



Received: 23 September 2018
Accepted: 17 December 2018
First Published: 20 December 2018

*Corresponding author: Nouroddin Yousoffi, Department of English Language and Literature, Razi University, Kermanshah, Iran (Republic of Islamic)
E-mail: nyousoffi@yahoo.com

Reviewing editor:
Maria Popescu, Strategic Communication, Carol I National Defense University, Romania

Additional information is available at the end of the article

TEACHER EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Research practice in higher education: Views of postgraduate students and university professors in English language teaching

Masoud Rahimi¹, Nouroddin Yousoffi^{1*} and Shahab Moradkhani¹

Abstract: As part of a large-scale project, the present study explores research conception, research engagement (both reading and doing research), the impact of research on professional development, the setbacks for research engagement, and the suggestions for improving the dominant research practice in English language teaching (ELT) higher education. The required data were collected through an instrument developed by the present researchers. To this end, the instrument was distributed among 50 MA students (MSs), 50 PhD candidates (PCs), and 50 university professors (UPs) in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) in higher education. Descriptive statistics used to analyse the data, indicated the participants' agreement on almost all categories underlying research conception, research engagement, research impact, research setbacks, and research suggestions of the instrument. However, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that, out of 19 research categories, there were significant differences among the three groups

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Masoud Rahimi, PhD in Applied Linguistics/TEFL at Razi University, Kermanshah, Iran. His research focuses on research engagement in ELT, L2 teacher education, teaching language skills, and higher-order thinking skills. He has published extensively in both international journals (e.g. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, etc.) and local journals. He has also presented in both international conferences (e.g. XVIIIth International CALL Research Conference, University of California, Berkeley, USA, and Global Conference on Linguistics and Foreign Language Teaching, Antalya, Turkey) and national conferences.

Nouroddin Yousoffi, assistant professor in Applied Linguistics/TEFL at Razi University, Kermanshah, Iran. His main research interests include Language teaching and Translation. He has published and presented papers locally and internationally.

Shahab Moradkhani, assistant professor in Applied Linguistics/TEFL at Razi University, Kermanshah, Iran. His research focuses on L2 teacher education and teaching language skills. He has published and presented research articles in local and international journals and conferences.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

The present study shows the research practice of MA students (MSs), PhD candidates (PCs), and university professors (UPs) in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) in higher education. This study is currently the largest analysis available of English language teaching (ELT) researchers' research practice in higher education. It addresses all aspects of research practice among different stakeholders of research in ELT higher education. The study indicates how MSs, PCs, and UPs perceive research in ELT higher education, how they are engaged both in reading and doing research, the way their research engagement influences their professional development, the setbacks for their research engagement, and the suggestions for improving the dominant research practice in higher education. The findings help the MSs, PCs, and UPs to appropriately read and do research in TEFL and produce reliable, valid, trustworthy, and applicable findings for educational context in general and ELT higher education in particular.

regarding the four categories of published articles, instrumental purpose, research reading and doing processes, and pressures from the immediate context. The findings are elaborated on and discussed in the light of the literature and the status of research engagement in ELT higher education.

Subjects: Educational Research; Education Studies; Higher Education; Higher Education Management; Study of Higher Education; Research Methods in Education; Action Research & Teacher Research; Teachers & Teacher Education; Continuing Professional Development; Language Teaching & Learning

Keywords: research engagement; ELT researchers; TEFL; ELT higher education

1. Introduction

Researchers' engagement both with (through reading) and in (through doing) research has been a prominent factor in higher education settings (Gibbs et al., 2017; Hajdarpasic, Brew, & Popenici, 2014; Wald & Harland, 2017). Academics' engagement with and in research is believed to improve the educational system in general (Hajdarpasic et al., 2014) and contribute to the academics' professional development in particular (Brew, 2010). A substantial body of studies have addressed different aspects of academics' research practice in higher education, such as academics' conception of research (Åkerlind, 2008; Bai & Millwater, 2011), their engagement both with and in research (Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2012; Webber, Laird, & Brckalorenz, 2013), the effects of their research performance (Brew, 2010; Robertson & Bond, 2001), and the impediments to their research practice (Johnes & Li, 2008; Yuan & Lee, 2014). A number of studies have also addressed the research practice of either university professors (UPs) (Bills, 2004; Prosser, Martin, Trigwell, Ramsden, & Middleton, 2008) or MA students (MSs) and PhD candidates (PCs) (Daniel, Kumar, & Omar, 2018; Mantai, 2015; Zamorski, 2002) as the academics in higher education.

More specifically, research practice (interchangeably referred to as research engagement throughout this study) in English language teaching (ELT) higher education has been explored (Borg & Liu, 2013; Xu, 2014) with the findings suggesting that due to some contextual setbacks, researchers are only moderately engaged with and in research (Allison & Carey, 2007; Borg & Liu, 2013). Broader surveys, though, of the research engagement of MSs, PCs, and UPs (academics) in the field of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) in higher education, in particular, is lacking. The present study, therefore, applies a newly developed research engagement instrument to explore different attitudes and perceptions, held by MSs, PCs, and UPs in TEFL, towards research conception, research engagement (both reading and doing), the impact of research on professional development, the setbacks for research engagement, and the suggestions for improving the dominant research practice in higher education. The findings might help the ELT MSs, ELT PCs, and ELT UPs to appropriately read and do research and produce reliable, valid, trustworthy, and applicable findings for educational context in general and ELT context in particular.

2. Literature review

In this study, we focus on various aspects of research practice in ELT higher education, such as academics' research conception, their engagement in reading and doing research, their perceptions towards the impact of research on professional development, their perceptions of the research engagement setbacks in academic setting, and their research suggestions to improve research practices in higher education. Research conception deals with researcher's understandings of research and researching. Researchers in higher education have various conceptions of their research practice. Some researchers might think of stopping their professional research practice when they get promoted to a high rank, while others might think that they should both teach and be engaged with and in research in order to contribute to their own and students' knowledge development.

Academics' engagement both with and in research in education system, on the other hand, is believed to contribute to their professional development (Kirkwood & Christie, 2006; Lindsay, Breen, & Jenkins, 2002; Rahimi & Weisi, 2018a, 2018b; Wald & Harland, 2017). However, there are some setbacks for academics' research engagement in higher education that can subsequently affect the academics' research performance (Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2012; Xu, 2014; Yuan & Lee, 2014).

2.1. Research practice in higher education

A number of research studies have dealt with researchers' research conception and research engagement in higher education (Åkerlind, 2008; Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2012; Brew, 2001; Bruce, Pham, & Stoodley, 2004; Kiley & Mullins, 2005; Prosser et al., 2008). For example, Kiley and Mullins (2005), collecting data from research supervisors in different universities in different countries through open-ended written responses and a web-based questionnaire, found that research supervisors view research as "a scholarly process characterized by the rigorous application of systematic methods" (p. 249). In addition, the supervisors thought the originality and creativity of research are the best features of the research.

Similarly, Bruce et al. (2004) explored the concept of research held by UPs in different disciplines in higher education through interview questions. It was indicated that achieving personal goals, helping the research team, developing knowledge, contributing to the practitioners' teaching practice, and addressing problems are the most prominent conceptions held by the UPs towards their research projects. Åkerlind (2008), investigating the research conception of UPs in various disciplines through semi-structured interview, revealed that fulfilling the institutional requirements, personal recognition, personal interests, and the community requirements are the most important purposes of the UPs' research practice. In addition, Prosser et al. (2008) explored the research-active UPs' understanding of their research in different and major disciplinary areas through in-depth interview questions. They indicated that the UPs' research experience resulted in a better experience of teaching and understanding the subject matter.

