Lecturers' Perceptions of Action Research and Current Challenges

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Abstract. Understanding the research concept, its obstacles, and motivation is necessary to provide better academic services and opportunities for teachers less active in conducting research. To this end, 40 lecturers from an English Language Center with various qualifications and adequate teaching experiences in the Omani EFL context were selected as the population of this study. A questionnaire initially designed by Borg (2009) to measure/gauge? lecturers' views on research was used to collect the data. The findings revealed that the lecturers showed lower levels of research engagement due to problems such as a lack of methodological knowledge, heavy teaching loads, and unclear job specifications. In addition, objectivity was considered an essential criterion while conducting research, and published materials on the Internet were stated to be the primary source of reading about language-related resources. They also believed that conducting research would only moderately affect their teaching techniques. The findings of this study should help reduce the concerns and obstacles among lecturers and engage them more in the research area by focusing on the problems and facilitating the use of accessible resources to encourage them to conduct more research studies. Policymakers, managers, institutions, and teachers play essential roles in the new way of developing curricula, which considers teachers as researchers.

Keywords: English lecturers; perceptions; action research; challenges

1. Introduction

Research is a keyword that could be considered the foundation to progress in all fields of science, and its role in education is undeniable (Sadeghi & Abutorabi,

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2017). Anderson (1998, as cited in Burton & Barlett, 2005) stated that research in the context of education is a term that tries to distinguish or find solutions for most issues by collecting and analyzing the primary data to describe, explain, generalize, and predict the problems. Consequently, research is indirectly related to teaching and learning, and most responsibilities are on the teacher's shoulders.

Gall et al. (2007) stated that knowledge continues as a growing trend, but it does not guarantee that educational practitioners are aware of it, acknowledge, or apply it to their duties. There are some debates over the essence and standards of the word research. Stenhouse (1981) describes research as a systematic inquiry considered self-critical.

The latest theories of curriculum design focus on a smooth transition of a teacher's role from passive to active and innovative (Sadeghi & Aburorabi, 2017). To achieve such a transition, teachers should acquire the researcher's perspective, which is highly dependent on knowledge. To better realize the role of teachers as researchers in the new standards of curriculum design, teachers should have a well-developed understanding of the research concept. This investigation equips teachers to be aware of the problems as teacher-researcher, consequently promoting their professional role and development (Sadeghi & Aburorabi, 2017).

Kutlay (2012) states that teachers must be engaged in research studies either by doing it or reading other scholarly resources, leading to their engagement in life-long learning. Day (1999) believes that the basics of teaching need teachers to be involved in continuous professional development activities. This learning process might have occurred in natural, opportunistic, evolutionary, or planned forms. Stenhouse (1975, cited in Nunan, 1997) expresses that there will be some educational improvement only if the teachers are involved in research, and the best educational curriculum can be designed as a kind of collaboration between the teachers and the researchers in an academic context. It is worth noting that, currently, most professional development sessions and activities consider the role of the teacher as a passive participant. Although teachers would like to participate in exciting workshops that cover their areas of interest, these activities will not improve their teaching and learning strategies (Gould, 2008).

Sadeghi and Aburorabi (2017) state that one of the crucial aspects of showing progress in professional development is to increase the abilities of a teacher to develop a critical assessment of the event, to analyze and implement the accessible evidence from the research to smoothly transform the role of teacher to be perspective evidence-based practitioners. Taber (2007) believes that there is an expectation from every classroom teacher to assess his work and improve it using some evidence comprehensively. Two levels have been defined for evidence-based practice. The first level is using the existing knowledge, research, and literature in educational contexts. The second level considers the creation of evidence that the current data is weak, questionable, or uncertain (Davies, 1999). It is discussed that being engaged in research will benefit the teacher's professional development (Kincheloe, 2003; Kirkwood & Christie, 2006;

Lankshear & Knobel, 2004; Lyle, 2003) and also increase their status as an academic (Gurney, 1989).

The issue which remains unsolvable is the gap between theory and practice. Research studies have been criticized as they cannot be appealed/applied? beyond the academic environments (Kutlay, 2013). Rose (2002) believes that there is a gap between researchers and classroom teachers, and most of the research studies have been unsuccessful in focusing on the teachers` experiences in real-life situations. Research is based on theory, while teaching is a practice-based model (Kutlay, 2013). Hargreaves (1996) states that the problem arises from the point that teachers believe conducting research is the researchers' problem and is not concerned with the teaching process.

Stenhouse (1981) argues that teachers do not tend to implement the results and findings of their research studies in their teaching and learning contexts unless they are part of that research process. He believes some criteria act as obstacles to prevent the teachers from working actively in the research area, including time shortage and lack of support from the proper authorities. Rose (2002) came up with the idea of bridging the relationship between researcher and teacher by providing a cooperative working climate. Rose also believes that the participation of teachers will be improved if they have been given clear and positive pictures/understanding? of classroom-based inquiry, which is beneficial for their teaching strategies and finding/determining? students' needs in the classrooms.

