

AN EVALUATION OF A DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to evaluate a doctoral program in English language teaching of a foundation (non-profit, private) university in İstanbul, Turkey. To this end, the CIPP (context, input, process, and product) evaluation framework developed by Stufflebeam (1971) was utilized. In this study, students' preferences and the encouraging determinants to join the program, program content, and resources, instruction in the program, roles of PhD mentors and lastly expected program outcomes were investigated. Seventeen students who are currently enrolled in the program and three program graduates participated in the study. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected via online questionnaires. Quantitative data analysis was done via descriptive statistics, and content analysis was administered for the qualitative data. The findings of the study illustrated students' positive perceptions in terms of the certain aspects of the program, such as content, resources, instruction, and PhD mentors while a need of increase in the variety of the courses was also indicated by the students.

Keywords: Program evaluation, CIPP model, doctoral program evaluation, mentoring in higher education, English language teaching

INTRODUCTION

The importance of acquiring English language skills for having financial and social access to a globalized world is gaining importance; furthermore, this amplified need for learning the English language increased the worldwide demand for skilled English language teachers and more efficient language teacher education programs (Burns & Richards, 2009). For the maintenance of quality and improvement, evaluation is an inseparable element of a program, and language teaching programs are not exceptions. Brown (1995) explains that “ongoing program evaluation on the right side of the model is the glue that connects and holds all elements together” (p. 217), also by providing cohesion among the program elements, evaluation makes sure that all elements of the program stay meaningful.

Program Evaluation

Program evaluation is crucial for the development, implementation and improvement of educational programs (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). There are different definitions proposed for program evaluation (Alkin, 1967; Brown, 1995; Linfield & Posavac, 2019). Firstly, Alkin (1967) approaches educational program evaluation as “identifying and then quantifying, or measuring, the relationships between student inputs and educational outputs and determining the combination of mediating factors which maximizes the educational outputs, given a constant financial input and controlling for the effects of external systems” (p.5). The study also emphasizes the complexity of evaluating educational programs since various factors affect the instructional outputs. Similarly, Brown (1995) views program evaluation as “the systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to promote the improvement of a program and evaluate its effectiveness within the context of the particular institutions involved” (p.218). This definition highlights two purposes for collecting and systematically analyzing information, namely supporting improvement and assessing the effectiveness

of the existing programs. Lastly, Linfield and Posavac (2019) claim that there is a misconception that evaluating only the program outcomes is considered as program evaluation. According to the study, there are seven areas to be considered in program evaluation: meeting needs, implementation, stakeholders, side effects, improvement focus, outcomes, and nuances (mechanisms). They also explain that all these areas may not be addressed in each evaluation process; however, there should be practical reasons why some areas are decided to be left out.

Evaluation is an essential component of a program and provides the necessary information for the improvement and the accountability of the programs (Brown, 1995; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018; Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1985). In educational settings, evaluation holds all the curriculum components together and provides cohesion among them, so that all are working in harmony (Brown, 1995). Furthermore, Stufflebeam (1983) highlights the improvement purpose of the evaluation, and he clarifies that although evaluation is considered as a stressing process, it is not possible to progress without knowing the strong and weak sides of the programs. Likewise, Peacock (2009) claims that program evaluation is essential in foreign language teacher education programs since the program evaluation studies are rare in this area. Finally, the information generated through systematic program evaluation should serve decision-makers in giving informed decisions (Fitzpatrick et al., 2010).

In the field of language teaching, there are a number of program and course evaluation studies (Ateş, 2012; Efeoğlu et. al., 2018; Elma, 2017; Gürler 2018; Kader, 2016; Karataş, 2016; Karim, et. al., 2019; Öztürk, 2015; Özutku 2016; Uzun 2016). These studies concentrated on assessing the preparatory programs (Efeoğlu et. al, 2018), undergraduate ELT programs (Gürler, 2018; Karim et. al., 2019), specific courses offered in undergraduate ELT programs (Elma, 2017; Özutku, 2016; Uzun, 2016) and MA ELT programs (Kader, 2016; Öztürk 2015). The results of these studies highlighted the importance of needs analysis and focus on teachers' and students' perceptions. Specifically, the significance of evaluation in course and program design, development, as well improvement was emphasized as well.

