

NIỀM TIN GIẢNG DẠY HIỆU QUẢ CỦA GIÁO VIÊN TIẾNG ANH: NGHIÊN CỨU ĐIỂN MẪU TẠI MỘT TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC Ở VIỆT NAM

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Mục đích của nghiên cứu này là điều tra niềm tin giảng dạy hiệu quả của giáo viên dạy tiếng Anh (TESOL), một lĩnh vực nghiên cứu chưa được chú ý tới nhiều. Nghiên cứu trường hợp này đã tìm hiểu các yếu tố dẫn đến niềm tin giảng dạy hiệu quả của giáo viên tiếng Anh tại một trường đại học ở Việt Nam, dựa trên lý thuyết nhận thức xã hội của Bandura (1986). Các cuộc phỏng vấn bán cấu trúc đã cho thấy rất nhiều yếu tố, mà phần lớn nằm trong bốn yếu tố dẫn tới niềm tin giảng dạy hiệu quả xác định bởi Bandura (1997), bao gồm: kinh nghiệm bản thân, kinh nghiệm gián tiếp, đánh giá xã hội, và trạng thái sinh lý và tình cảm. Cuối cùng, dữ liệu cho thấy mối liên quan chặt chẽ giữa những yếu tố này. Đây là một phát hiện nhất quán trong các tài liệu nghiên cứu, cho rằng các yếu tố thường gắn kết cùng cố lẫn nhau.

Từ khóa: Niềm tin giảng dạy hiệu quả, giáo viên tiếng Anh, Việt Nam, sự tự tin của khi giảng dạy tiếng Anh.

The study aims to investigate English teachers' self-efficacy - an under-researched area in the field of TESOL (Teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages). The case study, based on the framework of Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, explores factors contributing to the self-efficacy of English teachers at a university in Vietnam. The semi-structured interviews reveal various factors, most of which are mentioned in Bandura's (1997) four sources of self-efficacy, namely mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological and affective states. The data also show high interrelatedness among these identified sources, which implies the consistency of the existing research.

Keywords: Self-efficacy; teachers of English; Vietnam; confidence in teaching English.

SOURCES OF VIETNAMESE TEACHERS' SENSE OF EFFICACY IN TEACHING ENGLISH: A CASE OF A UNIVERSITY IN VIETNAM

Introduction

English is the most taught foreign language in the educational system across

Vietnam. Indeed in recent times it has become a compulsory subject at most learning institutions, until the tertiary level. This has led to a rapid expansion in the number of English language teachers required, an expansion that brings with it considerable challenges to prepare and

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maintain a large workforce of high quality English teachers. Education research can assist this situation by understanding the current state of this workforce regarding the issues promoting or blocking their confidence and performance as teachers. One proven approach to provide an overview of the beliefs held and issues experienced by a teaching group is to investigate their self-efficacy. Such studies reveal not only the belief structures of the participants but also pinpoint many of the situational and systemic influences that are retarding higher efficacy. These influences are useful to understand as, once identified, many may be modified to assist the teaching group to function with higher morale and success. Accordingly, this study aims to explore the sources of English teachers' sense of efficacy to identify hindrances and promote the confidence and competence of English teachers in the higher education Vietnamese context.

Teacher Self-Efficacy

First appearing in the 1970's there are now hundreds of publications present in the literature on teacher self-efficacy (e.g.: Klassen, Tze, Betts, & Gordon, 2011; Zee & Koomen, 2016). According to Bandura (1997, p. 3) a teacher's self-efficacy is defined as their "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments." Bandura argues that self-efficacy is the most important

mechanism of human agency. The underlying premise is that a teacher's set of beliefs function as cognitive filters, guiding their evaluation of experiences, and therefore governing the sense of their own capabilities and their decision making. Hoy, Hoy, & Davis (2009) agree and suggest that "among the many beliefs teachers might hold, few are as powerful as their self-efficacy for teaching – a belief that can trump others in the complex process of navigating classroom life" (p. 627). Many studies have now shown that a teacher's self-efficacy has a profound influence across all elements of a teacher's classroom practice, such as classroom management, instructional design, student relationships and assessment (e.g.: Klassen et. al., 2011; Zee & Koomen, 2016).