Atay (2006) stated that while teachers conduct research or read other research studies in their areas of interest, several advantages could be recorded accordingly. They could develop their critical thinking abilities and increase their self-esteem, and, as mentioned earlier, their awareness of their students' needs could also be boosted.

Hargreaves (2001) claimed that when teachers read other research papers, they are engaged with research, and by doing research themselves, they are boosting the teaching and learning process. Therefore, it has been observed that during recent years, in some educational contexts, such as Australia, the USA, and the UK, teachers have been conducting research (Borg, 2009). However, besides all these advantages of doing some research activities, various reasons still hinder the transition from being a teacher to a researcher (Luu et al., 2017).

Lately, international educational communities have acknowledged a growing trend of a teacher as a researcher terminology (Darling- Hammond, 1999; Gore & Morrison, 2000; Kemmis, 2001; Rogers, 2002). It has been discussed that if teachers have the knowledge, skills, and opportunities to conduct research within their educational communities, the complexity of the school community will be well-understood accordingly (Gray & Campbell-Evans, 2002). Bauman (1996) designed a model that shows teachers' development/transition? to researchers. He believes that teachers must be involved in scientific research and development from the first educational courses, then through professional development sessions, and finally through their roles as mentors to transfer their knowledge to new teachers. He also states that research is needed to assist the

institutions and their staff in questioning, analyzing, and investigating their daily educational goals.

Yuan et al. (2016) stated that the term teacher-researcher has moved/been applied? to English language teaching and learning in recent years. Concurrently, the literature is experiencing an increase in language teacher's research engagement through empirical studies (Anwaruddin & Pervin, 2015; Borg, 2013; Borg & Liu, 2012; Dikilitaş & Mumford, 2016), literature reviews (Borg, 2010), through a collection of teachers' research (Borg & Sanchez, 2015a; Dikilitaş et al., 2015), and finally through samples of practitioner research (Parsaiyan et al., 2016).

Involving teachers in research leads to a better and comprehensive understanding of the identity of a teacher as a researcher (Edwards & Burns, 2016a), the motivational factors affecting teachers (Yuan et al., 2016), the practice which comes from the teacher, and finally, the role of professional development in research (Erlam, 2008; Nassaji, 2012). There are some critics of implementing a teacher-researcher model in an educational context. McKay (2006) finds that research might lead to more effective teaching techniques by providing a deeper understanding of the teaching and learning process and not merely focusing on pedagogical doubts. Richards (2003) also criticizes the implementation of research on teachers and believes that teachers' schedules are already complete and the research might pressure them. Therefore, this study attempted to investigate lecturers' challenges comprehensively in conducting research in their institutions. The results will help the line managers and institutions be aware of the issues and provide the best solutions to facilitate research moves.

2. Review of the Related Literature
2.1. Theoretical Background
Defining the word 'research' can be difficult because it adopts an ideological position in the educational context. Although there are different views on the definition of research, particular key characteristics must be considered. TESOL defines research as an investigation, examination, or inquiry that requires planning, organizing, and ethical considerations as well as systematic and careful analysis of data, sound interpretations, and conclusions based on evidence and inferences being made (Paltridge & Phakiti, 2015).

To enable teachers to become teacher-researchers, it is vital to comprehend how language instructors see/regard? research (Edwards & Burns, 2016b). In addition, a proper organization and system are needed when conducting research (Dörnyei, 2007). Teachers need to know how they should be engaged with different/various? areas of research and how research should be conducted in classrooms (Borg, 2016).

Moreover, research engagement is associated with research culture in the teaching professions. The preparation of teachers, the support of institutions (Banegas, 2017), the motivation of teachers (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011), and the identity of the teacher-researcher can affect the research engagement (Xu, 2014). A study in Turkey concluded that teacher research engagement might negatively affect researchers and teachers if there is no balance (Yayli, 2012).

Students who are learning to be teachers in institutions are usually equipped with research-based necessities/essentials/requirements by universities. This can improve future teachers in their practices (Ball, 2012). A simple definition of teacher research is "systematic self-study by teachers (individually or collaboratively) that tries to produce some sort of real-world impact and is made public." (Borg & Sanchez, 2015, p. 1).

2.2. The new teacher-researcher role

For the past twenty years, teachers teaching in classrooms have had new roles in which they have to be involved in the educational communities (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; Gore, 2000; Poetter, 2001; Rodgers, 2002). The usual roles played by a teacher for years are now in question for the improvement of educational institutions (O'Donnell-Allen, 2004). There has been an increasing awareness and acceptance of the need for teachers' empowerment to realize better professional practice (Fueyo & Koorland, 1997; Kemmis, 2001; Keyes, 1999; Rodgers, 2002).

A teacher's role is important to understand the connection between teaching and researching further, as teachers are the medium between the classroom and the school (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Rodgers, 2002).