On the other hand, to the knowledge of the researchers, the number of the program evaluation studies conducted on PhD in ELT programs are scarce both abroad (Kordi & Koosha, 2018) and in Turkey (Bilican, 2014; Küçükoğlu, 2015). Firstly, Kordi and Koosha (2018) conducted a comparative evaluation study of the Iranian PhD in ELT program. In the study, the Iranian PhD in ELT curriculum was compared to five prominent universities in different countries. The results illustrated the Iranian PhD in ELT curriculum needs to be improved concerning its goals, admission criteria, and must courses. Secondly, Bilican (2014) evaluated the PhD in ELT program of a state university in Turkey. According to students' perspectives, the program was successful in developing students' analytical and critical thinking skills and research abilities. On the other hand, the program needed to be improved in providing comprehensive course materials, and timely and intensive feedback. Similarly, Küçükoğlu (2015) aimed to evaluate twelve PhD in ELT programs in Turkey. The results of the study showed that students and graduates had positive perceptions about the program descriptions and departmental support. Likewise, it was indicated that the programs were satisfactory in training students to be researchers and to be reflective practitioners. Conversely, it was revealed that the programs needed improvement in teaching language skills, and ELT methodologies, the of the courses, and program resources.

Mentoring in Higher Education

Though mentors and mentoring were defined in several ways, there are common themes in these definitions, such as “an individualized, personalized effort to assist someone in achieving their goals, reaching their objectives, and/or becoming successful” (Landefeld, 2009, p.11). Bozeman and Feeny (2007) defined mentoring in the business setting as “a transmission of knowledge, social capital, and psychosocial support that is related to work” (p. 733). In the educational context, “mentorship can be seen as a process where the novice (mentee), as the learner, is optimally engaged and has a constructive self-awareness” (Lindgren, 2005, p. 253), and there is potential for the development of mentors themselves as the questions, values, and acts of the mentees create unrealized and new possibilities.

In higher education context, mentoring programs have a vast potential considering their educational worth and widespread impact on individuals (Lea, 2011). The significance of the mentoring relationships in the retention of graduate students was highlighted by the scholars (Landefeld, 2009; Laverick, 2016). Furthermore, Lea (2011) states that empowering impact and intellectual connection are the characteristics of a mentoring relationship. As a result of a comprehensive analysis of the literature Ghosh (2013) identified ten mentoring functions: “(a) encouraging reflection, (b) coaching, (c) counseling, (d) assessing, (e) role modeling, (f) being a colleague/fellow learner, (g) parenting, (h) mediating, (i) making friend, and (j) teaching” (p. 156). Similarly, Kram (1983) also mentions the career and psychosocial functions of mentoring. Considering these functions and that each individual has different needs and expectations, in PhD programs, mentors have many roles to fulfill depending on the characteristics of the mentees and the nature of their relationships.

In terms of the studies conducted on mentoring in doctoral education while there are a number of studies conducted abroad (Roberts et al., 2019; Waldeck et al., 2009; Wilde & Schau, 1991) in Turkish context there are limited studies (Arabacı & Ersözülü, 2010; Güven, 2014). To begin with, Wilde and Schau (1991) conducted a study in education graduate departments focusing on mentees’ perceptions of mentoring. The results of the data analysis showed that psychological component is prevalent in the mentoring relationship among other components. Similarly, Waldeck et al. (2009) investigated doctoral mentoring relationships from different dimensions. Outcomes showed mentees received more psychosocial support than career support from the mentors. Finally, mentees expressed their positive feelings and extreme satisfaction with mentoring relationships. Another study conducted by Roberts et al. (2019) on the roles of doctoral mentors aiming to learn strategies from effective mentors for successfully guiding doctoral students. Results revealed that effective mentors employed technical, managerial, and emotional support strategies. The study also provided some strategies regarding these titles different from the previous studies. In their studies, Arabacı and Ersözülü (2010) investigated the postgraduate students’ perceptions of their academic supervisors’ mentoring abilities. They administered a questionnaire to seventy students. Data analysis illustrated that students had a positive perception of the mentoring skills of their supervisors. Likewise, Güven (2014) investigated the research assistants’ relationship with their supervisors within the mentoring framework with fourteen research assistants in a qualitative research design. The results of the study showed that research assistants differentiated between the supervisors and mentors, and there was a need for mentoring programs that can systematize mentoring relationships.

