

## The Influence of Blended In-service Teacher Professional Training on EFL Teacher Creativity and Teaching Effectiveness

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### ABSTRACT

*Current seminal studies on teacher creativity and teaching effectiveness have been widely investigated by numerous researchers. Most of them explored both variables (teacher creativity and effectiveness) from various aspects such as the perspectives of teachers, learners, and of gender but they failed to address one important variable, namely the influence of professional development background on these variables. Consequently, this study aims to analyse the influence of blended teacher professional training on teaching creativity and teaching effectiveness from the learners' perspective. A sample of 901 learners from various secondary schools in East Java province was randomly assigned to rate 120 EFL teachers using both the English language teaching creativity scale (ELT-CS) and the English language teaching effectiveness scale (ELT-ES). For this purpose, a validated and reliable five-point Likert scale of ELT-CS and ELT-ES (1 = totally disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = partially agree, 4 = agree and 5 = totally agree) has been employed. After administering the questionnaires, the data were analysed using structural equation modelling (SEM). The findings indicate a positive influence of blended professional training on EFL teachers' creativity and their teaching effectiveness. As for the indicators of teaching effectiveness and creativity, knowledge, subject matter, independent learning, learning environment, and material variables show the strongest influences. Conversely, fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration variables show the weakest influences. The detailed influences of each indicator from both variables were also elaborated on. Finally, recommendations for further research are presented.*

*Keywords: teacher creativity; blended professional training; learners' perspective; teaching effectiveness*

### INTRODUCTION

The existence of blended learning has attracted numerous researchers to investigate its potentials in English as a Foreign or Second Language (EFL/ESL) teaching and learning programmes. Researchers have acknowledged the benefits of blended learning for its flexibility, positive online interaction, perception, accessibility and students' motivation (Crawford & Jenkins 2018, Kocoglu, Ozek & Kesli 2011, Osguthorpe & Graham 2003, Wang 2010). Two examples of seminal works on blended learning within EFL settings have been introduced by Wang (2010) and Kocoglu et al. (2011). The researchers emphasize the importance of blended learning in two different contexts. The first study, Wang (2010) emphasizes the use of online and offline collaboration using asynchronous tools in a blended learning environment, whereas Kocoglu et al.'s study (2011) attempts to probe the potentials

of blended learning for EFL pre-service teachers. On the other hand, teacher creativity and teaching effectiveness from different perspectives have been widely studied in terms of their positive correlations (Arifani & Suryanti 2019, Khodabakhshzadeh et al. 2018, Vogt 2009). These two variables are also considered crucial factors to promoting the success of EFL teaching and learning. Teacher creativity and teaching effectiveness cannot be derived automatically. They develop in line with the quality of teacher education programme at university, teaching experience, interactions with senior teachers, and other in-service teacher training programmes. Blended learning as one form of teacher professional training programmes has also become one of media to enhance the quality of EFL teachers and in this case, teacher creativity and teaching effectiveness. So far, no studies have investigated the role of blended learning within the context of teacher professional development programme which involves two crucial variables of teacher creativity and teaching effectiveness as determinant factors affecting the quality of teachers and teaching.

Research on teacher creativity and teaching effectiveness has already addressed three vital issues in EFL/ESL circumstances. First, a correlation between teaching effectiveness and teacher creativity from the perspective of teachers was found by Khodabakhshzadeh et al. (2018). They investigated 325 EFL Iranian teachers using a creativity scale. The results show that there is a positive correlation between teacher creativity and effectiveness. Furthermore, they found that female teachers are more creative than the male. Second, the correlation between teacher creativity and effectiveness in terms of students' achievement has also been discovered by numerous researchers such as (Fishman 2003, Lovett, Meyer & Thille 2008, Vescio, Ross & Adams 2008, Vogt 2009). The findings illustrate that teacher creativity and teaching effectiveness significantly affect learners' English achievement. Three different experts report the positive effects of professional training and students' reading outcomes (Fishman 2003, Lovett et al. 2008, Vogt 2009). Third, a recent study that examines the effect of teacher creativity has already been conducted by Arifani and Suryanti (2019) as an incoming critique of its subjectivity correlation between teachers' creativity and effectiveness from the teachers' outlook. Therefore, they have developed a study on the effect of male and female English for specific purposes (ESP) teacher creativity and effectiveness from the angle of learners' perspective by looking at the learners' learning involvement variable to minimize the subjectivity matters of the previous studies. Results of this research also reveal a positive correlation between teachers' creativity and effectiveness. They also found the different impact between male and female teachers on the learning involvement of the learners.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### TEACHER CREATIVITY AND TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS

Teacher creativity and teaching effectiveness are two essential elements of teaching. Khodabakhshzadeh et al. (2018) define teachers' creativity as the implementation of the new idea to reach effective teaching which historically cannot be separated from the development of creativity tests namely Torrance's creative thinking and Wallach-Kogan's creativity tests (Torrance 1974, Wallach & Kogan 1965). Meanwhile, the notion of teaching effectiveness is more commonly viewed from multi-dimensional perspectives such as professional, pedagogical, social and personal attributes (Barry 2010, Paolini 2015).

Research on teachers' creativity and effectiveness in EFL/ESL contexts have yielded significant contributions towards various aspects of English language teaching and learning. For instance, Khodabakhshzadeh et al. (2018) examined teachers' creativity and teaching

effectiveness of EFL men and women using the English language teaching creativity scale (ELT-CS) and the English language teaching effectiveness scale (ELT-ES). They found that teachers' creativity observed among male and female teachers in an Iranian EFL teaching context was dissimilar. It further illustrated that male teachers were less creative than female ones. This finding was in line with Arifani and Suryanti (2019) who studied the influence of gender in EFL teaching creativity and learners' involvement among ESP teachers in Indonesian EFL circumstances. They asserted that female ESP teachers exhibited higher learning involvement than male ones.

The current studies mentioned above have been prolific in providing the horizons of EFL teachers' teaching creativity and effectiveness from the gender perspectives. However, a comprehensive inquiry encompassing teachers' creativity and effectiveness with their professional development has not been adequately examined yet. Therefore, this study bridges the gap to explore the different horizons of teachers' creativity and effectiveness from professional development outlooks.

#### BLENDED LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

The utilization of technology in EFL teaching and learning leads to an alteration in the roles of teachers and learners and initiates the innovative online teaching atmosphere and strategies such as e-learning, the flipped approach, and blended learning. Current research has indicated that teachers and students learn successfully in online settings (Donnelly 2010, Gillian & Lew 2018, Kocoglu et al. 2011). Conversely, it has also been recognized that single mode online learning courses cannot promote optimum attainment for successful learning (Kocoglu et al. 2011). As a result, several researchers have attempted to combine traditional teaching model face-to-face courses with an online learning system to advocate active and flexible learning (Garnham & Kaleta 2002).

Uniting the merits of traditional instruction in the form of face-to-face classroom learning and e-learning instruction has led to a new learning atmosphere commonly referred to a blended learning or hybrid learning or blended learning or flexible learning (Fernandes, Costa & Peres 2016). The blended-learning approach is implemented by bringing together the traditional physical face-to-face classes with the elements of e-learning (Garrison & Kanuka 2004, Kocoglu et al. 2011).

The underlying approach of implementing a blended learning instruction is the innate benefits from both traditional and e-learning preparations as well as finding a more harmonious balance between those two different approaches to optimize learning through meaningful interaction (Osguthorpe & Graham, 2003). Several researchers have addressed the inherent benefits on a blended learning approach in EFL teaching and learning, such as positive effects of mixed approaches on students' achievement, positive perception on the e-learning online system, participation, motivation, accessibility and flexibility (Crawford & Jenkins 2018, Holmes & Prieto-Rodriguez 2018, Macedo-Rouetet al. 2009, Uğur, Akkoyunlu & Kurbanoglu 2011).