This teacher-researcher role can result in reflecting on the experience in the classroom and further describing it, and making an analysis out of it, which can then be turned into actions.

Teachers playing the role of a researcher in their practice can also be described as a data-driven learning process. They see themselves as learners when conducting research in their classroom, and the data generated can be easily understood (Keyes, 1999). Teachers who conduct research can also quickly analyze school entanglement (Caro-Bruce & Zeichner, 1998). Teachers engaging in research projects can improve their self- and practice awareness as they play both the role of being a teacher and learner simultaneously, enhancing a more profound understanding of the research done (Breidenstein et al., 2001; Zeichner & Liston, 1987).

Teachers involved in action research mentioned that they are now more focused on in-depth ?? and analyzing their teaching methods since they started participating in this program (Caro-Bruce & Zeichner, 1998, p.16).

The role of teachers being researchers is challenging as this role is intellectually straining and often engages in/involves? serious and complex questions about classroom practice and learning outcomes (Keyes, 1999).

Schools and classrooms can be complex, an obstacle for teachers to be both teachers and researchers. Time management, relationships with colleagues and school management, the school system and the pressure associated with it, and teachers having less confidence can cause challenges to proceeding with the teacher-researcher role (Potter, 2001).

The majority of teachers also doubt the role of research being done/conducted? in the classroom. Keyes (1999) found that teachers had limited time to be involved in research in addition to the extra work given by the school for

teachers. Teachers find processes such as recording lessons, analyzing data, and interviewing students almost impossible, especially with all the jobs/tasks they have to complete daily as teachers (Bauman, 1996; Caro-Bruce and Zeichner, 1998; Keyes, 1999).

Keyes (1999) also found that most teachers did not read academic articles as they were seen/regarded as unrealistic, meaningless, and challenging to access. Moreover, the academic articles` language is difficult to understand, causing teachers to be demotivated to read, especially when it is too scientific and about something beyond their background knowledge. Keyes (1999) mentioned that the research voice is "not a voice that teachers naturally recognize as speaking to them" (p.21).

Perhaps the first researchers who conducted studies to determine teachers' conceptions of research were J. McDonough and S. McDonough (1990) and Brown (1992). They stated that teachers' viewpoints regarding conducting research were mainly focused on quantitative and empirical research. However, it had been observed that teachers had a negative attitude toward the numerical nature of research studies (McNamara, 2002). Allison and Carey (2007) revealed that formal research, based on teachers` ideas, is structural and demanding.

McMillan and Wergin (2010) focused on teachers' participation in research. They stated that teachers could skip the evaluation of other academics regarding the reliability of data. Nevertheless, they must be able to read, review, and evaluate the research data themselves.

Al Balushi (2022) stated that using action research helps teachers plan, implement, and assess the data in their classes, demonstrating critical thinking as professional academics. This emphasizes the function of action research to prepare the teachers with a systematic reflection on their practices in the classroom (Manfra, 2019).

Recently, there has been a notice to increase employees' awareness in Omani schools regarding conducting research studies for better reflection on their teaching strategies and techniques (Al Balushi, 2017, 2022).

Al Balushi (2022) stated that although some teachers might have research experience, those experiences rely on theories rather than practice. Therefore, it was suggested that higher education institutions consider placing action research programs within the curriculum. This will help the participants to develop action research theories and practice concurrently.

Sadeghi and Abutorabi (2017) believe that the existing literature to measure the attitude of teachers regarding conducting research studies lacks enough empirical data; however, some studies focus on the guidelines for teachers doing research. To fill this gap, the present study tries to find answers to the following research question:

2.3. Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of English as a foreign language (EFL) lecturers toward research situations, conducting research in their workplaces, and the challenges they face in this process?

3. Method

The current study used exploratory and descriptive methods of investigating action research in English as a foreign language (EFL) in Oman.

3.1. Participants

To conduct the current research study, 40 English language lecturers from the University of Technology and Applied Sciences in Shinas, Oman participated voluntarily. The lecturers came from different/various countries, including Iran, Oman, India, Pakistan, the UK, Egypt, the Philippines, and Sudan. The lecturers taught General English Skills at English Language Center (ELC) for the Foundation Program. The Foundation Program prepares the students for Information Technology, English, and Mathematics to be able to move to the Higher Education Department to pursue their studies. The age range of the lecturers was between 28 to 60.

The population above had a minimum of a bachelor's degree, mostly a master's degree, and a few were Ph.D. holders who had studied Applied Linguistics, TESOL, or Education in different/various universities worldwide. Professionally speaking, almost all the lecturers had passed the CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults) course by Cambridge University Assessment. Since the lecturers came from different countries, their native languages and educational backgrounds also differed. However, the only proper communication channel at the university was in English.