Considering the above discussion, the studies conducted to evaluate PhD in ELT programs are limited. Moreover, the studies on the mentoring relationships in doctoral education in Turkish context are scarce. Thus, while this study will contribute to the scarcity of the studies on the evaluation of PhD in ELT programs, it will also address mentoring relationships in doctoral education in Turkish context. Ultimately, as emphasized by Stufflebeam (1983) “the purpose of program evaluation is not to prove but to improve” (p.117), therefore, the fundamental aim of this study is contributing to the improvement of the PhD in ELT program by suggesting certain revisions in the light of its findings by addressing the research questions listed below in terms of Stufflebeam’s Context Input Process Product (CIPP) program evaluation model.

Context evaluation:

1. What are the students’ preferences and the encouraging determinants about joining the PhD in ELT program?

Input Evaluation:

2. What is the nature of PhD in ELT program as perceived by the students in terms of content and resources?

Process Evaluation:

3. How is the instruction in the program perceived by the students?

4. How do the students perceive the roles of the mentors in the existing program?

Product Evaluation:

5. How are the expected outcomes of the program perceived by the students?

Conceptual Framework of Study

For the purposes of this research Context Input Process Product (CIPP) evaluation framework developed by Stufflebeam (1971) was utilized. In order to execute the evaluation process, Stufflebeam designed four core elements to be evaluated in his method: context, input, process, and product. The initial letters of these central themes comprised the name of the model (CIPP) for which it is well known.

Context evaluation

Context evaluation provides information concerning establishing new objectives and modifying or confirming the existing objectives (Stufflebeam, 1971). It can be initiated before, during, or after a program is started to be executed. Needs, problems, and opportunities are evaluated to reach decisions related to program goals and objectives (Stufflebeam, 2000). As stated by Ornstein and Hunkins (2018), evaluating the context of the program is not a one-time activity since it repeatedly provides a basis for the execution and accomplishment of the whole system.

Input evaluation

Input evaluation assists decision-makers to decide on a specific strategy to actualize the needed changes; moreover, it may provide accountability to the plans that are already in use (Stufflebeam, 1983). In addition, identifying applicable approaches for execution, searching for specific barriers, and potential resources, then helping decision-makers to avoid inefficient practices are other purposes of input evaluation (Stufflebeam, 2000).

Process evaluation

Process evaluation can be implemented during the program execution and after the program cycle completed, and it guides the program implementation. Providing feedback to decision-makers concerning if the program is on schedule; if it is carried out as planned; if there is a need for modification; if all the stakeholders can carry out their roles; and finally, if the program is implemented as planned are the purposes of process evaluation (Stufflebeam, 1983). So, the key questions in process evaluation are “Is the program being implemented as planned? What changes have been made? What barriers threaten its success? What revisions are needed?” (Fitzpatrick et al., 2010, p. 174). This kind of evaluation may be used to adjust strategies to guarantee program quality, to decide on the reasons for unattained objectives, and it may be a guide for the revision of the utilized approach (Fitzpatrick et al., 2010; Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014, Stufflebeam, 1983).

Product evaluation

The purposes of the product evaluation are relating the outcomes to the program objectives and assessing the overall value of the program regarding its effects (Stufflebeam, 1971). Moreover, product evaluation serves to judge the intended and unintended effects of the program by including all the stakeholders in the evaluation process (Stufflebeam, 1983). Product evaluation assists managers to decide whether to continue, terminate, or revise the existing curriculum by providing accurate information (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). In addition, it is suggested that in long-term evaluations, product evaluation may have four subsections: “reach to the targeted beneficiaries, effectiveness, sustainability, and transportability” (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014, p.313).

METHOD

Research Design

In this study, a mixed-method, convergent parallel design was utilized (Creswell, 2012) to evaluate the PhD in ELT program. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed

simultaneously to answer the research questions. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected via online questionnaires.

Participants and Setting

Purposeful sampling strategy was employed in the sampling procedures in order to reach all the students and graduates of the program and to gain a comprehensive understanding (Creswell, 2012). 20 participants responded to the online questionnaire. Seventeen of them are the current students in the program, and 3 of them are the program graduates. Among the current students, 11 of them are continuing their courses, 4 of them are writing their dissertations, and 2 of them completed their coursework. While 15 of the participants are female, 5 of them are male with an age range of 25-49. Fourteen of the participants get their undergraduate degrees from English Language Teaching, 4 of them from English Language and Literature, 1 of them from Linguistics, and 1 of them from Translation and Interpretation departments. Fourteen students had their MA degree from English Language Teaching, 2 of them from English Language and Literature, and 4 of them from other departments.