To date, the majority of teacher self-efficacy studies have been carried out in Western countries, particularly in the USA. These studies mainly focus on science-based subject areas over humanities, and utilize quantitative methodologies (Klassen et. al., 2011; Zee & Koomen, 2016). There are few studies that have researched self-efficacy in the specific subject of English language teaching. Moreover, insufficient attention has been paid to the sources of teachers' self-efficacy (Klassen et. al., 2011). As Henson (2002) noted, research investigating such sources was "practically nonexistent" (p. 142), and this hinders the progress in continuing research. Thus, our qualitative approach

utilizing Bandura's (1997) sources of self-efficacy should be seen as a contribution to research on the sources of teacher self-efficacy, particularly the self-efficacy of English teachers at tertiary level.

The Vietnamese English Teaching Context

English was formally recognized by the Vietnamese government as the most important foreign language in Vietnam, as highlighted in a Plan for "Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Educational System in the Period 2008 – 2020" (Decision 1400 QĐ-TTg). The goal of this Plan is to achieve significant progress in foreign language proficiency of the Vietnamese workforce by 2020. Due to the incompleteness of the Project in 2015, Project 2020 was revised and adapted on December 22nd, 2017, for the new period 2017-2025 (Decision 2080/ QĐ-TTg). The newly amended project calls for the improvement of students' English proficiency to adapt to studying and working requirements, towards foreign language universalization in 2025. This Decision also requires that by 2025, 100% of the graduates from English teacher training programs to be well qualified in their teaching profession and English proficiency level.

However, a key hurdle to overcome is the serious shortage of quality English teachers in Vietnam (Hoang, 2013). With the adoption of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) as a standard of measurement, it was revealed

that around 90% of school teachers and nearly 45% of college teachers were under-qualified to teach English (Hung, 2013). Teachers' poor English proficiency remains a major barrier to the teaching and learning of English, and demonstrates a clear correlate with low teacher confidence (Nunan, 2003). Understanding the sources that hinder English teaching effectiveness in the Vietnamese tertiary context is therefore a compelling need, which will help to improve teaching practices and teacher commitment in the profession.

Theoretical Framework

Following numerous self-efficacy studies, this paper adopts the sources of self-efficacy as outlined by Bandura (1977) to guide and structure the interview protocol and analysis of data. The four sources of self-efficacy are as follows: mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and physiological and affective state. The following is a brief explication of each source within the context of teacher self-efficacy:

Mastery experiences

Mastery experience is typically found to be the most powerful source of self-efficacy. Success builds positive belief whereas repeated failure undermines (Bandura, 1997; Morris, 2010). Teachers who think they are successful in their lessons are likely to have high self-belief. However, those who perceive their lessons as a failure may doubt their worth as

teachers. Greater experience generally reflects higher efficacy as practice provides a teacher with more opportunities for success and refinement (Blackburn & Robinson, 2008). There is evidence that a teachers' completion of additional qualifications contributes to enhanced self-efficacy (Cheung, 2008). This effect is even more pronounced when the studies are in pedagogical courses (Morris, 2009).

For teachers, especially early in their career, content knowledge is known to be an essential component to their mastery experience (Hoy, Hoy, & Davis, 2009). Chacon (2005) has shown that foreign language teachers attending courses to improve their fluency in the language of instruction promotes personal efficacy. According to Guskev (1987) and Morris (2009), teachers experience mastery not only when they succeed but also when their students do. Indeed there is a reciprocal relationship to many components of self-efficacy. In brief, perceived competence in content and pedagogical skills leading to high student achievement are important mastery experiences.

Vicarious experiences

Vicarious experience refers to the sense of self-efficacy that arises when we witness the success and failure of others performing a task. When we make comparisons of ourselves with the performances of others, we vicariously evaluate ourselves through the experience

of another. The impact of vicarious experience is especially influential when the task is novel and the comparison group is thought to be similar to the observer (Bandura, 1997). A teacher may become demoralized in the face of extraordinary teaching, thinking they could never do that, or they may think how much better they are than the teaching being observed (Morris, 2009). In brief, teachers who assess their teaching as poorer than their colleagues may have lower personal efficacy while those who compare themselves positively with others tend to have stronger efficacy.