Regarding their teaching experiences, a range of three years' experience was the minimum to 20 years of teaching experience. Lecturers taught 18 hours per week except for the coordinators, whose teaching loads were six to eight hours weekly. The lecturers were a combination of males and females.

3.2. Research Instruments

To implement the present research study, the following instruments were used:

3.2.1. The Questionnaire

The first instrument employed in this study to collect the required data was the English Language Teachers` Views of Research designed by Simon Borg in 2009 in the School of Education at the University of Leeds. The questionnaire was published in March 2009 in Applied Linguistics, a journal from Oxford University Press. The original questionnaire has six sections; however, this adopted/adapted? version contains five sections.

The first section, Scenarios, introduces some situations that might be a research condition. There is no wrong or correct answer. Participants are given 10 scenarios and are asked to select one option among the existing ones. The options are designed on a Likert scale as follows: Definitely not research (1), Probably not research (2), Probably research (3), and Definitely research (4).

The second section, Characteristics of Good Quality Research, which includes two parts, attempts to elicit the teachers` views regarding the features of a good research study. In the first part, 11 statements are given to the participants, and they have to select an option from the following ones: Unimportant, Moderately important, Unsure, Important, and Not very important for each statement. In the second part, a table is provided for them to write any other features of good quality research that are missing in part one.

Section 3, Research Culture, measures the participants' perceptions of the research at their school. Nine statements are given to the participants, and they are requested to select one of the following options for each statement: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Uncertainty, Agree, Strongly agree.

Section 4, Reading Research, is designed in four parts. In part one, the participants must select the frequency rate of reading research papers by selecting one of the following options: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, and Often. If they choose Often, they must tick the resources such as books or journals they read in the second part. In part three, the participants must determine how much reading other research studies may affect their teaching. Finally, in part 4, the participants must determine why they read other research studies rarely or never.

Section 5, Doing Research, investigates the participants' frequency of publishing. They must select one of the following options for doing research, including Never, Rarely, Sometimes, and Often, followed by the reasons for their selections.

The current study used the adopted/adapted? version of the original questionnaire. Some studies have recently used and cited the questionnaire, therefore it was considered reliable. The reliability of the questionnaire mentioned above was measured by Faribi et al. (2019) as 0.79, which is considered highly reliable. This questionnaire is still widely used in various studies (Banegas, 2017; Derakhshan et al., 2020; Rahimi & Weisi, 2018). Two holders of PhDs in Applied Linguistics reviewed the questions comprehensively to measure the validity of the questions.

3.2.2. Google Forms
The main questionnaire of the current study was designed on Google Forms and distributed to the participants. A soft copy of the questionnaire would give easy access to the statistics to analyze.

3.2.3. Ethical Considerations
To follow the College's Academic Integrity Policy, the proposal to conduct the study was initially drafted and approved by the head of the English Language Center. To ensure the integrity of the data collection procedure, it was mentioned that participants voluntarily answered all the sections in the questionnaires. They were not under any pressure to answer the questions nor were their identities indicated.

3.3. Procedures

The study was conducted during the second semester (summer semester) of the academic year 2022-2023 at University of Technology and Applied Sciences in Shinas, Oman. A questionnaire was designed on Google Forms to collect the required data and distributed among the participants by their office emails. The participants were given one week to answer the questions.

3.4. Data Analysis

Section 1 of the questionnaire measured lecturers' knowledge in various scenarios, which were either research situations or not. The results of this section can be found in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Scenarios` statistics

Scenario	N	Definitely not research	Probably not research	Probably research	Definitely research
1	40	15.8	21.1	36.8	26.3
2	40	0	21.1	21.1	57.9
3	40	26.3	26.3	15.8	31.6
4	40	0	10.5	21.1	68.4
5	40	0	31.6	15.8	52.6
6	40	0	10.5	31.6	57.9
7	40	26.3	10.5	36.8	26.3
8	40	15.8	47.4	26.3	10.5
9	40	21.1	31.6	15.8	31.6
10	40	21.1	15.8	42.1	21.1

As can be observed, in Scenario 4, which was about the questionnaire distribution among 40 lecturers, 68.4% of the participants agreed that this scenario was undoubtedly research. The second and third ranks belong to Scenarios 2 and 6, with 57.9% of agreement on its definitely being research. Scenario 8, which focused on a lecturer receiving feedback from students to decide about the second part of his teaching, with 10.5%, is at the bottom of the list. The table revealed that lecturers have adequate knowledge and background regarding research.