Thirteen of the participants had 11 years and more teaching experience while 4 participants indicated 6-10 years of teaching experience, 2 of them have 4-5 years of experience, and 1 of the participants has 0-1 year teaching experience. Among the 20 participants to the survey, 19 of them are currently working. Twelve of the participants are working at higher education institutions, 3 of them at private schools, 2 of them at state schools, and 2 of them at other institutions. The years of teaching in their current institutions varies from 6 months to 20 years.

This study was conducted at a PhD in ELT program offered by the Graduate School of Educational Sciences at a foundation (non-profit, private) university. It is a four-year doctoral program that offers courses on English language teaching, research skills, educational sciences, and educational technology. The program aims to ensure that students have a complete understanding of language teaching and research skills with a balance on theory and practice. Furthermore, during their studies, students focus on language teaching and learning theories, teacher education, and most prominently reflective teaching and learning.

Data Collection Tool

The questionnaire used in the current study partially adapted from Küçükoğlu's (2015) PhD dissertation which aims to comparatively evaluate twelve PhD in ELT programs in Turkey. For the purposes of the current study, some sections which are out of the scope of the current study were excluded from the questionnaire. Furthermore, a scale developed by Berk et al. (2005) was adapted and included in the data collection tool to learn about the roles of PhD mentors in the existing PhD in ELT program. Furthermore, to answer the research questions of the current study, students were asked to reflect on the roles of their mentors.

The questionnaire used to collect data for this study comprises five sections. The first section is related to the demographic information of the participants. The following sections are Context Evaluation, Input Evaluation, Process Evaluation, and Product Evaluation, which are the evaluation dimensions of the CIPP framework.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed by using SPSS.26 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) descriptive analysis, and percentages and frequencies were calculated. In addition to the quantitative data, qualitative data generated through the open-ended item in the questionnaire were analyzed via content analysis (Miles & A. Huberman, 1994). Answers to open-ended question were coded by hand and categorized to explore the roles of the PhD mentors as perceived by the students. To establish inter-rater reliability, two experts from the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), analyzed the qualitative data and their analyses were compared. It was found out that there is a close agreement between the raters.

Trustworthiness

Guba and Lincoln (1981) proposed four determinants to assess the trustworthiness of a qualitative study, which are credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. Firstly, in order to ensure the credibility of the findings, direct quotations from the students' answers to the open-ended items were presented (Ary et al., 2013). Secondly, since there is limited research on the evaluation of the PhD in ELT programs, the transferability of the findings of the current study bears much significance. Therefore, to ensure the transferability, thick descriptions of the context and the participants were provided. Thirdly, so as to meet the dependability criteria, a detailed account of research design and implementation and data collection instrument and processes were provided in addition to the validation of results with the involvement of two experts in the coding process (Ary et al., 2013; Shenton, 2004). Lastly, to meet the conformability criteria and to avoid bias, the researcher did not interfere or interact with the participants during the data collection process.

Limitations

The main limitation of the current study is the number of participants in the study. Since the program is relatively new, it was not possible to reach a higher number of participants. Secondly, because of COVID-19 pandemic, it was not possible to collect data from the instructors and the program coordinator. For this reason, the current study explores the perspectives of the students and lacks the opinions of the instructors and program coordinator. Lastly, since the study was conducted in one specific context, it would not be possible to generalize the results to other contexts. Therefore, it is possible to indicate that the findings of this study are more suggestive than definitive.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What Are the Students' Preferences and the Encouraging Determinants about Joining the PhD In ELT Program?

So as to understand the students' preferences and the encouraging determinants to join the existing program, they were, first, asked to indicate their professional career choice after their PhD graduation. The following table reported the findings related to this determinant (Table 1).

Table 1. Career choice after program completion

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Researcher in an academic setting	13	65.0
Researcher in a non-academic setting	1	5.0
Management or administration	1	5.0
Other non-academic position	1	5.0
English teacher in a state school	2	10.0
English teacher in a private school	2	10.0
Total	20	100.0

The outcomes related to career choice after completing the program demonstrated that more than half of the participants (65%) aspired to be a researcher in an academic setting after completing the program.

