their responses are summarized in the table below.

#### 6. Conclusion

Professionalism is an important aspect of every discipline. Professionalism and professional development of practitioners are crucial issues for English language teachers as well. In light of the data generated above, it can be concluded that some aspects of professional development need reconsideration. For instance, practitioners reported that they do not engage themselves in reading journals in their area of expertise. As indicated in their responses to open ended questions, they stated that they have no time allocated for this. This finding seems to be compatible with a study by Eshiwani (1999) which states the situation of African higher education teaching personnel work to make "ends meet" for increased income. The study also seems to be in the same line of thought with Alemu (2008) which touches upon the condition of the teaching personnel at the University of Gondar. Last but not the least, the data presentation also confirms that though it is essential that ELT teachers need to have access to up to date journals, they do not have access to it. Thus, there seems to be a need to address this issue as it needs administrative decisions to facilitate access to journals and publications which are available both in print and online as well. As per the UNESCO Recommendation (1997), providing these and similar inputs helps maintain high professional standards in research and quality education.



As indicated in the review of related literature, Richard and Farrell (2005) emphasize on “the need for regular professional development activities”. In light of this, the responses provided by the research participants for the open-ended questions indicate that the institution hosts a number of national and international conferences, and workshops as well. In spite of this, respondents also indicated that the conferences and workshops are in some cases specifically relevant to some disciplines like biomedical and health sciences, leaving the issue of English language teaching in its entirety unaddressed.

The responses of respondents show that the teaching personnel feel they have Professional authority in decisions related to teaching-learning (students score and the like), they feel what they do is relevant and they are assigned to handle tasks in their area of expertise.

### 7. Recommendation

The researcher would like to recommend the top management of the university that journal subscriptions are vital and they should be available as well as accessible to the teaching personnel. Moreover, teaching personnel should be encouraged to participate in workshops and conferences in other institutions in the country as well as in the region and abroad. Similar workshops in areas of English Language Teaching should be prepared by the University of Gondar as well. In general, keeping the positive lights, there is a need to work on the items with an extreme negative rating.

The teaching personnel themselves and the head of the department should initiate collegiality and discussion among members of the department so that senior faculty of the department be able to share their experiences with the young majority staff members in the department.

Last but not the least, the institution shall keep on recognizing and giving weight to the ideas and opinions provided by the teaching personnel which has its own part in developing ELT teachers of the university professionally.

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