Section 2 of the questionnaire measures the features of a good research study. The following data was collected from the participants of this study:

Table 2: Characteristics of good quality research

Research Features	Unimportant	Moderately important	Unsure	Important	Very important
Large-scale study	0	21.1	0	57.9	21.1
Large volume of information	10.5	21.1	15.8	31.6	21.1
Experiments in use	5.3	15.8	5.3	36.8	36.8
Hypothesis testing	5.3	10.5	5.3	26.3	52.6
Statistical data	0	10.5	5.3	31.6	52.6
Using a questionnaire	0	21.1	21.1	21.1	36.8
Objectivity of researcher	0	0	15.8	15.8	68.4
Targets' wide ELT	26.3	0	10.5	47.4	15.8

context					
Publicizing the results	5.3	10.5	15.8	36.8	31.6
New ideas appear out of/emerge from? results	5.3	0	15.8	42.1	36.8
Controlled variables	0	5.3	5.3	57.9	31.6

Table 2 shows that a researcher's objectivity while conducting research is the main criterion of a good study. Following this, hypothesis testing and statistical data, with 52.6%, are considered the other essential criteria of a good quality study. In this section, the majority of participants did not significantly select targeting a broad ELT context as a feature of a high-quality research study.

Section 3 of the questionnaire measured what it means to research culture among the lecturers. Table 3 below reveals the relevant statistics of this section:

Table 3: Research culture

Research culture	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Don't know	agree	Agree strongly
Lecturers as researchers	0	26.3	15.8	52.6	5.3
Encouragement by managers	0	0	15.8	52.6	31.6
Doing research is important part of job	5.3	26.3	10.5	36.8	21.1
Lecturers access books and journals	0	10.5	10.5	63.2	15.8
Lecturers` opportunities to learn about current research	0	10.5	15.8	57.9	15.8
Lecturers talk about research	0	15.8	36.8	42.1	5.3
Support to attend ELT conferences	0	5.3	15.8	42.1	36.8
Research time merged in teaching loads	10.5	5.3	42.1	31.6	10.5
Lecturers read published research	0	15.8	36.8	36.8	10.5

Based on Table 3, supporting lecturers to attend the EFL conferences received the highest percentage, namely 36.8%, which shows the teachers' motivation to be able to participate in various related conferences. Furthermore, 31.6% of teachers stated that managers should encourage and motivate teachers to conduct research studies. Teachers as independent researchers and talking about research are considered minor criteria in research culture, at 5.3%.

The following Table $ depicts the frequency of reading resources by lecturers, the types of the resources, and the degree to which they affect the lecturers' teaching strategies.

Table 4: The frequency of reading ELT-published materials

Reading research	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
	0	21.1	63.2	15.8

A total of 63.2% of the participants said they sometimes read published materials, followed by those who rarely read published material (21.1%_, and those who often read research articles at 15.8%. The number of people who

selected 'Often' and were sometimes told to select the resources that are accessible to them, are reflected in the following table:

Table 5: The Reading resources by teachers

| Resources	Percentage
Web-based sources of research	63.2
Academic journals	52.6
Books	36.8
Not applicable	21.1
Newsletters	3

Table 5 reveals that lecturers prefer using Internet-based materials over other accessible resources. Academic journals and books are the other reading resources indicated by participants.

Figure 1 below shows the participants' opinions on reading research resources and how these resources affect the quality of their teaching.
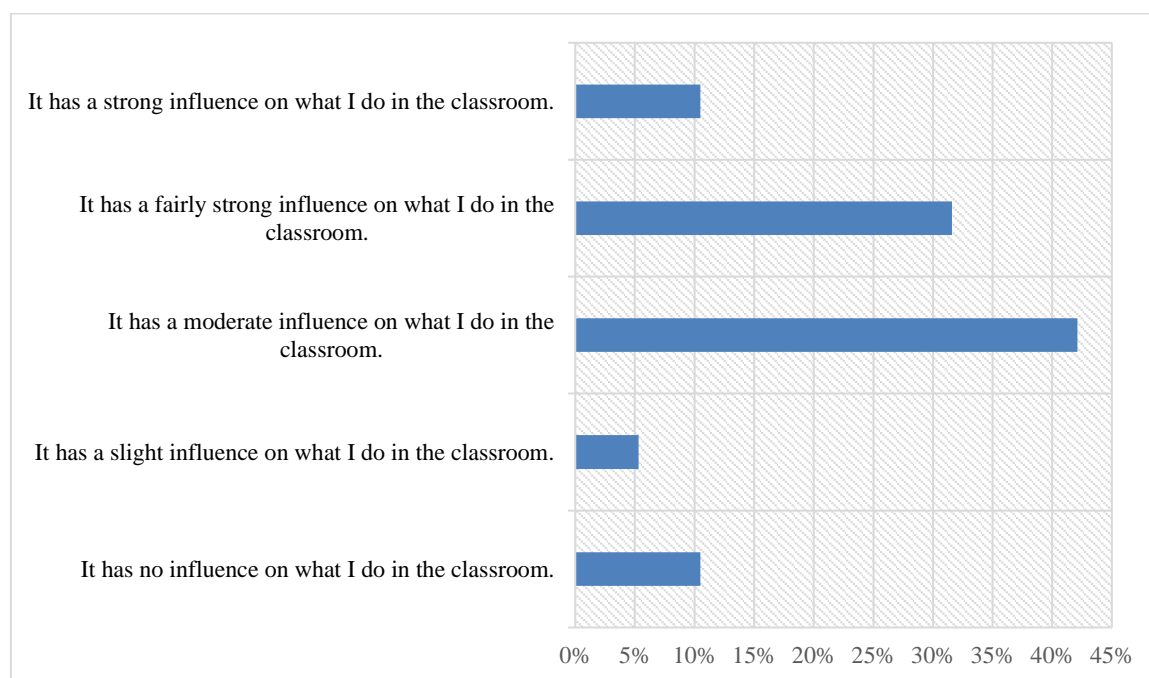
Figure 1: Effect of reading research studies on teaching process