In a similar vein, Borg and Alshumaimeri (2012) explored the research engagement of the research engaged university teacher educators who were teaching a range of disciplinary and pedagogical courses on pre-service teacher education programmes. They collected the required data through a questionnaire designed to investigate the participants' research engagement both with and in research, their perceptions of their working context as a supportive environment, and their conception of research. The findings indicated that more academically senior, highly qualified, and experienced teacher educators both read and do more research in comparison with those who are less senior, less qualified, and less experienced. The teacher educators reported that the main reasons for doing research are contributing to their professional development, getting promotion to a higher academic rank, and expanding to their knowledge base. The findings further indicate that the main reasons for not reading and doing research are the lack of time. Moreover, with respect to their conceptions of research characteristics, the teacher educators believed that quality research adopts experimental designs, collects data from large samples, utilises questionnaires for data collection, and includes some form of statistical analysis.

2.2. Research practice in ELT higher education

Similarly, a number of studies have addressed research practice in TEFL in higher education context (Allison & Carey, 2007; Borg & Liu, 2013; Tavakoli & Hasrati, 2018; Xu, 2014). Borg and Liu (2013), for instance, explored the research engagement of college English language teachers through a sequential explanatory mixed methods research. They used questionnaire and follow-up interview to explore the college English language teachers' written responses to the questionnaire in more detail. The questionnaire focused on reading research, doing research, research culture, research scenarios, and characteristics of good-quality research. The findings indicated that the participants were just moderately engaged with and in research. The participants' main reason for reading published research was that it directly influenced their classroom practice, and their main reason for doing research was the impact it had on their professional development and teaching

practice. The findings further indicated that the main reason for not reading published research was that the research was uninteresting and difficult, and the main reasons for not doing research were that it was difficult to publish the research study and that an expert was not available to advise.

Xu (2014) explored university English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' research practices through surveys of narrative frame and individual in-depth interview. The narrative frame investigated the participants' engagement both with and in research, their motivation and attitudes towards research, the institutional requirements for research engagement, and the perceived challenges of and solutions for their research engagement setbacks. The individual in-depth interviews complemented the results of the narrative frames and explored the participants' research practice in more detail. The findings revealed that the university EFL teachers' research practice was limited by some constraints such as "teaching overload, a shortage of resources, and a lack of support from mentors, as well as self-efficacy beliefs" (p. 248). The results further indicated that the university EFL teachers were more engaged with reading research in comparison with their engagement in doing research. In addition, the teachers' motivation towards reading and doing research was more extrinsic (i.e. for promotion) than intrinsic (i.e. for professional development).

In addition, Allison and Carey (2007) examined university English language teachers' research engagement through an open-ended questionnaire and follow-up discussions in the forms of e-mail exchanges, corridor chats, live group discussions, and individual and in-depth interview questions. The findings indicated that university teachers' engagement in research was constrained by the lack of time, encouragement, and motivation to do research.

2.3. The gap existing in the literature and purpose of the study

As the review of the literature indicated, academics have different conceptions towards research in mainstream education in general (Åkerlind, 2008; Allison & Carey, 2007) and in ELT context in particular (Borg & Liu, 2013; Xu, 2014). However, there is a lack of research in ELT higher education context exploring how research is perceived by MSs, PCs, and UPs. Conducting a research study in this regard can contribute to the literature and deepen the ELT researchers' understandings of research in ELT higher education context, which further helps the academics adopt more feasible forms of research. More specifically, the literature review revealed how frequently ELT researchers read and did research (Borg & Liu, 2013). Nevertheless, it has remained unclear how and why/why not MSs, PCs, and UPs read and do research. In this study, we explore in more detail the research conceptions held by MSs, PCs, and UPs in TEFL in higher education through a newly developed research engagement instrument. In addition, applying the instrument, we explore the participants' research engagement both with and in research and the way and the reasons for their engagement (or lack thereof) in research.

The review of the previous research studies further indicated that academics' research practice might have positive (Lindsay et al., 2002) or no impact (Marsh & Hattie, 2002) on their professional development. In this study, using the developed instrument, we explore the impact of research engagement on MSs', PCs', and UPs' professional development in ELT higher education. Moreover, the literature review indicates that a low-quality performance of academics' research practice in the underdeveloped countries is due to the way the higher education system in those countries is ruled by policymakers and ministry of education (Johnes & Li, 2008). To explore the research engagement setbacks, we apply the newly developed instrument to explore the MSs', PCs', and UPs' attitudes and perceptions towards the impact of the contextual factors on their research engagement more specifically in the ELT higher education context. Additionally, we examine the MSs', PCs', and UPs' recommendations for improving the dominant research practice in ELT higher education. Therefore, drawing on the purposes of the study the following research questions are addressed:

- (1) What are the characteristics of research according to MSs, PCs, and UPs in TEFL in higher education?
- (2) What is the current status of their research engagement? How and why are they engaged with/in research?
- (3) How does engagement with/in research contribute to their professional development?
- (4) According to these stakeholders, what are the main setbacks for being engaged with and in research in TEFL in higher education?
- (5) What are their suggestions for improving the dominant research practice in TEFL in higher education?

3. Method

3.1. Context and participants

The developed instrument was distributed among 50 MSs, 50 PCs, and 50 UPs in TEFL in several state universities in Iranian ELT higher education in order to collect data from a large number of participants so that to generalise the findings to a wider population. There were both males and females among the participating ELT MSs (15 males and 35 females), ELT PCs (27 males and 23 females), and ELT UPs (41 males and 9 females). The ELT MSs were in their first or second year of the academic study with their age ranging from 25 to 33 years. The ELT PCs were in their first, second, or third year of the academic study with an age range of 29–35 years. The ELT UPs were in the 4–20 years of professional teaching experience in higher education with their age varying from 34 to 45 years.

3.2. Instrument

A newly developed research engagement instrument was used in the present study. The questionnaire is in two versions: one for the ELT MSs and ELT PCs (see Appendix A) and one for the ELT UPs (see Appendix B). The MSs and PCs version includes 112 items and the UPs version includes 114 items. Each version of the questionnaire is in five sections with each section including some items on a 5-point Likert scale followed by one open-ended question.

The first section of the instrument, research conception, includes the categories of contributions (5 items), procedure rigidity (5 items), research logistics (5 items), writing style (3 items), published articles (3 items), research topic (2 items), design (2 items), and researcher ability (2 items). The second section, research engagement, comprises instrumental purpose (8 items), professional development (5 items), course requirement (4 items), and research reading and doing processes (3 items). The third section, research impact, consists of knowledge base growth (6 items), positive impact on professional teaching practice (2 items for the MSs and PCs version and 4 items for the UPs version), and qualification (3 items). The fourth section, research engagement setbacks, includes drawbacks with published research studies (13 items), insignificant contribution (11 items), and pressures from the immediate context (7 items). Finally, the fifth section, research suggestions, comprises 18 items that examine the participants' suggestions for improving the dominant research practice in ELT higher education.

Following Dörnyei's (2003) suggestion, the instrument was reviewed by some experts in the field of TEFL and piloted with MSs, PCs, and UPs in TEFL in different state universities to ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument. As all the items of the instrument explored the participants' attitudes and perceptions and each item investigated a specific purpose, factor analysis was not run to check the validity of the instrument. The validity was checked through experts' review. To this end, six UPs and PCs (3 in each group) who were engaged in reading and doing research in TEFL reviewed the instrument and made comments on the content, wording of the items, and its format. The instrument was then piloted with 30 MSs, PCs, and UPs (10 in each group) in TEFL in different state universities, who were similar to the target participants and selected through availability sampling. Applying Cronbach's Alpha consistency index, the instrument was shown to enjoy a reliability index of 0.86.