Social persuasions

The third source of teaching efficacy is social persuasion arising from evaluative feedback. The strength of persuasion, and therefore enhancement of self-efficacy, depends on the perceived knowledge or credibility of the person(s) providing the feedback (Morris, 2009). For example, evaluation of a novice teacher from a highly experienced mentor who has frequently supervised the teacher is likely to be more powerful than an evaluation from a peer who is watching a fellow novice teacher for the first time. Schunk (1984) has observed that specific and sincere comments give evaluation a more profound effect on self-efficacy. Interestingly, Bandura (1997) suggests that negative feedback tends to be more effective in lowering self-belief than positive feedback is in raising it.

Physiological and affective states

The physiological and affective state is the final source of teaching efficacy. The intensity of these states can influence people's belief about their capabilities (Bandura, 1997). Teachers who experience an average level of anxiety may interpret this feeling as excitement or enthusiasm leading to be more dynamic and successful in the classroom. However, anxiety may also lead to undermining doubts, that they are not good enough to be a teacher. As Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) explain, "high levels of arousal can impair functioning and interfere with making the best use of one's skills and capabilities" while "moderate levels of arousal can improve performance by focusing attention and energy on the task" (p. 219). Or in the absence of any emotion, where a teacher feels little arousal at all during their teaching and hence may consider their efforts as pointless (Morris, 2010).

Only a few studies have explored the impact of physiological and affective states on the personal efficacy of teachers (Mulholland & Wallace, 2001; Morris, 2009; Poulou, 2007). In general they all conclude that physiological and affective sources show the least impact of the four sources on teacher self-efficacy.

Methodology

This study aims to answer the following research question: "*What are the sources of teachers' sense of efficacy in teaching English in a faculty of a university in Vietnam?*". To address this

question, qualitative method with in-depth interviews was adopted.

Participants and setting

Participants in this study were 13 English teachers in a faculty of a university in Vietnam. This group was chosen because the faculty specializes in English language teacher education and provides a large number of English teachers for Vietnam each year. The university is located in the capital city Hanoi, Vietnam and has a history of more than 60 years. The university aims at becoming a prestigious university in foreign languages, linguistics, international studies and related social sciences and humanities, training English teachers, and translators and interpreters for Vietnam. There are six divisions in the faculty, including English I (teaching first-year students), English II (teaching second-year students), an Honours Program (teaching gifted students), English for Specific Purposes (ESP), English Language Teaching (ELT), and Translator and Interpreter Training.

Procedure

The first step in the interviewee recruitment process was to identify the perceived sense of teacher efficacy across a sample group. From these results, a cross section of English teachers by teaching efficacy levels were selected to ensure the data was inclusive of both high and low efficacy levels. The Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) developed by Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2001) was

adapted to measure perceived levels of teacher self-efficacy. All English teachers in the faculty were invited to answer the questionnaire and return by email to the author. After a month, 70 participants had responded to the survey, a response rate of 70%. Participants who had the highest and lowest levels of self-efficacy in teaching English were then identified. Using the “maximum variation sampling” (Seidman, 1998, p. 45), 13 teachers were purposefully selected for the interviews, representing different divisions in the faculty, males and females, a range of teaching experience, and held different qualifications (bachelor and master degree). An email with the consent form was sent to each teacher, inviting them for interview. The interview information, purpose, form (individual online interview), and expected time of the interview (one hour) was clearly indicated in the email. All of the invited teachers agreed to be interviewed. A preferred date and time was arranged and interviews conducted.

The interview questions were adapted (to align with the research context) from the interview protocols of Morris and Usher (2011). These protocols targeted the four efficacy sources of Bandura, and in their modification care was taken to maintain the integrity of their original purpose. An online semi-structured interview was conducted with each participant lasting approximately one hour. Participants’ confidentiality is preserved through the use of pseudonyms.