The participants were asked to indicate their reasons to join a PhD program as well. The results were presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The encouraging determinants to join a PhD program

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Primary career choice	Yes	5	25.0
	No	15	75.0
Change of career	Yes	3	15.0
	No	17	85.0
Advanced degree required for career	Yes	10	50.0

advancement	No	10	50.0
	Yes	2	10.0
Increased income-earning potential	No	18	90.0
	Yes	15	75.0
Personal intellectual enrichment	No	5	25.0

As presented in Table 2, the most important encouraging determinant to join a PhD program was for personal intellectual development, which was marked by most of the participants (75%); advanced degree required for career advancement indicated as the second most prominent reason by 50% of the participants. On the other hand, one-fourth of the participants (25%) preferred this program as their primary career choice. Similarly, students who aimed for a career change (15%) and an increase in their incomes (10%) were a small proportion of the participants.

Lastly, the responses on the importance of the encouraging determinants in joining this specific program were analyzed. The findings were summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Importance of the encouraging determinants to join the program

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Opportunity to work with a particular faculty member	VI	8	40.0
	MI	7	35.0
	SI	3	15.0
	NI	2	10.0
Reputation of the graduate program	VI	8	40.0
	MI	9	45.0
	SI	3	15.0
Scholarship received	VI	6	30.0
	MI	7	35.0
	SI	4	20.0
	NI	3	15.0
Recommendation of a friend	VI	2	10.0
	MI	5	25.0
	SI	8	40.0
	NI	5	25.0
Recommendation of graduate instructors	VI	6	30.0
	MI	4	20.0
	SI	5	25.0
	NI	5	25.0
Reputation of the university	VI	8	40.0
	MI	6	30.0
	SI	4	20.0
	NI	2	10.0
Location of campus	VI	4	20.0
	MI	6	30.0
	SI	5	25.0
	NI	5	25.0
Proximity of family members	VI	2	10.0
	MI	2	10.0
	SI	6	30.0
	NI	10	50.0
Availability of housing in the area	SI	5	25.0
	NI	15	75.0

Note. VI=Very Important, MI=Moderately Important, SI=Slightly Important, NI=Not Important

The results illustrated that opportunity to work with a particular faculty member (40%), reputation of the graduate program (40%), and the reputation of the university (40%) were the most important encouraging determinants for the students to prefer this particular program. Conversely, availability of the housing in the area was found out to be the least significant encouraging determinant in students' decision-making as 75% indicated that availability of the housing in the area was not important and 25% slightly important.

Research Question 2: What Is the Nature of PhD in ELT Program as Perceived by the Students in Terms of Content and Resources?

Students were asked to respond to Likert scale items related to the program content. The results of the data analysis were reported in Table 4.

Table 4. Evaluation of the program content

		Frequency	Valid Percent
The program is/was up-to-date.	SA	8	40.0
	A	9	45.0
	U	1	5.0
	SD	2	10.0
The program is/was relevant to my needs.	SA	7	35.0
	A	10	50.0
	U	1	5.0
	D	1	5.0
	SD	1	5.0
The program allocates/allocated sufficient time for each course.	SA	7	35.0
	A	6	30.0
	U	3	15.0
	D	3	15.0
	SD	1	5.0
The program avoids/avoided overlapping information between different courses.	SA	6	30.0
	A	11	55.0
	U	1	5.0
	D	1	5.0
There is/was a variety of PhD level courses in the program.	SD	1	5.0
	SA	5	25.0
	A	6	30.0
	U	5	25.0
The courses offered within the program follow/followed a logical sequencing.	D	2	10.0
	SD	2	10.0
	SA	7	35.0
	A	6	30.0
Teaching methods used in graduate courses (e.g., lectures, seminars, audiovisual aids) are/were well-tailored for my needs.	U	5	25.0
	D	1	5.0
	SD	1	5.0
	SA	5	25.0
	A	9	45.0
	U	5	25.0
	SD	1	5.0

The program gives/gave me adequate training in research methods.	SA	5	25.0
	A	7	35.0
	U	6	30.0
	D	1	5.0
	SD	1	5.0
The program gives/gave me adequate training in teaching skills.	SA	5	25.0
	A	4	20.0
	U	7	35.0
	D	3	15.0
	SD	1	5.0
The program gives/gave me adequate training for the needs of the local context (Turkey).	SA	4	20.0
	A	10	50.0
	U	4	20.0
	SD	2	10.0
	SA	8	40.0
The program gives/gave me adequate training in doing research in ELT.	A	7	35.0
	U	4	20.0
	SD	1	5.0
	SA	11	55.0
	A	7	35.0
The program encourages/encouraged me to reflect on my past experiences as a language learner.	U	1	5.0
	SD	1	5.0