3.3. Procedures

The first author/researcher distributed the instrument both online and in hard copy among 50 participants in each group to check and find the differences among the three groups with regard to their research conception, research engagement, research impact on professional development, their research engagement setbacks, and their suggestions for improving the dominant research practice in ELT higher education. In the online form, the first author/researcher designed the questionnaire and the teacher demographic form in Google Form and circulated it using Email, social networking websites such as ResearchGate and LinkedIn, and online applications such as WhatsApp and Telegram. The questions and the procedures for filling out the questionnaire were already clarified for the participants in the instruction section. The first author/researcher distributed the questionnaire to a number of participants in hard copy as well. He was present at the time of administration to clarify the questions and the procedures for answering the questionnaire items and resolve any likely ambiguities. In both online and face-to-face administration procedures, all the participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that the information they provided would remain strictly confidential.

3.4. Data analysis

To analyse the results of the questionnaire, descriptive statistics were run to indicate the most important characteristics of research according to ELT MSs, ELT PCs, and ELT UPs, the important factors related to their research engagement which influenced their professional development, their research engagement setbacks, and their suggestions for improving the dominant research practice in higher education. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was also applied to find the difference among the three group's perceptions towards their research conception, research engagement, research impact, research engagement setbacks, and their suggestions for dealing with the setbacks.

4. Results and discussion

In this section, the descriptive statistics and ANOVA results of the ELT MSs', ELT PCs', and ELT UPs' responses to the categories of each section of the instrument are reported. For different sections of the instrument, the participants' mean scores were calculated by averaging the values of the options (from 1 to 5) they chose in answering the items of each category. So, the higher a mean score on any of the categories, the higher positive perceptions that group had towards the items in that category. Options 4 and 5 in each scale of the instrument indicated the participants' agreement on the questionnaire item. As a result, mean scores above 3.5 were believed to indicate the group's agreement on the items capturing the category. On the other hand, the p -value for the ANOVA results was set at .05. Post hoc and partial eta squared analyses were further applied to, respectively, show where the differences occurred among the three groups and how important the differences were (the effect size).

However, prior to the ANOVA analyses, assumptions underlying this test were checked in order to make sure that the data could be analysed using one-way ANOVA. To this aim, in spite of the fact that the variables (i.e. categories and items) were continuous (i.e. they were measured at the interval level) and there were three groups (i.e. ELT MSs, ELT PCs, and ELT UPs), we ensured that there was independence of observations in each group, that is, we made sure that there were different participants in the groups. Furthermore, Kolmogorov–Smirnov test indicated that there were no significant outliers and the data were approximately normally distributed for the categories and items of the instrument. Moreover, Levene's test used to check the homogeneity of variances, showed no significant differences for the p values, which revealed the acceptability of this assumption of one-way ANOVA as well. Therefore, all the six-mentioned assumptions of one-way ANOVA were met which indicated that the data could be analysed using one-way ANOVA.

4.1. Research conception

Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation of the ELT MSs', ELT PCs', and ELT UPs' research conception for each category, and the differences among the three groups' perceptions in this regard.

As Table 1 shows, except for published articles for ELT MSs and ELT PCs, the mean score of all the categories exceeded 3.5, which indicated the participants' agreement on the research conception

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and ANOVA results of the MSs, PCs, and UPs' responses to the research conception categories of the instrument

Categories	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Contributions	MS	50	4.26	.44	1.22	.29
	PC	50	4.19	.49		
	UP	50	4.10	.65		
Procedure rigidity	MS	50	4.48	.41	0.58	.56
	PC	50	4.48	.44		
	UP	50	4.38	.72		
Research logistics	MS	50	4.47	.40	0.56	.57
	PC	50	4.43	.43		
	UP	50	4.36	.67		
Writing style	MS	50	4.40	.44	1.12	.32
	PC	50	4.23	.51		
	UP	50	4.28	.72		
Published articles	MS	50	3.82	.83	3.71	.02
	PC	50	3.46	.61		
	UP	50	3.46	.80		
Research topic	MS	50	4.39	.52	1.80	.16
	PC	50	4.31	.55		
	UP	50	4.15	.80		
Design	MS	50	4.60	.44	0.47	.62
	PC	50	4.56	.39		
	UP	50	4.50	.67		
Researcher ability	MS	50	4.59	.55	1.52	.22
	PC	50	4.42	.50		
	UP	50	4.38	.80		

categories of the instrument. For instance, the design category that received the highest mean scores for all the three groups revealed that the three groups, especially the MSs, determine the research design (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods) based on the research questions of the study. In addition, it showed that all the groups, especially the PCs, capitalise on the method section of their research study. Kiley and Mullins (2005), in a similar vein, argued that procedures carried out to accomplish research studies should be taken into account seriously in order to produce trustworthy findings. The findings are also consistent with those of Bills (2004) who indicated positive perceptions of academic supervisors towards some generic criteria of research, like being rigorous and methodical.

ANOVA analyses showed that, save for published articles ($F = 3.71$; $p = .02$; Partial eta squared = .04), there were no significant differences among the three groups' research conception categories. Regarding the effect size (i.e. partial eta squared), the value of .14 and higher were considered large, .06-.14 was considered as medium, and .01-.06 was considered low effect size.

In addition, post hoc analysis (Tukey) of the results showed that, regarding the published articles category, the differences were between ELT MSs with ELT PCs and ELT UPs with the former group's mean score exceeding the other two groups, although the effect size was small, as reported above. This might indicate that MSs try to publish more articles in comparison with both PCs and UPs and receive a considerable amount of citations in comparison with PCs, so that they may be accepted as PCs in reputable universities. Although the results showed that the PCs and UPs would like to have their papers published and receive a lot of citations, so that they can find university positions and get promotion to a higher education rank, respectively, this ambition was greater in the ELT MSs.

Further analyses of the items underlying the other categories revealed significant differences between ELT MSs and ELT UPs regarding items 2 ($F = 3.15$; $p = .04$; Partial eta squared = .04), 4 ($F = 3.17$; $p = .04$; Partial eta squared = .04), and 26 ($F = 3.12$; $p = .04$; Partial eta squared = .04), suggesting that ELT MSs, to a greater deal, conceptualise research to be practical and the findings be applicable to the teaching/learning context, research be replicable in different educational contexts, and the researcher should have the required skills to conduct different parts of a research study.

4.2. Research engagement

Table 2 displays the mean, standard deviation, and ANOVA analyses of the ELT MSs', ELT PCs', and ELT UPs' research engagement categories.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and ANOVA results of the participants' responses to the research engagement categories of the instrument

Categories	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Instrumental purpose	MS	50	3.57	.57	5.23	.00
	PC	50	3.50	.54		
	UP	50	3.24	.46		
Professional development	MS	50	4.19	.40	1.46	.23
	PC	50	4.09	.65		
	UP	50	4.28	.53		
Course requirement	MS	50	3.93	.59	0.70	.49
	PC	50	3.85	.59		
	UP	50	3.79	.51		
Research reading and doing processes	MS	50	3.80	.44	7.20	.00
	PC	50	3.81	.66		
	UP	50	4.15	.41		

Table 2 indicates that ELT MSs, ELT PCs, and ELT UPs capitalised on the research engagement categories of the instrument as their mean scores were more than 3.5; however, the UPs' mean score for the instrumental purpose category was 3.2. The professional development category received the highest mean scores for all the participants; therefore, this may show that the MSs, PCs, and UPs, to a great extent, agree that they read and do research to become knowledgeable, keep themselves up-to-date, find solutions to the issues in the education context, find the gaps in the literature, and stay interested in reading and doing research. The findings in this regard echo with those of Borg and Liu (2013) who propose that UPs' engagement with/in research helps them enhance their professional development and professional teaching practice.