In an attempt to attain its benefits of blended learning to enhance EFL teachers' professional development, government, policymakers, and universities have begun offering blended learning in various academic domains such as the arts, economic and business studies to improve the quality of human resources (Arbaugh 2000, Crawford & Jenkins 2018, Holsapple & Lee-Post 2006). However, little research has been conducted on blended learning in EFL teachers' training programmes to see the effect on their teachers' creativity and effectiveness.

Different aspects of blended learning in teacher professional development programmes have been investigated. Some researchers studied the teachers' perception of the

implementation of this blended approach as part of their education programme. Studies also probed the perceptions of teacher candidates of the implementation of blended teacher education programmes, and found that they have favourable views of and feel satisfied with blended education. (Kocoglu et al. 2011, Motteram 2006, Young & Lewis 2008).

As far as we know, only four other researchers have investigated blended learning approaches in EFL teacher education (Blignaut & Els 2010, Harker & Koutsantoni 2005, Kocoglu et al. 2011, Kupetz & Ziegenmeyer 2005). Kupetz and Ziegenmeyer (2005), for example, scrutinized the implementation of blended learning approaches using multimedia-based tools to support different aspects of learning. The finding describes that the blended learning model could support students' declarative and procedural knowledge. Second, Harker and Koutsantoni (2005) probed the effectiveness of students' retention, achievement, and satisfaction in an English academic programme using a blended learning approach among diverse ethnic students. The findings reveal that the blended learning mode significantly increased students' retention. Third, Blignaut and Els (2010) examined teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of blended approaches involving in-service EFL teachers. They found that in-service EFL teachers showed positive attitudes on the blended approaches. Fourth, Kocoglu et al. (2011) studied the potential of blended learning for in-service language teacher training programme for the master's programme in English Language Teaching (ELT) teaching context. The findings indicated that there was no significant difference between blended approaches and the traditional ones.

The previous studies mentioned above have investigated various aspects of blended learning as part of teacher education programmes such as their potential in fostering students' knowledge, effectiveness, teachers' attitudes, students' retention, and the potential of blended approaches in EFL teacher education programmes. However, no previous studies have reported the effect of blended learning on EFL teachers' creativity and effectiveness. This research is a follow-up study to the research conducted by Kocoglu et al. (2011) which scrutinized the effectiveness of the blended approach compared to traditional approaches as part of teacher education and professional development programmes. Therefore, this study poses the following research question: Is there any significant influence of blended teacher professional development on teachers' creativity and effectiveness?

## METHODOLOGY

The research subjects of this study consist of 120 EFL teachers who attended a one-year in-service hybrid/blended teacher development training programme under the Ministry of Education Project and surveyed 901 EFL students at senior high school level in East Java Province. This project was implemented at four English education departments which had been accredited as "excellent" by the Board of National Accreditation and fulfilled the requirements as in-service teacher training hosts nominated by the Directorate of Higher Education. The training programme was designed for two different sessions. In the first session, EFL teachers conducted a one-semester e-learning programme using *SPADA Indonesia* (an Indonesian online learning system). Hence, the teachers joined one-semester long-distance learning using the SPADA e-learning mode. Online discussions and tests on both English content knowledge and pedagogical aspects were also held and administered in this phase. With regards to session two, they also held a one-semester traditional classroom meeting programme at the same host universities. In this learning mode, all in-service EFL teachers were "quarantined" in the host universities dormitory to have a semester traditional training programme with EFL university lecturers. During the semester training programme, they discussed current issues and trends in EFL teaching and learning practices and they were

not allowed to visit their families. At the end of the programme, a reflective teaching practice at each teacher's school was accomplished and monitored by a senior English lecturer from the host universities. Both online and traditional quizzes and tests were also implemented during a year-long blended training programme. At the end of the programme, two sets of questionnaires, namely an English language teacher creativity scale (ELT-CS) and an English language teaching effectiveness scale (ELT-ES) were administered to 901 students from numerous schools to observe their teacher creativity and teaching effectiveness enhancement. The students were assigned to complete the questionnaire to ascertain whether their English teachers' creativity and teaching effectiveness had been enhanced after attending one-year teachers' professional development using a blended approach.