Note. SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U=Undecided, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

As given in Table 4, the findings highlighted that the majority of the students (90%) believed that the program encourages them to reflect on their past experiences as language learners. Moreover, it was revealed that most of the participants thought that the program is up-to-date (85%), it is relevant to their needs (85%), and the program avoids overlapping information in the courses (85%). Similarly, most participants believed that they receive adequate training in doing research in ELT (75%), and for the needs of the local context (70%); furthermore, they agreed that the teaching methods used in the program are well-tailored for their needs (70%). Students and graduates demonstrated moderate levels of satisfaction with the time allocated for the courses (65%), logical sequencing of the courses (65%), training in research methods (60%), and the variety of PhD level courses offered in the program (55%). Lastly, only 45% of the participants agreed that the program gives them adequate training in teaching language skills.

To understand the participants' perceptions regarding program resources, they were asked to respond to Likert scale items. Table 5 demonstrated the data analysis results of the program resources.

Table 5. Evaluation of the program resources

		Frequency	Valid Percent
The institution offers/offered sufficient internet connection.	SA	12	60.0
	A	4	20.0
	U	4	20.0
University library resources are/were relevant to the field.	SA	8	40.0
	A	11	55.0
	SD	1	5.0
	SA	7	35.0
Specialized facilities, such as laboratories or studios, and equipment needed for teaching	A	12	60.0

are/were satisfactory. U 1 5.0

Note. SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U=Undecided, SD=Strongly Disagree

The findings showed that nearly all of the participants believed that specialized facilities used for the program resources are satisfactory (95%), and library resources are relevant to their field (95%). Furthermore, 80% of the participants agreed that the internet connection provided by the institution is adequate. The students demonstrated a high level of satisfaction with all the program resources.

Research Question 3: How Is the Instruction in the Program Perceived by the Students?

To reveal the students' opinions related to the instruction in the program Likert scale items were utilized. The obtained data were summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. Evaluation of the program instruction

		Frequency	Valid Percent
The program offers/offered quality instruction.	SA	7	35.0
	A	12	60.0
	U	1	5.0
The program balances/balanced teacher-centered learning on its course.	SA	5	25.0
	A	9	45.0
	U	4	20.0
	D	1	5.0
	SD	1	5.0
The program balances/balanced student-centered learning on its course.	SA	9	45.0
	A	9	45.0
	U	2	10.0
The program puts/put emphasis on the balance between theory and practice.	SA	8	40.0
	A	7	35.0
	U	5	25.0
The program has/had the necessary instructional technologies.	SA	11	55.0
	A	8	40.0
	U	1	5.0
The program promotes/promoted intellectual development.	SA	11	55.0
	A	8	40.0
	U	1	5.0
The program prepares/prepared me to be a good researcher in the field.	SA	10	50.0
	A	6	30.0
	U	4	20.0
The program raises/raised my awareness about how to do research in the field.	SA	10	50.0
	A	8	40.0
	U	2	10.0
The program encourages/encouraged me to be a reflective teacher.	SA	10	50.0
	A	8	40.0
	U	2	10.0
I receive/received valuable feedback from my	SA	7	35.0

professors.	A	12	60.0
	U	1	5.0

Note. SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U=Undecided, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

Students and graduates demonstrated positive perceptions of the instruction provided in the program. Specifically, most of the respondents agreed that the program offers quality instruction (95%), has the necessary instructional technologies (95%), promotes intellectual development (95%), offers quality instruction (95%), balances student-centered education (90%), raises participants' awareness with regard to conducting research in the field (90%), and encourages them to be reflective teachers (90%). Additionally, they believed that the program balances theory and practice (85%), prepared them to be a good researcher in the field (80%), and there is a good balance of teacher-centered learning (70%).

Research Question 4: How Do the Students Perceive the Roles of the Mentors in the Existing Program?