The results of ANOVA analyses revealed that there were significant differences among the ELT MSs', ELT PCs', and ELT UPs' instrumental purpose ($F = 5.23$; $p = .00$; Partial eta squared = .06) and research reading and doing processes ($F = 7.20$; $p = .00$; Partial eta squared = .09). Regarding the category on instrumental purpose, post hoc analysis indicated that the MSs' and PCs' mean scores were significantly higher than that of the UPs. This shows that the MSs and PCs would like to read, do, and publish research for instrumental purposes (rather than develop professionalism) more than the UPs. The MSs and PCs read, do, and publish research studies in accredited journals to be accepted to a higher education level, to either go abroad or become accepted in top foreign universities, to become knowledgeable in the field, to become a prominent figure, etc. In line with the findings in this regard, Xu (2014) suggests that UPs publish research studies mainly to get promotion to a higher education rank. With regard to the category related to research reading and doing processes, the differences were between UPs with MSs and PCs with the former group's mean score higher than those of the other two groups. As a result, in comparison with the MSs and PCs, the UPs would highly read different sections of research papers based on their own purpose, subscribe in top journals to email them their recent issues, and mainly supervise their MSs' and PCs' research projects.

Further analyses of the items underlying the other categories showed significant differences among the three groups regarding items 12 ($F = 2.10$; $p = .04$; Partial eta squared = .04), 14 ($F = 2.08$; $p = .04$; Partial eta squared = .04), 15 ($F = 3.62$; $p = .01$; Partial eta squared = .06), 16 ($F = 25.33$; $p = .04$; Partial eta squared = .25), 17 ($F = 14.60$; $p = .00$; Partial eta squared = .16), and 19 ($F = 4.05$; $p = .02$; Partial eta squared = .05). It indicated that ELT UPs are more interested in reading and doing research than ELT MSs, ELT UPs mostly read and do research to find the gaps in the literature in comparison with PCs, MSs and PCs mostly read, do, and publish research to accomplish their thesis and get the academic degree, and UPs mostly read their students' research projects and give comments, and read research papers to prepare for the class. The findings are in agreement with those of Tavakoli and Hasrati (2018) who argued that in Iranian ELT higher education, research is mainly done for instrumental purposes, such as getting promotion, defending the thesis, and graduation purposes.

4.3. Research impact

The mean, standard deviation, and ANOVA analyses of the ELT MSs', ELT PCs', and ELT UPs' research impact categories are shown in Table 3.

As is evident from Table 3, all the three groups' mean scores went beyond 3.5 for all the research impact categories of the instrument which showed their positive attitudes and perceptions towards the items capturing the categories. The positive impact on professional teaching practice which received the greatest mean scores for all the participants indicated that the ELT MSs, ELT PCs, and ELT UPs capitalised on the role of reading and doing research in helping them connect research findings to the classroom context and become more proficient ELT instructors in the education context. In addition, the UPs thought that reading and doing research positively influence their professional teaching practice in ELT higher education context and help them introduce suitable research papers to the students to do research accordingly. In harmony with the findings, Lindsay et al. (2002) argue that research engagement enhances academics' knowledge in higher education and positively influences the students' learning outcome.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics and ANOVA results of the participants' responses to the research impact categories of the instrument

Categories	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Knowledge base growth	MS	50	4.32	.42	0.04	.95
	PC	50	4.34	.45		
	UP	50	4.31	.45		
Positive impact on professional teaching practice	MS	50	4.12	.63	0.98	.37
	PC	50	4.28	.59		
	UP	50	4.12	.70		
Qualification	MS	50	4.30	.49	1.32	.27
	PC	50	4.32	.49		
	UP	50	4.15	.67		

ANOVA analyses indicated no significant differences among the three groups' research impact categories. This suggests that all the three groups had the same positive attitudes and perceptions towards the items underlying the research impact categories.

Analyses of the items underlying the categories indicated that, save for item 12 ($F = 7.37$; $p = .00$; Partial eta squared = .09), there were no significant differences among the three groups. The results in this regard signified that ELT MSs and ELT PCs mostly read and do research to fulfil the course requirements and ELT UPs mostly read and do research to publish papers to prove to university officials that they are making academic progress. Although such joint publications could be mutually advantageous for both the students (e.g. supporting the students' apprenticeship and academic appropriation) and the UPs (e.g. helping the UPs to get promotion), the publications have been made mandatory for all the groups for graduation and promotion purposes.

4.4. Research engagement setbacks

Table 4 summarises the mean, standard deviation, and ANOVA analyses of the ELT MSs', ELT PCs', and ELT UPs' research setback categories.

As displayed in Table 4, all the three groups' mean scores were higher than 3.5 for the insignificant contribution and pressures from the immediate context categories which revealed their agreement on the items underlying the categories. However, all the three groups' mean scores were lower than 3.5 for

Table 4. Descriptive statistics and ANOVA results of the participants' responses to the research setback categories of the instrument

Categories	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Drawbacks with published research studies	MS	50	3.37	.66	0.84	.43
	PC	50	3.23	.63		
	UP	50	3.23	.54		
Insignificant contribution	MS	50	3.71	.53	0.45	.63
	PC	50	3.73	.76		
	UP	50	3.62	.59		
Pressures from the immediate context	MS	50	3.97	.53	3.09	.04
	PC	50	4.02	.51		
	UP	50	3.77	.56		

the drawbacks with published research studies which indicated their less positive perceptions towards the items of the category. The pressures from the immediate context category that received the highest mean scores for all the participants showed that the ELT MSs, ELT PCs, and ELT UPs greatly approved that for reading, doing, and publishing research they are under the pressure of time and stress, have difficulty in collecting the required data, do not receive financial support, and are involved in a competitive process. Furthermore, they unanimously agreed that the MSs and PCs receive little or no contributions from the UPs, while the MSs and PCs, as the UPs' manpower and ghost-writers, try hard to read, do, write, and publish research studies, if they do, to meet the UPs' preferences. The UPs, on the other hand, were believed to spend most of their time on teaching, not research.

The results of ANOVA analyses revealed significant differences among the three groups with regard to the pressures from the immediate context category ($F = 3.09; p = .04$; Partial eta squared = .04). The results of post hoc analyses indicated that the differences were between PCs and UPs with the former group's mean score higher than the latter. This may show that the PCs, in comparison with the UPs, emphasised the items underlying the pressures from the immediate context category to a greater extent. For instance, the ELT PCs greatly stressed the difficulty in collecting the required data and overemphasised that ELT MSs and ELT PCs receive little or no contributions from ELT UPs.