As Figure 1 indicatess, 42.1% of lecturers believe such studies moderately affect their teaching strategies. In addition, 31.6 % of the lecturers think reading research material strongly influences their teaching process. It is clear from this figure that only 10.5% believe there is no relation between reading research publications and the teaching process, which is insignificant. Lecturers who selected 'Never' or 'Rarely' were asked the justification for their replies, which are reflected in   in Figure 2.
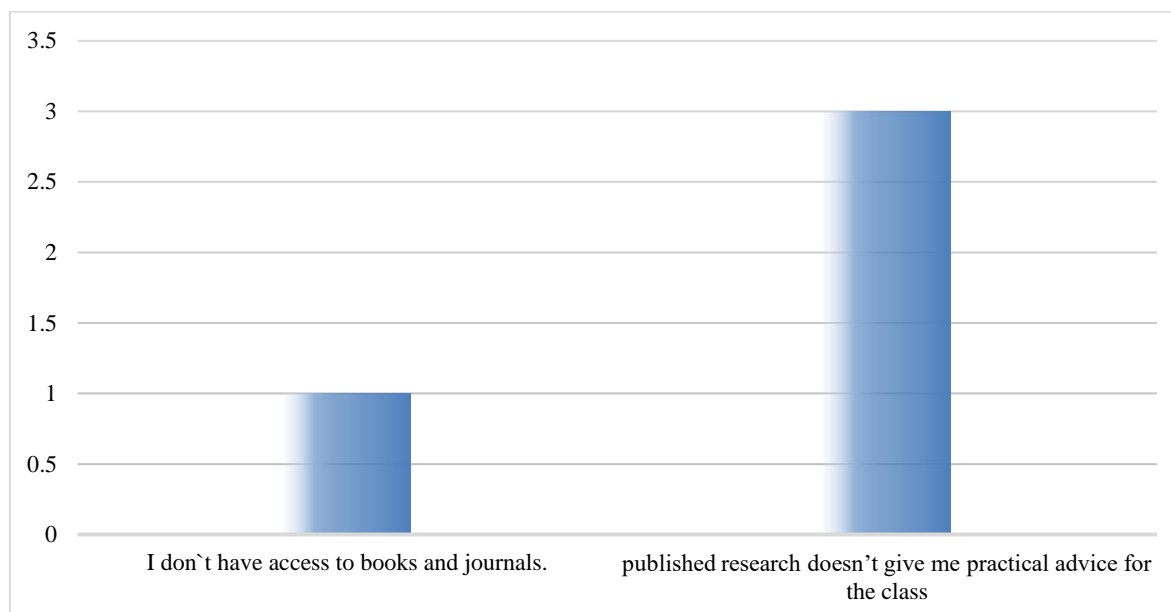
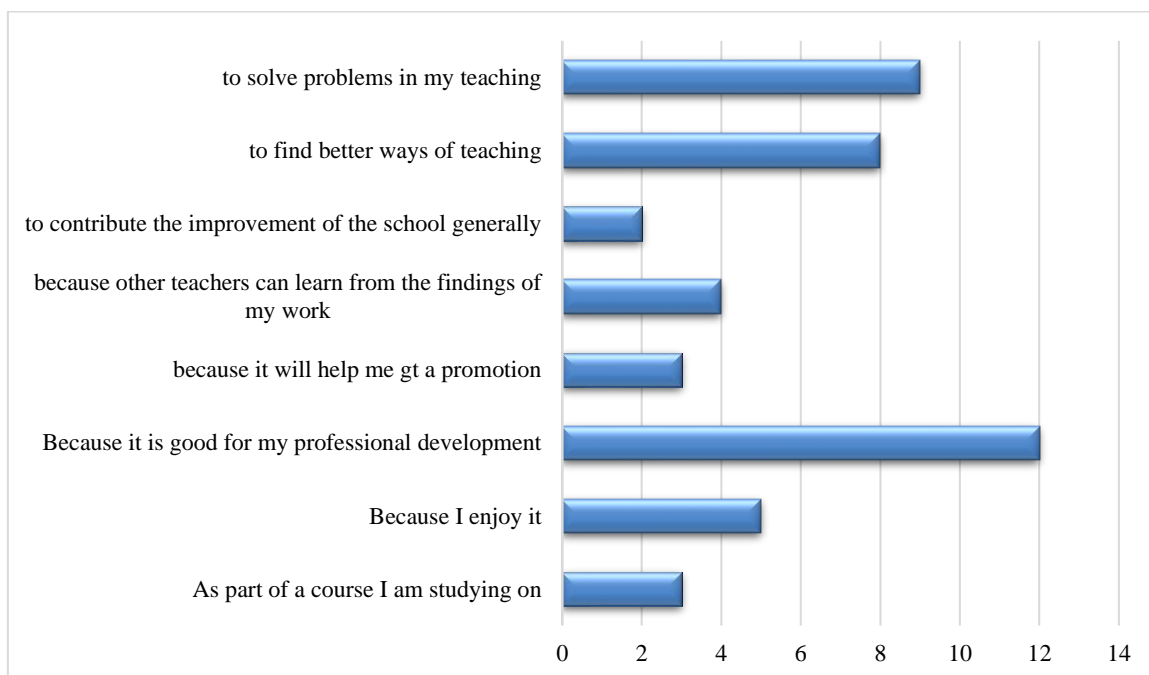**Figure 2: Reasons for not Reading research studies**