#### INSTRUMENTS

As this study aimed to measure EFL teacher creativity and teaching effectiveness, two different instruments were implemented. An English language teacher creativity scale (ELT-CS) and an English language teaching effectiveness scale (ELT-ES) have been applied in the study. To assess to what degree EFL teacher training programme promoted their creativity, an ELT-CS questionnaire designed and validated by Pishghadam, Nejad, and Shayesteh (2012) has been used. A 60-multiple option format interval from "always" to "never" interval has been presented as well. It contains seven multi-dimensional elements of creativity, namely originality and elaboration, fluency and flexibility, teacher, environment and materials, motivation, independent learning, and brainstorming. Specifically, elaboration refers to the teachers' ability to extend the details of the main idea. Originality belongs to teachers' ability to present uncommon or different responses to a problem. Fluency refers to the ability to articulate ideas in a limited time span. Flexibility refers to the ability to respond to learning issues in various acceptable ways. Motivation belongs to the teachers' ability to inspire and encourage students' learning activities. Brainstorming refers to the teachers' ability to make the students curious about the topic being discussed. Finally, Independent learning refers to the teachers' ability to optimise students' autonomous learning.

Also, a questionnaire dealing with teaching effectiveness consisting of 60 items developed and validated by Kulsum (2000) has been administered. It covers five distinct areas, namely classroom management, planning and teaching, subject matter, interpersonal relations, and teacher characteristics (Buela & Joseph 2015). Specifically, classroom management refers to the teachers' ability to manage the flow of classroom learning activities. It covers both physical and non-physical aspects of teaching and learning. Planning and teaching start from designing the lesson plan to the three stages of teaching, namely pre-, whilst-, and post-teaching. Subject matter refers to both English skills and elements taught in the classroom. Interpersonal relations cover interaction, cooperation with students and colleagues within the social context. Finally, teacher characteristics refer to qualities of teachers to build harmonious relationships with the students.

#### PROCEDURES

The initial stage of the study began when the researchers went to four host universities which enrolled the EFL blended/hybrid teacher professional programme funded by the Indonesian Ministry of Education. These universities had been accredited as excellent and received a certificate from the Ministry of Research and Technology, Directorate of Higher Education. Site visits and meetings to socialize this research objective with secondary English teachers from each host universities were conducted at the end of the programme. The two types of questionnaire (ELT-CS and ELT-ES) had to be completed by the students after the teachers had finished their teaching practices in the schools. In this case, all questionnaires were

administered in a paper-pencil based format. Therefore, the students completed the questionnaires manually because they were not allowed to bring their mobile phones during school sessions. This is why the questionnaires were not designed using an online format. At the end of the programme, a senior lecturer from the four host universities was present during the teaching practice for the sake of monitoring and reflection on the progress made. Consequently, paper-based copies of ELT-CS and ELT-ES were prepared and distributed to the learners via host lecturers. After the data had been collected, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was applied to analyse the quantitative correlation.

## FINDINGS

TABLE 1. The result of the normality test

		One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test											
		X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7
		901	901	901	901	901	901	901	901	901	901	901	901
Normal Parameters <sup>b</sup>	Mean	5.0380	5.6225	5.6225	4.9800	5.5685	5.2486	5.5241	5.2202	4.9858	5.4963	3.4990	4.6099
	Std. Deviation	.28797	.28931	.28931	.16305	.26264	.21294	.23461	.18854	.17863	.10715	.08465	.09465
	Absolute	.202	.237	.237	.215	.232	.241	.208	.222	.224	.241	.242	.220
Most Extreme Differences	Positive	.202	.198	.198	.215	.232	.241	.208	.222	.224	.241	.242	.220
	Negative	-.159	-.237	-.237	-.199	-.127	-.236	-.192	-.218	-.182	-.231	-.237	-.218
Test Statistic		.202	.216	.237	.215	.232	.241	.208	.222	.224	.241	.242	.220
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.000 <sup>c</sup>	.000 <sup>c</sup>	.000 <sup>c</sup>	.000 <sup>c</sup>	.000 <sup>c</sup>	.000 <sup>c</sup>	.000 <sup>c</sup>	.000 <sup>c</sup>	.000 <sup>c</sup>	.000 <sup>c</sup>	.000 <sup>c</sup>	.000 <sup>c</sup>

a. Test distribution is Normal.  
b. Calculated from data.  
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

The initial analysis included an examination of the normality test applying Kolmogorov-Smirnov's model. It was required before analysing the data using the SEM model to ensure that the data would be normally distributed and there would be no single error with co-linearity of the data. Table 1 and 2 highlighted the results of the normality and multicollinearity tests.