Analyses of the items underlying the other categories revealed significant differences among the three groups regarding items 1 ($F = 3.07; p = .04$; Partial eta squared = .04), 3 ($F = 4.42; p = .01$; Partial eta squared = .05), 4 ($F = 4.30; p = .01$; Partial eta squared = .05), 16 ($F = 5.08; p = .00$; Partial eta squared = .06), and 24 ($F = 3.14; p = .04$; Partial eta squared = .04). For instance, the MSs, in comparison with the PCs, highlighted the issue that research is read, done, and published mostly for instrumental purposes, such as promotion and acceptance, and in comparison with UPs, the MSs highlighted that competent researchers are rejected to be employed as the faculty members in ELT higher education. In addition, in comparison with the PCs and UPs, the MSs emphasised that research in TEFL is irrelevant to the teaching/learning context and has inaccurate and/or doubtful findings, and, in comparison with the UPs, the PCs overemphasised the issue that the UPs are incapable of helping MSs' and PCs' research projects appropriately.

4.5. Researchers' suggestions

The mean, standard deviation, and ANOVA analyses of the ELT MSs', ELT PCs', and ELT UPs' research suggestions are summarised in Table 5.

Table 5 revealed the participants' agreement on all the items of the research suggestions section of the instrument since the mean scores of all groups exceeded 3.5. For example, items 13 and 17 of the instrument that received the highest mean scores for ELT MSs showed that the MSs capitalised on the issue that MSs' and PCs' research knowledge and skills should be developed and the researchers in ELT higher education do and publish research studies honestly (i.e. researchers must not fabricate and/or manipulate their research data). Items 4 and 6 that received the greatest mean scores for ELT PCs revealed that they highlighted the issue that the ELT researchers should develop their research knowledge and skills and competent researchers be recruited, supported, and motivated in ELT higher education. In addition, ELT UPs had the highest mean scores for items 3 and 6 which revealed that they behave ELT researchers to consider the ethics of research and that they want competent ELT researchers to be recruited, supported, and motivated.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics and ANOVA results of the participants' responses to the research suggestion section of the instrument

Categories	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Research suggestions	MS	50	4.56	.31	1.09	.33
	PC	50	4.50	.38		
	UP	50	4.44	.53		

ANOVA analyses indicated that, on the whole, there were no significant differences among the three groups' research suggestions. However, further analyses of the underlying items revealed that there were significant differences among the three groups regarding items 9 ($F = 4.58$; $p = .01$; Partial eta squared = .06) and 14 ($F = 4.05$; $p = .02$; Partial eta squared = .05) (i.e. UPs' research engagement and performance should be monitored and researchers' time should not be devoted to other useless tasks, such as reading extra material, preparing slides to present each session). Post hoc analyses showed that the differences were between MSs and UPs with the former group's mean score exceeding the latter for both items. This indicates that the MSs, in comparison with the UPs, deem it more necessary for other members in ELT higher education setting to monitor the UPs' research performance, so that the UPs might act better on their research activities. Moreover, the MSs suggest that the researchers should focus their attention and effort on research activities, not other less useful tasks.

5. Conclusion

Research practice in higher education is an important factor to contribute to the researchers' professional development (Wald & Harland, 2017) and the betterment of the education system (Hajdarpasic et al., 2014). As no research of this kind has been done in ELT higher education setting, the present study was an attempt to explore ELT researchers' research practice in higher education deeply and extensively by applying a newly developed and comprehensive research engagement instrument. This work is the largest analysis available of ELT researchers' research practice in higher education setting which has addressed all aspects of research practice among different stakeholders of research in ELT higher education.

As the findings shed light on ELT researchers' research conception, research engagement, the impact of their research practice on their professional development, the setbacks for their research engagement, and their suggestions for improving the research practice in higher education, the educational policymakers, officials in the higher education, and researchers may consider the findings in order to improve research practice in the field of TEFL in higher education. For instance, applying the findings, policymakers and officials in the higher education in the ELT contexts can establish a research centre for MSs, PCs, and UPs in the universities and recruit a group of experts in the field in order to train the ELT MSs, ELT PCs, and ELT UPs how to read and do useful research in ELT higher education context, let them read and do research in the pertinent lines adequately, support and encourage them both emotionally and financially to read and conduct research cooperatively, and motivate them to have an inward-looking perspective towards the purposes and values of research not an outward look, such as doing and publishing research for instrumental purposes. As a result, MSs, PCs, and UPs, as ELT researchers in higher education, might come to understand how to read and do research appropriately and contribute to their own professional development and the education system broadly.

However, future studies might be conducted to replicate the study to find about researchers' research engagement in other higher education contexts in different countries. For instance, other ELT researchers in higher education contexts in other countries who are interested in the topic of research engagement might adopt the newly developed instrument by the present researchers and develop insights into the phenomena under investigation. In addition, as we just collected data from ELT MSs, ELT PCs, and ELT UPs in state universities, future researchers might apply the instrument and explore MSs', PCs', UPs' research practice in other universities in the present context or in different universities around the world. Applying and adapting the instrument, future researchers might also explore research practice of MSs, PCs, and UPs across a range of educational disciplines in higher education internationally. Moreover, this study can be extended through qualitative work in order to address the issues under study more deeply. For example, longitudinal and exploratory studies might be conducted to further explore and compare the research practices of MSs, PCs, and UPs across different higher education contexts.

Funding

The authors received no direct funding for this research.

Author details

Masoud Rahimi¹
E-mail: rahimi.tefl@yahoo.com
ORCID ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0684-2087>
Nouroddin Yousoffi¹
E-mail: nyousoffi@yahoo.com
E-mail: nyousoffi@yahoo.com
ORCID ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8981-5246>
Shahab Moradkhani¹
E-mail: moradkhani.shahab@gmail.com
ORCID ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2129-4453>
¹ Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Razi University, Kermanshah, Iran.

Citation information

Cite this article as: Research practice in higher education: Views of postgraduate students and university professors in English language teaching, Masoud Rahimi, Nouroddin Yousoffi & Shahab Moradkhani, *Cogent Education* (2019), 5: 1560859.