Figure 2 shows the reasons why some lecturers are not interested in reading other's research studies. A lecturer (5.3%) stated that there is no access to the research publications such as books and journals, while three other lecturers (15.9%) mentioned that there is not much practical advice to be found regarding their work in these types of reading material.

The last section of the questionnaire measured the frequency of publications by the participants. The following Table 6 shows the results of the section:

Table 6: Frequency of doing research

| Options	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Percentage	10.5	21.1	47.4	21.1

Table 6 shows that 47.4% of teachers at UTAS Shinas sometimes undertake research studies, followed by 21.1% of teachers who often conduct research. To determine the reasons for conducting research studies or not, some follow-up data were gathered, which depict the teachers' willingness or unwillingness to undertake research studies. The results are as follows:

Figure 3: Reasons for lecturers' conducting research

Figure 3 shows that the main reasons for teachers' conducting research studies at UTAS Shinas are professional development concerns (12 teachers); researching to solve their teaching issues (nine teachers), followed by finding better ways or strategies to teach effectively (eight teachers).

For those who had selected 'Rarely' or 'Never,' the following Figure 4 reveals their reasons:
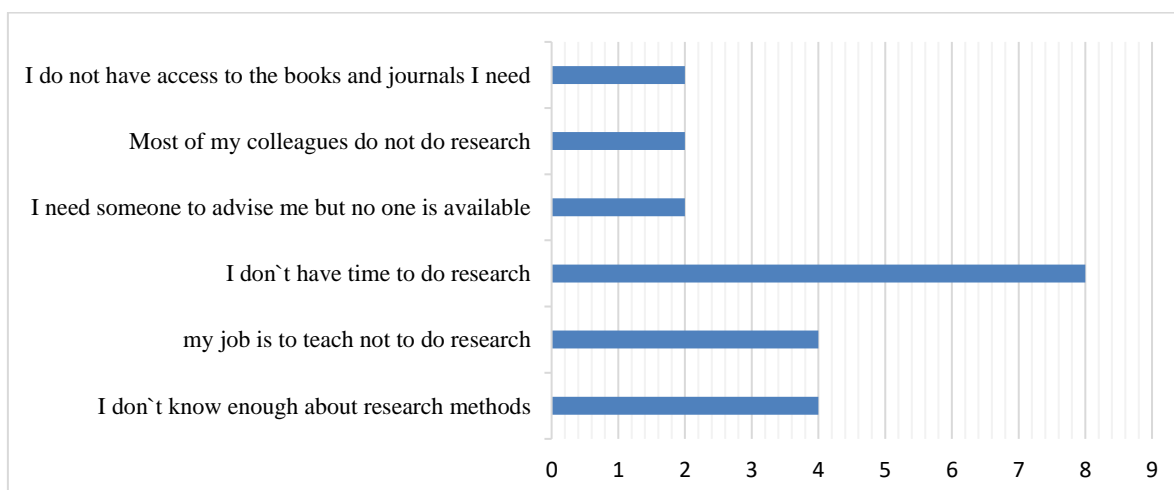
Figure 4: Reasons for not conducting research studies

Figure 4 shows the lecturers' reasons and obstacles preventing them from conducting research. It is observed that most lecturers (21.1%) suffer from heavy teaching loads, which hinder them from conducting research studies. Although other lecturers (10.5%) need more training sessions on research methods, the

same percentage of lecturers insist that conducting any research studies is not included in their job descriptions.

4. Results & Discussion

The overall study attempted to understand the research concept, challenges, motivation, and solutions regarding engaging lecturers more in conducting research studies among Omani and non-Omani English teachers.