Table 1 depicts that all indicators from both Teacher creativity (7 indicators) and Teaching effectiveness (5 indicators) variables, namely Y1 (Originality & elaboration), Y2 (Persons), Y3 (Fluency & flexibility), Y4 (Brainstorming), Y5 (Motivation), Y6 (Independent Learning), Y7 (Press & material) and X1 (Classroom management), X2 (Preparation for teaching and planning), X3 (Knowledge and subject matter), X4 (Interpersonal relations), X5 (Teacher characteristics), were normally distributed.

TABLE 2. Multicollinearity test

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	1.974	.123		16.067	.000		
Classroom management	.101	.009	.263	11.376	.000	.727	1.375
Preparation for teaching and planning	.182	.017	.263	10.807	.000	.656	1.525
Knowledge and subject matter	.200	.009	.521	21.156	.000	.641	1.560
Interpersonal relations	.054	.014	.080	3.811	.000	.889	1.125
Teacher characteristics	.028	.010	.067	2.873	.004	.723	1.384

a. Dependent Variable: Total

Table 2 illustrates the tolerance value for each indicator of the endogenous latent variable (teaching effectiveness). The value exceeds 0.10. Therefore, it can be guaranteed that there was no multicollinearity issue with the data which were going to be analysed.

The following criteria were implemented by observing the value of VIF from each indicator variables. Table 2 portrays the obtained VIF value was lower than 10. Again, no suspicious multicollinearity issue was found.

TABLE 3. The Goodness of Fit Statistics

GOF Index	Value	
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	0.88	If the value approaches 1, it is valid.
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.03	
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI)	0.83	
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.90	
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.90	
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.90	

If the RMSEA value was smaller than 0.8, the value of CFI  $\geq$  0.9 the values of AGFI and NFI were close to 1. Consequently, the model was valid (Schreiber, Nora, Stage, Barlow, & King, 2006). Table 3 indicated that the result of GOF index validated the fit model of the correlations between teacher creativity and teaching effectiveness.

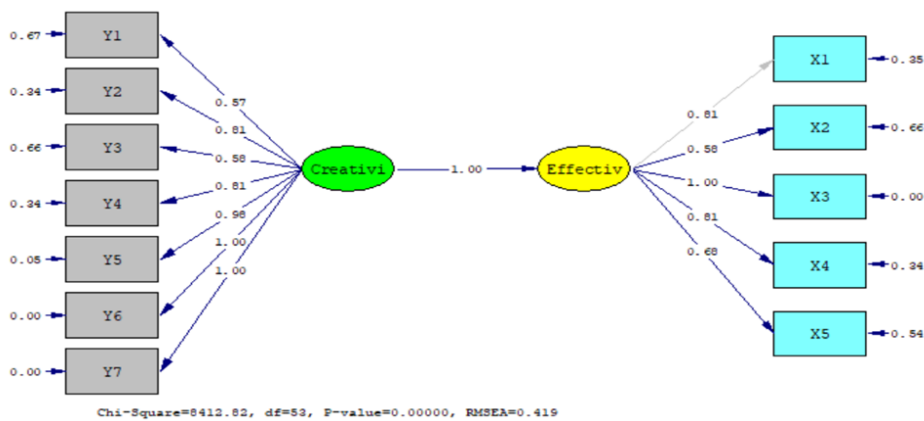


FIGURE 1. The correlation between teacher creativity and teaching effectiveness

The variable of "teacher creativity" is the exogenous latent variable. It was assessed using 7 indicators, namely: a) Y1 originality and elaboration, b) Y2 (fluency and flexibility), c) Y3 (person), d) Y4 (brainstorming), e) Y5 (motivation), f) Y6 (independent learning), and g) Y7 (environment and material). Meanwhile, the variable of "teaching Effectiveness" was the endogenous latent variable. It was measured using 5 indicators, namely: a) X1 (classroom management), b) X2 (fluency & flexibility), c) X3 (knowledge and subject matter), d) X4 (interpersonal relations), and e) X5 (teacher characteristics).