References

- Åkerlind, G. S. (2008). An academic perspective on research and being a researcher: An integration of the literature. *Studies in Higher Education*, 33(1), 17–31. doi:10.1080/03075070701794775
- Allison, D., & Carey, J. (2007). What do university language teachers say about language teaching research? *TESL Canada Journal*, 24(2), 61–81. doi:10.18806/tesl.v24i2.139
- Bai, L., & Millwater, J. (2011). Chinese TEFL academics' perceptions about research: An institutional case study. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 30(2), 233–246. doi:10.1080/07294360.2010.512913
- Bills, D. (2004). Supervisors' conceptions of research and the implications for supervisor development. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 9(1), 85–97. doi:10.1080/1360144042000296099
- Borg, S., & Alshumaimeri, Y. (2012). University teacher educators' research engagement: Perspectives from Saudi Arabia. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 28(3), 347–356. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2011.10.011
- Borg, S., & Liu, Y. D. (2013). Chinese college English teachers' research engagement. *TESOL Quarterly*, 47(2), 270–299. doi:10.1002/tesq.2013.47.issue-2
- Brew, A. (2001). Conceptions of research: A phenomenographic study. *Studies in Higher Education*, 26(3), 271–285. doi:10.1080/03075070120076255
- Brew, A. (2010). Imperatives and challenges in integrating teaching and research. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 29(2), 139–150. doi:10.1080/07294360903552451
- Bruce, C., Pham, B., & Stoodley, I. (2004). Constituting the significance and value of research: Views from information technology academics and industry professionals. *Studies in Higher Education*, 29(2), 219–238. doi:10.1080/0307507042000190804
- Daniel, B., Kumar, V., & Omar, N. (2018). Postgraduate conception of research methodology: Implications for learning and teaching. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 41(2), 220–236. doi:10.1080/1743727X.2017.1283397
- Dörnyei, Z. (2003). *Questionnaires in second language research: Construction, administration, and processing*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Gibbs, P., Cartney, P., Wilkinson, K., Parkinson, J., Cunningham, S., James-Reynolds, C., ... MacDonald, A. (2017). Literature review on the use of action research in higher education. *Educational Action Research*, 25(1), 3–22. doi:10.1080/09650792.2015.1124046
- Hajdarpasic, A., Brew, A., & Popenici, S. (2014). The contribution of academics' engagement in research to undergraduate education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 40(4), 644–657. doi:10.1080/03075079.2013.842215
- Johnes, J., & Li, Y. U. (2008). Measuring the research performance of Chinese higher education institutions using data envelopment analysis. *China Economic Review*, 19(4), 679–696. doi:10.1016/j.chieco.2008.08.004
- Kiley, M., & Mullins, G. (2005). Supervisors' conceptions of research: What are they? *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 49(3), 245–262. doi:10.1080/00313830500109550
- Kirkwood, M., & Christie, D. (2006). The role of teacher research in continuing professional development. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 54(4), 429–448. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8527.2006.00355.x
- Lindsay, R., Breen, R., & Jenkins, A. (2002). Academic research and teaching quality: The views of undergraduate and postgraduate students. *Studies in Higher Education*, 27(3), 309–327. doi:10.1080/03075070220000699
- Mantai, L. (2015). Feeling like a researcher: Experiences of early doctoral students in Australia. *Studies in Higher Education*, 42(4), 636–650.
- Marsh, H. W., & Hattie, J. (2002). The relation between research productivity and teaching effectiveness. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 73(5), 603–641.
- Prosser, M., Martin, E., Trigwell, K., Ramsden, P., & Middleton, H. (2008). University academics' experience of research and its relationship to their experience of teaching. *Instructional Science*, 36(1), 3–16. doi:10.1007/s11251-007-9019-4
- Rahimi, M., & Weisi, H. (2018a). The impact of research practice on professional teaching practice: Exploring EFL teachers' perception. *Cogent Education*, 5(1), 1–15. doi:10.1080/2331186X.2018.1480340
- Rahimi, M., & Weisi, H. (2018b). Reflective practice, self-efficacy and research practice of EFL teachers: Examining possible relationships. *Issues in Educational Research*, 28(3), 756–780.
- Robertson, J., & Bond, C. (2001). Experiences of the relation between teaching and research: What do academics value? *Higher Education Research & Development*, 20(1), 5–19. doi:10.1080/07924360120043612
- Tavakoli, P., & Hasrati, M. (2018). MA TESOL dissertations in a changing global landscape: A case from Iran. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, 6(1), 109–128.
- Wald, N., & Harland, T. (2017). A framework for authenticity in designing a research-based curriculum. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 22(7), 751–765. doi:10.1080/13562517.2017.1289509
- Webber, K. L., Laird, T. F. N., & BrckaLorenz, A. M. (2013). Student and faculty member engagement in undergraduate research. *Research in Higher Education*, 54(2), 227–249. doi:10.1007/s11162-012-9280-5
- Xu, Y. (2014). Becoming researchers: A narrative study of Chinese university EFL teachers' research practice and their professional identity construction.

Language Teaching Research, 18(2), 242–259.
 doi:10.1177/1362168813505943
 Yuan, R., & Lee, I. (2014). Understanding language teacher educators' professional experiences: An exploratory study in Hong Kong. *The Asia-Pacific*

Education Researcher, 23(1), 143–149.
 doi:10.1007/s40299-013-0117-6
 Zamorski, B. (2002). Research-led teaching and learning in higher education: A case. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 7(4), 411–427. doi:10.1080/135625102760553919

Appendices

Appendix A. Research Engagement in Applied Linguistics/TEFL: MA and PhD Students Questionnaire

This questionnaire is devised with the aim of looking into your actual research engagement as a postgraduate student in ELT context. To this end, your careful completion of the questionnaire will definitely contribute to obtaining more reliable data. The information will be kept confidential and will be used just for research purposes.

Thank you very much in advance for your time and cooperation.

Section 1: Research conception

The following items investigate your perceptions towards the characteristics of research in ELT higher education.

There are 5 self-rating responses format according to the following:

1 = Unimportant, 2 = Moderately important, 3 = Unsure, 4 = Important, 5 = Very important

Item No	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1	Research should address and solve a problem in education.					
2	Research should be practical and the findings be applicable to the teaching/learning context.					
3	Research should explore creative, innovative, and unexplored ideas.					
4	Research should be replicable in different educational settings.					
5	Research should be emancipatory for both the researcher and the researched (i.e. the researcher and the participants should reflect on the collected data to learn something from the research study).					
6	There should be a reasonable number of participants in research studies.					
7	Research should be systematic and the procedures for data collection and analysis should be considered seriously.					
8	Reliability and validity of research instruments and research findings should be considered seriously.					
9	Research should be based on real and trustworthy data.					
10	Ethical issues in research studies should be addressed seriously.					
11	There should be enough time to accomplish research projects.					
12	There should be cooperative participants and organisation for research projects.					
13	Required facilities for research projects should be adequately available.					
14	Relevant theoretical background should be pre-specified in research studies.					
15	Definition and purposes of research studies should be pre-specified.					
16	All sections of a research paper should be dealt with as equally important.					
17	Standards of academic writing suitable for research papers should be observed.					
18	There should not be plagiarism in research papers.					

(Continued)

19	Attempts should be made to publish research studies in accredited journals.					
20	Research should receive a considerable number of citations.					
21	Research studies should result in more than one published paper.					
22	Research should be challenging and engaging for the researcher.					
23	Research should be in line with the researcher's field of interest.					
24	Research design (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods) should be determined based on research questions of the study.					
25	Research should have a clear and suitable methodology.					
26	The researcher should have the required skills to conduct different parts of a research study.					
27	The researcher should have the required prior knowledge before conducting the research study.					
28	If you think there are any other characteristics of good research studies in Applied Linguistics/TEFL in higher education, please list them here.					

Section 2: Research engagement

The following items investigate your research engagement and the way and the reason that you are engaged with/in research in Applied Linguistics/TEFL in higher education.

There are 5 self-rating responses format according to the following:

1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree

Item No	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
29	I read, do, and publish research to be accepted to a higher educational level (i.e. to become a PhD student or a university professor).					
30	I read, do, and publish research to become a prominent figure in this field.					
31	I prefer to publish research in accredited journals.					
32	I do and publish research to either go abroad or become accepted in top foreign universities.					
33	I publish research to receive financial benefits, rewards, and support.					
34	I must be the first and the corresponding author of my published research papers.					
35	I read, do, and publish research to be in touch with other members of the research community.					
36	I do and publish research papers in line with my area of interest (not necessarily in line with my professor's area of interest).					
37	I read and do research to become knowledgeable in this field.					
38	I read and do research to keep myself up-to-date.					
39	I am interested in reading and doing research.					
40	I read and do research to find solutions to the problems in the ELT educational context.					
41	I read and do research to find the gaps in the literature.					
42	I read, do, and publish research to get the academic degree.					
43	I read, do, and publish research to accomplish my thesis.					
44	I read, do, and publish research to receive the required mark and pass the courses.					
45	I read research papers to prepare for the class.					
46	I read different sections of research papers based on the purpose that I have.					