The interview data was analysed using deductive thematic analysis to identify common themes that come up repeatedly (Braun & Clarke, 2006), based on four preconceived efficacy sources identified by Bandura (1997). The transcribed interview data was first coded using multi-coloured markers mapping to the four identified efficacy resources, with a further coding “Other sources” for any extraneous material and labels. During the coding procedure, ideas and reactions to the meaning of the interview data were written in the margin of the transcripts. Interpretations of the descriptive coding resulted in the identification of sub-codes in each main code. After all transcripts were coded, a descriptive matrix was created for each code. Each matrix included sub-codes and relevant results from the interviews, and contained 13 rows, one for each participant.

Results and discussion

The objective of the study was to examine the sources of the teachers’ sense of efficacy based on Bandura’s four hypothesized sources (i.e.: mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, physiological and affective state). The semi-structured online interviews revealed that mastery experience and social persuasion were the most commonly cited sources of teaching efficacy; other sources were also present but mentioned less frequently. Apart from the four hypothesized sources, other sources were also found to contribute to the development of a teachers’ self-efficacy. An indicative sampling of findings is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 A summary of findings by sources of teaching self-efficacy

Source	Types	Examples
Mastery experience	Past experiences	<i>"After a while, I think experience is the most important. To me, experience helps me to handle problems, both old and new."</i> - Le
	Overcoming a teaching challenge	<i>"After teaching highly multilevel classes, I feel more confident because I can adapt to any type of student."</i> – Ngoc
	Students' attainments	<i>"I am particularly more confident when my students achieve good results in exams."</i> – Thu
	Perceived students' enthusiasm	<i>"Whether students are alert or drowsy directly affects my teaching confidence."</i> – Phuong
	Mastery of content	<i>"Understand deeply what you teach leads to high teaching confidence."</i> – Viet
	Mastery of pedagogical skills	<i>"Not only content knowledge but also how to teach it is of crucial importance."</i> – Phuong
Vicarious experience	Learning pedagogical skills by observing models	<i>"I learned from my teachers. I remembered again the time I studied in the university, how they came into class, how they started the lessons and how they taught, so I can imitate them, because now I also teach similar groups of students."</i> – Phuong
	Comparisons of oneself to others	<i>"Seeing poor teachers, I feel more confident because I think I can teach better than them."</i> - Phuong
Social persuasion	Student comments	<i>"The most common comments I receive are about my devotion to teaching and the use of various activities to excite students' interest. This really boosts my confidence."</i> – Hoang
	Mentor comments	<i>"In each lesson, mentors commented on the good points and the not-so-good points of my teaching, which helped to improve my teaching skills considerably."</i> – Van

	Less explicit social messages <i>“Being a teacher in a leading university makes me more confident, as it speaks to my ability.” – Khanh</i>
	Perceived people judgments <i>“People now tend to look at qualifications. Qualifications come first, knowledge comes second. I would be more confident with a higher degree.” – Hoang</i>
Physiological and affective states	Motivation resulted from student positive attitude to studying <i>“My teaching confidence depends greatly on students. Students who are eager to study and cooperate make lessons very joyful. That gives me motivation when coming to class. So I try to research more to teach them.” – Vu</i>
	The love for teaching and/or subjects <i>“I am very enthusiastic about teaching English, teaching linguistics. Coming to class, I am highly motivated and totally devoted to teaching.” – Viet</i>
	Job dissatisfaction <i>“Due to bread and butter issues, I have to teach outside [the university] a lot. After a while, I get bored with teaching. Many times, I feel tired because of teaching too much.” – Le</i>
Other sources	Student – teacher relationship <i>“That was my first class in the university. After the teaching practicum, I also taught them for several other subjects. We then become very close. I feel that the students like me. They usually asked me to hang out. Now they graduated but still keep in touch with me. I feel that they really respect me. So I think there must be some reason they look up to me like that.” – Hoang</i>
	Perceived power in a classroom/ in the university <i>“It [One of the most powerful influences in teaching confidence] is the power to be flexible in course content.” – Vu</i>
	Classroom facility <i>“The classroom facility is terrible. There were 40 students [studying double majors] in a class, which was normally for 28 students. The teacher’s table was pushed extremely close to the wall. I had to stand the whole time. It made me really annoyed.” – Phuong</i>
	Personal characteristics <i>“One thing that affects my teaching confidence is the volume of my voice. One of the aids to have high confidence is to use a loud voice. Teachers with a soft voice may not be able to suppress noisy students and therefore feel unconfident.” - Nguyen</i>