To determine the students' opinions related to the roles of PhD mentors, they were asked to respond to the Likert scale items. The results were presented in Table 7:

Table 7. Roles of PhD mentors perceived by the students

		Frequency	Valid Percent
My mentor is/was accessible.	SA	11	55.0
	A	8	40.0
	U	1	5.0
My mentor is/was approachable.	SA	12	60.0
	A	8	40.0
My mentor is/was supportive.	SA	14	70.0
	A	5	25.0
	U	1	5.0
My mentor is/was encouraging.	SA	14	70.0
	A	6	30.0
My mentor demonstrates/demonstrated professional integrity.	SA	14	70.0
	A	6	30.0
My mentor is/was helpful in providing direction and guidance on professional issues.	SA	12	60.0
	A	8	40.0
My mentor suggests/suggested appropriate resources.	SA	13	65.0
	A	6	30.0
	U	1	5.0
My mentor demonstrates/demonstrated content expertise in my area of need.	SA	13	65.0
	A	7	35.0
My mentor provides/provided constructive and useful critiques of my work.	SA	13	65.0
	A	6	30.0
	U	1	5.0
My mentor answers/answered my questions satisfactorily.	SA	12	60.0
	A	7	35.0
	U	1	5.0
My mentor acknowledges/acknowledged my contributions appropriately.	SA	12	60.0
	A	7	35.0
	U	1	5.0
My mentor motivates/motivated me to improve my work product.	SA	13	65.0
	A	6	30.0
	U	1	5.0

My mentor challenges/challenged me to extend my abilities.	SA	13	65.0
	A	6	30.0
	U	1	5.0

Note. SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U=Undecided

As reported in Table 7 above, findings showed that all of the respondents agreed that their mentor is approachable (100%), encouraging (100%), shows professional integrity (100%), provides direction and guidance on professional issues (100%) and demonstrates content expertise (100%). Similarly, nearly all participants (95%) believed that their mentor is accessible (95%), supportive (95%), suggests appropriate resources (95%), provides constructive and useful critiques of their work (95%), answers their questions satisfactorily (95%), acknowledges their contributions appropriately (95%), motivates them to improve their work product (95%), and challenges them to extend their abilities (95%). Lastly, it is notable that non-of the participants disagreed with any of the statements related to the roles of PhD mentors.

To gain a better understanding of how the students perceived the roles of PhD mentors, they were asked to reflect on the topic critically. The data analysis results revealed that most students identified their mentors as guides in their academic studies. Specifically, they mentioned two functions of the mentors, namely, providing academic and emotional support.

Regarding academic support and guidance, initially, PhD students stated that PhD mentors provided constructive and instant feedback. Secondly, it was revealed that the mentors provided the necessary academic knowledge and helped students develop a broader understanding of the field. Lastly, some students indicated that they expected their mentors to challenge them in their PhD studies. The following excerpts supported these findings:

[...] My mentor is like a critical friend to me. By giving me valuable and timely feedback. (Student 9, Open-ended Question, March 24th, 2020)

[...] My mentor guides and supports me through my PhD path, providing his academic knowledge when needed. (Student 16, Open-ended Question, March 9th, 2020)

[...] I wish my mentor to put the challenges before me to make me go further as well as his/her vantage points on the way I am walking to make me see various ways to steer. (Student 17, Open-ended Question, March 24th, 2020)

With regard to emotional support and guidance, students indicated that their PhD mentors had an essential role in keeping their motivation high and complete their PhD studies. Below quotations represented students' ideas in relation to the providing emotional support function of PhD mentors.

[...] Psychologically, she has a very vital role for me to continue the journey of getting a new identity and title in a peaceful way. (Student 5, Open-ended Question, March 9th, 2020)

[...] Most importantly, she did not let me feel down, she always motivated me, helped me a lot and welcomed me with a big smile on her face. (Graduate 1, Open-ended Question, March 9th, 2020)

To sum up, the findings clearly showed a high level of satisfaction with the PhD mentors. Correspondingly, these findings were supported by the students' comments to the open-ended question. Students emphasized the importance of academic and emotional support of their mentors. Especially, they underlined that the mentors kept them in the program and did not let them quit their studies.

Research Question 5: How Are the Expected Outcomes of the Program Perceived by the Students?

Results considering the students' opinions about the expected program outcomes, presented below (see Table 8).