(Continued)

(Continued)					
47	The research projects that I do should be under the supervision of the professors.				
48	I subscribe in top journals to email me their recent issues.				
49	If you think there are any other reasons that you are engaged with/in research in Applied Linguistics/TEFL in higher education, please list them here.				

Section 3: Research impact

The following items investigate the contribution of your research engagement in Applied Linguistics/TEFL in higher education to your professional development.

There are 5 self-rating responses format according to the following:

1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree

Item No	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
50	Reading and doing research help me increase my academic knowledge.					
51	Reading and doing research help me keep my knowledge up-to-date.					
52	Reading and doing research help me develop my academic writing skills necessary for writing high-quality research papers.					
53	Reading and doing research help me develop my research ability through the reviewers' constructive comments.					
54	Reading and doing research help me find and bridge the gaps in the literature.					
55	Reading and doing research help me develop a close collaboration with other researchers.					
56	Reading and doing research help me become a more proficient ELT instructor in the educational context.					
57	Reading and doing research help me connect research findings to the classroom context.					
58	Reading and doing research help me become accepted to a higher educational level.					
59	Reading and doing research help me fulfil the course requirements.					
60	Reading and doing research help me enrich my CV.					
61	If you think there are any other contributions of research in Applied Linguistics/TEFL in higher education to your professional development, please list them here.					

Section 4: Research setbacks

The following items investigate your perceptions and attitudes towards the main setbacks for being engaged with and in research in Applied Linguistics/TEFL in higher education.

There are 5 self-rating responses format according to the following:

1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree

Item No	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
62	Research is read, done, and published for instrumental purposes such as promotion and acceptance.					
63	Research is not practical and/or applicable to the teaching/learning context.					
64	Research in Applied Linguistics/TEFL is irrelevant to the teaching/learning context.					
65	Research has inaccurate and/or doubtful findings.					
66	Research has low-quality and poor writing.					
67	Research studies are published in a short and limited time.					
68	Ethics of research are not considered in research studies.					
69	Researchers do not read the relevant papers adequately.					
70	Researchers do not have creative ideas for their research projects.					
71	Researchers underestimate their research performance.					

(Continued)

72	Researchers use some strategies to get their research studies published.					
73	Foreign researchers' research findings are used to improve teaching/learning.					
74	Research studies are reviewed by biased reviewers.					
75	Research is a tool to only promote university professors' rank to associate or full professors.					
76	The university professors (i.e. the first and/or corresponding authors) are the non-contributors of the published research papers.					
77	University professors are incapable of helping students' research projects appropriately.					
78	Researchers are not supported emotionally.					
79	Researchers have no cooperation with other researchers.					
80	MA and PhD students do research to pass the courses and get their academic degree.					
81	Research is done and published through a hierarchical system of authority (i.e. MA and PhD students do research for university professors, and university professors publish it for the university).					
82	Competent researchers are demotivated by the lack of financial and emotional support.					
83	Researchers' academic success is determined through the number of their published papers, not the quality of the papers.					
84	Researchers' economic hardship hinders them from wholeheartedly devoting their energy to conducting/publishing research.					
85	Competent researchers are rejected to be employed as the faculty members in ELT higher education.					
86	Researchers are under the pressure of time and stress.					
87	Researchers have difficulty in collecting the required data.					
88	MA and PhD students try to meet the university professors' preferences.					
89	Researchers are involved in a competitive process.					
90	Researchers do not receive financial support.					
91	MA and PhD students receive little or no contributions from university professors.					
92	The university professors spend most of the time on teaching, not research.					
93	If you think there are any other setbacks for your research engagement in Applied Linguistics/TEFL in higher education, please list them here.					

Section 5: Researchers' suggestions

The following items explore your suggestions for improving the dominant research practice in Applied Linguistics/TEFL in higher education.

There are 5 self-rating responses format according to the following:

1 = Unimportant, 2 = Moderately important, 3 = Unsure, 4 = Important, 5 = Very important

Item No	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
94	Researchers should work more seriously on research projects.					
95	Researchers should be provided with enough time to do research projects.					
96	Researchers should consider the ethics of research.					
97	Researchers should develop their research knowledge and skills.					
98	A connection should be made between research and the educational context of teaching and learning.					

(Continued)

(Continued)					
99	Competent researchers should be recruited, supported, and motivated.				
100	A sense of cooperation should be created among researchers.				
101	A centre should be established for novice researchers to be taught and guided.				
102	University professors' research engagement and performance should be monitored.				
103	Participants should be motivated to participate in research studies.				
104	Researchers should be allowed to follow their own research interests.				
105	MA and PhD students should be guided by competent university professors.				
106	MA and PhD students' research knowledge and skills should be developed.				
107	Researchers' time should not be devoted to other useless tasks (e.g. reading many materials, preparing the slides to present for each session, etc.).				
108	Researchers should be taught the basics of research from the beginning.				
109	University professors should be supported to do and read research more and hence, teach less.				
110	Researchers should do and publish research projects honestly and the process of cheating in doing research should be eliminated.				
111	Researchers should develop their digital literacy in research by taking part in some websites such as Google Scholar and ResearchGate.				
112	If you think there are any other suggestions for improving the dominant research practice in Applied Linguistics/TEFL in higher education, please list them here.				

Appendix B. Research Engagement in Applied Linguistics/TEFL: University Professor Questionnaire

This questionnaire is devised with the aim of looking into your actual research engagement as a university professor in Applied Linguistics/TEFL in higher education. To this end, your careful completion of the questionnaire will definitely contribute to obtaining more reliable data. The information will be kept confidential and will be used just for research purposes.

Thank you very much in advance for your time and cooperation.

Section 1: Research conception

The following items investigate your perceptions towards the characteristics of research that you do in Applied Linguistics/TEFL in higher education.

There are 5 self-rating responses format according to the following:

1 = Unimportant, 2 = Moderately important, 3 = Unsure, 4 = Important, 5 = Very important

Item No	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1	Research should address and solve a problem in education.					
2	Research should be practical and the findings be applicable to the teaching/ learning context.					
3	Research should explore creative, innovative, and unexplored ideas.					
4	Research should be replicable in different educational settings.					
5	Research should be emancipatory for both the researcher and the researched (i.e. the researcher and the participants should reflect on the collected data to learn something from the research study).					
6	There should be a reasonable number of participants in research studies.					
7	Research should be systematic and the procedures for data collection and analysis should be considered seriously.					
8	The reliability and validity of the research instruments and research findings should be considered seriously.					
9	Research should be based on real and trustworthy data.					
10	The ethical issues in research studies should be addressed seriously.					
11	There should be enough time to accomplish research projects.					
12	There should be cooperative participants and organisation for research projects.					
13	The required facilities for research projects should be adequately available.					
14	The relevant theoretical background should be pre-specified in research studies.					
15	The definition and purposes of the research studies should be pre-specified.					
16	All sections of a research paper should be dealt with as equally important.					
17	Standards of academic writing suitable for research papers should be observed.					
18	There should not be plagiarism in the research paper.					
19	Attempts should be made to publish research studies in accredited journals.					
20	Research should receive a considerable number of citations.					
21	Research studies should result in more than one published paper.					
22	Research should be challenging and engaging for the researcher.					
23	Research should be in line with the researcher's field of interest.					
24	The research design (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods) should be determined based on the research questions of the study.					
25	Research should have a clear and suitable methodology.					
26	The researcher should have the required skills to conduct different parts of the research study.					
27	The researcher should have the required prior knowledge before conducting the research study.					