The above figure exhibits that all seven indicators of the exogenous latent variable (teacher creativity) have a positive influence. The positive influences of each indicator were Y1 (0.57); Y2 (0.81); Y3 (0.58); Y4 (0.81); Y5 (0.98); Y6 (1.0); and Y7 (1.0). Based on the results, two indicators of teacher creativity Y6 (1.0) or independent learning and Y7 (1.0) or environment & material show the strongest influences. Conversely, the other two indicators Y1 (0.57) or originality & elaboration and Y3 (0.58) or person have the weakest influences. Next, all five indicators of the endogenous latent variable "teaching effectiveness" also make positive influences. The positive influences of each indicator are X1 (0.81); X2 (0.58); X3 (1.0); X4 (0.81); and X5 (0.68). For the indicators of teaching effectiveness, only X3 or knowledge and subject matter exert the strongest influences, but the other two variables X2 (0.58) or fluency & flexibility and X5 (0.68) or teacher characteristics have the weakest influences.

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study provide evidence for EFL teachers who attended a one-year hybrid training programme to comprehend how a blended training contributed to the professional enhancement of EFL teachers. The findings support the benefits of mixed training for the in-service teacher teaching creativity and effectiveness from learners' perspectives. This study suggests that there is a positive correlation between teaching creativity and effectiveness established among EFL teachers who attended the one-year blended training programme. Kocoglu et al. (2011) discovered the potential of blended learning for English language teacher training in terms of convenience, flexibility, access, and efficiency. Young and Lewis (2008) found that teacher's candidates showed a positive response to the implementation of blended learning when it comes to job satisfaction and enjoyment.

The present study also indicates that among the indicators of teacher creativity, the highest-ranking important indicators are independent learning and environment, and materials. Next, from the angle of teaching effectiveness, the highest-ranking influential indicators are knowledge and subject matter. These findings might encourage the EFL teachers to select teaching materials relevant to the EFL environment and to accentuate their teaching application to learners' independent learning. It also signifies that EFL learners perceived the essential indicators of both creativity and effectiveness based on the above elements. The empirical data publicise that within the Indonesian high school milieu, the implementation of blended learning at secondary schools had only been implemented at the discourse level and it is thus still limited in preparing the EFL teachers to be acquainted with the blended learning model (this is rather unclear - before they had been able to mix the online course and traditional teaching for future purposes. Through this study, indirect contributions towards the essential elements from creativity and effectiveness are echoed. These findings are also similar to the previous study conducted by Dewi (2019) who examined the effect of multimedia web-based teaching in literature courses for pre-service teachers in Indonesia. This researcher mentioned that using videos, web-based visual creators, and other multimedia resources could support EFL students' cognition and creativity.

Independent learning has become another emerging issue from the findings that fall under the umbrella of teacher creativity. It would not be overly excessive to assert that one of the core objectives of teaching creativity was to augment learners' independent learning. By combining online and face to face learning, EFL teachers could facilitate learners with combinations of online and face-to-face interactions to promote learning autonomy. Therefore, an awareness of individual learning is well worth contributing. Several researchers avow that the quality of interactions could establish the learning autonomy of learners. Therefore, creative EFL teachers have to be able to facilitate the quality of balanced interactions during an online course and traditional learning (Farrell & Jacobs 2010, Masouleh & Jooneghani 2012).

In addition, the environment and material emerge from the findings. Looking back, in the context of blended learning the application of the online learning environment was very different from the traditional one. Within the context of online learning, learners had to be more independent to figure out learning materials and tasks. Therefore, EFL teachers had to prepare, design and adapt their teaching materials to facilitate learners' learning needs and autonomy.