Table 8. Evaluation of the expected program outcomes

		Frequency	Valid Percent
The program increases/increased my self-reflection.	SA	12	60.0
	A	6	30.0
	U	2	10.0
The variety of the courses opened in the program meets/met the needs of the PhD candidates	SA	8	40.0
	A	10	50.0
	U	1	5.0
The total number of credits that a PhD candidate should take during the course period is/was enough for the program.	D	1	5.0
	SA	11	55.0
	A	7	35.0
	U	1	5.0
I feel/felt competent enough to do research on ELT.	D	1	5.0
	SA	8	40.0
	A	11	55.0
I have developed/developed the knowledge and necessary skills required for my chosen career.	U	1	5.0
	SA	8	40.0
	A	10	50.0
I feel/felt that I will be able to carry out research in my field.	U	2	10.0
	SA	6	30.0
	A	13	65.0
Overall, I am/was satisfied with the quality of my learning experiences in the program.	U	1	5.0
	SA	10	50.0
	A	9	45.0
	U	1	5.0

Note. SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U=Undecided, D=Disagree

As given in Table 8, it was found out that nearly all of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the overall quality of their learning experiences in the program (95%). Similarly, participants felt that they are competent enough to conduct research in ELT (95%), they will be able to conduct research in their area (95%), the program increases their self-reflection (90%), variety of the courses opened in the program meet the needs of the PhD candidates (90%), the total number of credits that a PhD candidate should take during the course period is enough for the program (90%), and they have developed the knowledge and necessary skills required for their chosen career (90%).

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

To begin with, the results of the study within the context evaluation indicated that the students of the PhD in ELT program mostly aimed to become researchers in academic settings and viewed this program as a means of intellectual development as well as career development. As graduate students, they spotlighted that their priority was working with qualified academicians and the reputation of the program and the university. These findings of the first research question correspond with the findings of Küçükoğlu (2015) who comparatively evaluated the PhD in ELT programs in Turkey.

Secondly, in terms of input evaluation, the most important finding related to the content of the existing program was that nearly all students agreed that the program encourages students to reflect on their past experiences as language learners. This finding showed that the program has a focus on reflective teaching and learning, as stated in its program description. Another important point is according to the students' opinions the existing PhD in ELT program needs improvement in the variety of elective courses offered. Similarly, Bilican (2014) stated that the main concern of the PhD in ELT students was the lack of variety in the elective courses.

Thirdly, in terms of process evaluation instruction and Ph.D. mentors were evaluated. The results showed that students were highly satisfied with these two points. One important finding in this section was a great majority of the students believed that the program promotes intellectual development. As discussed in the first research question, personal intellectual development is one of the most important encouraging determinants for joining this particular program. A higher level of satisfaction with this item shows that the program is quite successful in meeting this need stated by the students. Also, most participants believed that the program encourages them to be reflective teachers. This finding is

in line with the claims of Mann and Walsh (2017), which indicated that reflective practice is a fundamental and inseparable component of teacher education programs. Similarly, Considering the Ph.D. mentors of the program, students indicated highly positive opinions. Students emphasized the importance of academic and emotional support of their mentors. Especially, they underlined that the mentors kept them in the program and did not let them quit their studies. This was an important finding since, as mentioned by Landefeld (2009) and Laverick (2016) as well, mentoring has a vital effect on the retention of graduate students, and the completion rates of the graduate programs. These findings are also parallel with Wilde and Schau (1991) and Waldeck et al. (2009), who reported that students' perspectives on mentoring included the psychological support of the mentors.

Lastly, product evaluation section revealed that in general, the students indicated a high level of satisfaction with their learning experiences in the program. Most participants thought that the program benefitted them in developing the skills and knowledge they needed to advance in their careers. Also, they agreed that the program encouraged them to reflect on their experiences. These findings are in line with the results of the previous research questions about the program content and instruction which reflected students' positive opinions about the program considering its achievement on the elaboration of students' research and reflection skills.

This study aimed to demonstrate students' preferences and the encouraging determinants to join the existing PhD program and explore their perceptions towards the content, resources, instruction, PhD mentors, and lastly, expected outcomes of the program within Stufflebeam's (1971) CIPP framework. The findings revealed that the students have quite positive perceptions in terms of the content, resources, instruction, and PhD mentors of the existing program. On the other hand, the findings also suggested that the variety of the courses should be increased.

The current study is one of the limited number of studies evaluating PhD in ELT programs in Turkey, so it bears much importance in its implications. First of all, the findings of this study are critical in the enhancement of the program that was evaluated; in addition, they may also serve as a guide for future work on the evaluation of PhD in ELT programs. Secondly, the results of this study imply that meeting the students' needs is fundamental in educational programs, which underlines the importance of the needs analysis in the design of these programs. Lastly, a comprehensive and functioning mentoring system that is in line with the students' needs and expectations should be established in the PhD in ELT programs to increase the efficiency of these programs.

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