The investigation of data on the concept of the research showed that lecturers perceived research to be associated with objectivity, statistical data, hypothesis testing, using questionnaires (Dornyei, 2007; Paltridge & Phakiti, 2015), and experiments which lead to the discovery of new ideas. Fox et al. (2007) and McIntyre (2005) state that teaching is certainly a practical action, and a lecturer's research should provide vivid and valuable ideas suitable for their teaching environment. In this study, the lecturers did not agree on the generalizability of research as a highly needed criterion for good research. This agrees with the studies conducted by Borg (2009) and Sadeghi and Abutorabi (2007) which found that generalizing a study's results is not necessary for an educational research study.

Measuring lecturers' attitudes regarding research at their workplace, it was found that many teachers rely on support from the authorities to participate in ELT workshops, webinars, or conferences. This study's findings align with the findings by Maravillas (2022), namely that the difficulty in conducting research depends on the number of seminars in which teachers participate in a year. Relucio (2019) also stated that to be able to conduct some research studies, lecturers must attend related training and conferences. This attitude is connected with/relates to? the idea that managers must encourage and motivate teachers to conduct research studies (Calhoun, 1993; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990; Sardo-Brown, 1995; Yuan et al., 2016). Pierce and Hunsaker (1996) considered teachers as agents who can change their strategies and techniques based on the results of their research. Most participants did not support the idea of the teacher as a researcher. and Edwards and Burns (2016) and Xu (2014) concluded that there is a need for further exploration and promotion of teachers as researchers. Therefore, the other types of research studies are acknowledged irrespective of the normativity judgments from other academics.

It was also revealed that 63.2% of the population of this study read some research studies. Among the accessible resources, they were interested in reading web-based materials, academic journals, and books. They believed that reading other research studies affects their teaching procedures moderately. To further analyze why a few teachers are not reading available resources, they stated that published materials in academic contexts do not give them practical ideas to implement in their classrooms.

Finally, the level of lecturers` engagement in conducting research showed that most are probably interested in doing research. Anwaruddin and Pervin (2015) confirmed that many teachers would like to be engaged in research voluntarily without considering it as part of their jobs and without receiving any benefits. Teachers mentioned that research is a valuable standard for their professional

development (Sadeghi & Abutorabi, 2017); some do research to solve their teaching problems, and others stated that they are looking for more strategic and practical teaching techniques in their classes. Tindowen et al. (2019) revealed that teachers view research as one of the most important tools for better delivery of their instruction in class. They also found that conducting research leads to higher levels of teacher knowledge in subject areas.

The justifications of those lecturers who were not interested in conducting research are worth investigating here. The first point was the lack of time to complete a study. The findings from Allison and Carey (2007), Borg (2009) and Nassaji (2012) support the idea of a lack of time for doing research being critical. Teachers also believe that research is not part of their job specification, therefore their preference is to be more passive in research. This aligns with a study by Banegas (2018), who found that Argentinian teachers do not see/regard? conducting research as part of their teaching duties.

5. Conclusion and Implications

The study endeavored to determine the research climate among the lecturers in the Omani EFL context. They stated that they need external motivation from their managers to invest more time in research. They also indicated that participating in EFL-related conferences could help them better understand the research concept. The study further revealed that teachers conduct research because they consider it a professional development stage in their careers, which helps them find technical solutions for their teaching problems. Those lecturers who were not interested in conducting any research mentioned that there is a lack of time to do research, and it is not a mandatory part of their jobs. They also do not have adequate knowledge in the area of research methodology.

This study provided insights for the policymakers, managers, institutions, and lecturers as researchers. Policymakers might have a new viewpoint regarding the role of teachers at universities and institutions. They could provide situations or a research climate where lecturers are able to create a path from what they teach, which is largely based on theories, to the conducting of research that increases their practical knowledge. A manager could provide conducive situations, such as facilitating administrative procedures to receive approval for conducting research or giving their lecturers free access to modern EFL journals as signs of support. Managers could also consider load reduction for the lecturers engaging in research. On the other hand, institutions could develop/arrange? webinars, seminars, workshops, or conferences on conducting a research study, designing methodology, and using proper instruments leading to increased teachers' knowledge. Finally, for lecturers, it can be stated that they need to increase their awareness regarding the research methodologies and techniques to understand their students' needs, strengths, and weaknesses to implement better practices.

Although it was attempted to design and develop a comprehensive study in Oman, some limitations can be noted for further research. The study was conducted at Shinas University of Technology and Applied Sciences with 40 participants, therefore the generalizability of the results is somewhat critical.

Other studies that target a large population of lecturers within or outside of Oman are recommended.

Owing to the lack of time and lecturers' teaching loads, the study relied on the questionnaire from Borg (2009). However, further studies could be based on interviews and observations to understand the relationship between teaching and research.

Finally, the present data analysis is based on English lecturers' replies, therefore more studies could be conducted to determine the concept of research among teachers of other fields of study.

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