The next findings show the lowest correlation between the indicators of teacher creativity and their teaching effectiveness. As for the element of teacher creativity, indicators of originality and elaboration, and of persons score the lowest among other creativity indicators. Then, regarding the element of teaching effectiveness, indicators of fluency and



flexibility and teacher characteristics obtain the lowest score among others. It is quite acceptable through the findings asserting that originality and elaboration, and the person are less urgent elements in teaching creativity. Concerning the implementation of online learning within the context of blended learning, learners tended to ignore both the originality of learning materials and teacher characteristics in the teaching and learning process. They merely sought the enhancement of learning autonomy as a more essential learning objective rather than looking at the originality of materials. In this case, the roles of person or teacher in the online learning rested on the creativity to enhance the learning autonomy of the learners. That was why learners did not view teachers' characteristic as a vital indicator. This finding also reveals significant differences in the teacher characteristics between those in online settings and the traditional ones. In the traditional paradigm, various indicators of teacher characteristics such as patience, confidence, humour, knowledge, fluency, flexibility, and other variables did not appear in the online teaching mode. These findings indirectly address the hypothesis proposed by Janicaud (2005). Further, he hypothesized that technology might overtake humanity. Although this hypothesis was applied as a theoretical framework by (Dewi 2019) in her study of scrutinizing the effect of multimedia on student cognition and creativity for pre-service teachers within the literature teaching context, this hypothesis was still unveiled. In the implementation of technology-based literature teaching, Dewi (2019) has suggested that IT-based teaching should not neglect the potential value of human beings. This is why these findings emerged as the novelty of this study.

Admittedly, the current study shows various limitations. First, the research merely examined the correlation between in-service EFL teachers' creativity and their teaching effectiveness by focusing on a group of EFL teachers who attended a one-year blended training programme. Therefore, the impact of a hybrid training programme could not be revealed since the researcher did not compare their teaching performances before and after the blended training. To overcome or eliminate this limitation, further research scrutinizing the impact of blended training needs to be conducted. Second, the important research variable of gender was not identified through the study as the sample was quite large and the analysis highly challenging. Thus, identifying the role of gender as parts of teacher creativity and teaching effectiveness would be another valuable variable to study.

Consequently, the involvement of gender-based study would be worth pursuing to uncover the impact between male and female in-service teachers' creativity and their teaching effectiveness. Finally, the number of participants in this study do not represent all schools in the provincial area yet. As a result, no solid guarantees could be established to generalise the findings to other settings.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The present research has investigated the influence of hybrid/blended teacher professional development on teachers' creativity and effectiveness from the perspective of EFL students using the English language teaching creativity scale (ELT-CS) and the English language teaching effectiveness scale (ELT-ES). Overall, the findings reveal that there is a positive influence of hybrid professional training on EFL teachers' creativity and their teaching effectiveness. Out the elements of teaching effectiveness, knowledge, subject matter, independent learning, learning environment, and materials show the strongest influences. It also implies that the blended training programme positively influences teachers' English abilities and their content knowledge. Furthermore, through this blended training, EFL students become more autonomous or independent. As a result, the blended professional training model could be applied as one of several alternatives in fostering the teaching

effectiveness of EFL teachers. Conversely, among the elements of teacher creativity, the ones categorised as fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration show the weakest influences. The findings convince us of the fact that learners merely base their ideas on learning autonomy. It also implies that the roles of teachers in the online learning rested on their creativity to promote the autonomous learning potentials of their students. In addition, the results reveal that the online teaching mode has eliminated several elements of teacher characteristics such as patience, confidence, humour, fluency, and flexibility. Since the study does not draw a comparison between the teaching performances of EFL teachers before and after the implementation of hybrid professional training, it cannot describe the impact of the blended training programme. Furthermore, the sample size does not represent the wider population at the provincial level, which makes it hard to establish whether it can be generalised. Gender as an important issue has also not been included in the study. Therefore, further research could address this research gap by examining the impact of blended training on male and female EFL teachers' teaching performances using more representative samples.

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