(Continued)

(Continued)

28 If you think there are any other characteristics of good research studies in Applied Linguistics/TEFL in higher education, please list them here.

Section 2: Research engagement
 The following items investigate your research engagement and the way and the reason that you are engaged with/in research in Applied Linguistics/TEFL in higher education.
 There are 5 self-rating responses format according to the following:
1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree

Item No	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
29	I read, do, and publish research to be promoted to a higher educational rank (i.e. to become an associate or full professor).					
30	I read, do, and publish research to become a prominent figure in this field.					
31	I prefer to publish research in accredited journals.					
32	I do and publish research to go abroad and teach in top foreign universities.					
33	I publish research to receive financial benefits, rewards, and support.					
34	I must be the first and the corresponding author of my/the students' published research papers.					
35	I read, do, and publish research to be in touch with other members of the research community.					
36	I impose my area of interest on students and behave them to do and publish research papers in that line.					
37	I read and do research to become knowledgeable in this field.					
38	I read and do research to keep myself up-to-date.					
39	I am interested in reading and doing research.					
40	I read and do research to find solutions to the problems in the educational context.					
41	I read and do research to find the gaps in the literature.					
42	I read, do, and publish research because of my professional career.					
43	I read, do, and publish research to receive the required score determined by the university for each academic year.					
44	I read the students' research projects and give comments.					
45	I read research papers to prepare for the class.					
46	I read different sections of research papers based on the purpose that I have.					
47	I subscribe in top journals to email me their recent issues.					
48	I supervise my students' research projects directly and carefully.					
49	If you think there are any other reasons that you are engaged with/in research in Applied Linguistics/TEFL in higher education, please list them here.					

Section 3: Research impact
 The following items investigate the contribution of your research engagement in Applied Linguistics/TEFL in higher education to your professional development.
 There are 5 self-rating responses format according to the following:
1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree

Item No	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
50	Reading and doing research help me increase my academic knowledge.					
51	Reading and doing research help me keep my knowledge up-to-date.					
52	Reading and doing research help me develop my academic writing skills necessary for writing high-quality research papers.					
53	Reading and doing research help me develop my research ability through the reviewers' constructive comments.					
54	Reading and doing research help me find and bridge the gaps in the literature.					
55	Reading and doing research help me develop a close collaboration with other researchers.					

(Continued)

56	Reading and doing research help me become a more proficient ELT instructor in the educational context.						
57	Reading and doing research help me connect research findings to the classroom context.						
58	Reading and doing research have positive impact on my professional teaching practice in ELT higher education context.						
59	Reading and doing research help me introduce suitable research papers to the students to do research accordingly.						
60	Reading and doing research help me promote to a higher educational level.						
61	Reading and doing research help me publish papers to prove to university officials that I am making academic progress.						
62	Reading and doing research help me enrich my CV.						
63	If you think there are any other contributions of research in Applied Linguistics/TEFL in higher education to your professional development, please list them here.						

Section 4: Research setbacks

The following items investigate your perceptions and attitudes towards the main setbacks for being engaged with and in research in Applied Linguistics/TEFL in higher education.

There are 5 self-rating responses format according to the following:

1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree

Item No	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
64	Research is read, done, and published for instrumental purposes such as promotion and acceptance.					
65	Research is not practical and/or applicable to the teaching/learning context.					
66	Research in Applied Linguistics/TEFL is irrelevant to the teaching/learning context.					
67	Research has inaccurate and/or doubtful findings.					
68	Research has low-quality and poor writing.					
69	Research studies are published in a short and limited time.					
70	Ethics of research are not considered in research studies.					
71	Researchers do not read the relevant papers adequately.					
72	Researchers do not have creative ideas for their research projects.					
73	Researchers underestimate their research performance.					
74	Researchers use some strategies to get their research studies published.					
75	Foreign researchers' research findings are used to improve teaching/learning.					
76	Research studies are reviewed by biased reviewers.					
77	Research is a tool to only promote university professors' rank to associate or full professors.					
78	The university professors (i.e. the first and/or corresponding authors) are the non-contributors of the published research papers.					
79	University professors are incapable of helping students' research projects appropriately.					
80	Researchers are not supported emotionally.					
81	Researchers have no cooperation with other researchers.					
82	MA and PhD students do research to pass the courses and get their academic degree.					
83	Research is done and published through a hierarchical system of authority (i.e. MA and PhD students do research for university professors, and university professors publish it for the university).					
84	Competent researchers are demotivated by the lack of financial and emotional support.					
85	Researchers' academic success is determined through the number of their published papers, not the quality of the papers.					

(Continued)

(Continued)					
86	Researchers' economic hardship hinders them from wholeheartedly devoting their energy to conducting/publishing research.				
87	Competent researchers are rejected to be employed as faculty members in the ELT higher education.				
88	Researchers are under the pressure of time and stress.				
89	Researchers have difficulty in collecting the required data.				
90	MA and PhD students try to meet university professors' preferences.				
91	Researchers are involved in a competitive process.				
92	Researchers do not receive financial support.				
93	MA and PhD students receive little or no contributions from university professors.				
94	University professors spend most of their time teaching, not research.				
95	If you think there are any other setbacks for your research engagement in Applied Linguistics/TEFL in higher education, please list them here.				

Section 5: Researchers' suggestions

The following items explore your suggestions for improving the dominant research practice in Applied Linguistics/TEFL in higher education.

There are 5 self-rating responses format according to the following:

1 = Unimportant, 2 = Moderately important, 3 = Unsure, 4 = Important, 5 = Very important

Item No	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
96	Researchers should work more seriously on research projects.					
97	Researchers should be provided with enough time to do research projects.					
98	Researchers should consider the ethics of research.					
99	Researchers should develop their research knowledge and skills.					
100	A connection should be made between research and the educational context of teaching and learning.					
101	Competent researchers should be recruited, supported, and motivated.					
102	A sense of cooperation should be created among researchers.					
103	A centre should be established for novice researchers to be taught and guided.					
104	University professors' research engagement and performance should be monitored.					
105	Participants should be motivated to participate in research studies.					
106	Researchers should be allowed to follow their own research interests.					
107	MA and PhD students should be guided by competent university professors.					
108	MA and PhD students' research knowledge and skills should be developed.					
109	Researchers' time should not be devoted to other useless tasks (e.g. reading many materials, preparing the slides to present for each session, etc.).					
110	Researchers should be taught the basics of research from the beginning.					
111	University professors should be supported to do and read research more and, hence, teach less.					
112	Researchers should do and publish research projects honestly and the process of cheating in doing research should be eliminated.					
113	Researchers should develop their digital literacy in research by taking part in some websites such as Google Scholar and ResearchGate.					
114	If you think there are any other suggestions for improving the dominant research practice in Applied Linguistics/TEFL in higher education, please list them here.					



© 2019 The Author(s). This open access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) 4.0 license.

You are free to:

Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format. Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially.

The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms.

Under the following terms:

Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made.

You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

No additional restrictions

You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits.

Cogent Education (ISSN: 2331-186X) is published by Cogent OA, part of Taylor & Francis Group.

Publishing with Cogent OA ensures:

- Immediate, universal access to your article on publication
- High visibility and discoverability via the Cogent OA website as well as Taylor & Francis Online
- Download and citation statistics for your article
- Rapid online publication
- Input from, and dialog with, expert editors and editorial boards
- Retention of full copyright of your article
- Guaranteed legacy preservation of your article
- Discounts and waivers for authors in developing regions

Submit your manuscript to a Cogent OA journal at www.CogentOA.com