Mastery experiences

Mastery experiences emerged as a dominant source of teacher self-efficacy. When asked to list the most powerful influences on their teaching confidence, all teachers mentioned performance-related successes.

Understandably, much of a teacher's classroom confidence was attributed to past teaching experiences, which over the years had helped them be confident and competent in class. Conversely, the lack of practical experience (including teaching practicum) was often cited as a challenge to confidence by novice teachers.

A further aspect which was reported to undermine the teacher's sense of mastery was difficulty with weaker students. In the faculty, a number of students were accepted into the program without taking an entrance examination. They came from economically and socially disadvantaged areas or ethnic minority groups with poor educational capital. They were sent to the university to study by the provincial authority (the proposed selection policy – 'cử tuyển', Vietnam Decree, no. 134/2006/NĐ-CP). These students had very low level English proficiency, indeed some of them lacked fluency in Vietnamese and communicated primarily in their ethnic minority language. Teaching these low achieving students was a tough challenge for several teachers who reported becoming disheartened when they saw no progress in the student's English proficiency. Attempts to help and motivate was often a frustrating

experience. The students' continual experience of failure would lead to a pattern of disaffection that teachers found difficult to endure.

To most of the teachers, their own feeling of success was defined by their students' attainments. When student's achievements were visible or measurable, the teachers were happy, motivated and more confident in their teaching. Some teachers viewed the accomplishments of their students, such as their improvement or performance in exams, as the strongest indicator of the effectiveness of their teaching. Students' failures, on the other hand, had a devastating effect on teachers' efficacy and their commitment to teaching. For Hoang, he even "thought of changing the job several times for I am not sure whether I taught them something."

Self-efficacy judgments were also strongly linked to perception of student enthusiasm. All teachers reported a sense of assurance resulting from evidence that students understood the course material and were actively engaged (such as listening attentively, asking questions, or discussing and debating in class). Cues that students were uninterested (such as sleeping, yawning, or using mobile phones) were cited as indications of instructional ineffectiveness. When students showed no enthusiasm in class activities but an indifferent attitude, the teachers felt stressed and often questioned their teaching ability. This finding agrees with several other studies, which also reported that a students' body language or

unresponsiveness influences college instructors' sense of efficacy (e.g.: Bain, 2004; Mottet et. al., 2004).

A teachers' sense of efficacy is known to be strongly influenced by how knowledgeable a teacher feels in their content area. Perceived mastery of the language has commonly been found to enhance the self-efficacy of English teachers (e.g., Crook, 2016). Indeed, the undermining of efficacy due to poor content knowledge was a strong finding in the low efficacy participants of this study.

Some teachers reported insufficient preparation time as a constraint on the competent delivery of materials. Because of the frequent revision and modification of courses in the faculty, teachers often found themselves continually adapting to changes in required knowledge and skills. This caused difficulties not only for the novice but also the experienced teachers. Some teachers suggested that a course should be run at least 3 to 4 semesters for them to be familiar with it and evaluate its effectiveness.

A small number of teachers reported they had chosen to leave teaching at high school and shift to the university context in order to avoid the difficult behaviors of school students. Hoang, who previously taught at school and was clearly demoralized by his experiences, as he reported, "I totally failed in school. I could not survive in that environment and I was not confident when teaching them. [...] I had no way to teach them at all." As Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) has

noted, self-efficacy beliefs are often connected to the context in which teachers work and may fluctuate accordingly. Teaching in the university where the students generally behave with greater maturity clearly suits some teachers.

Vicarious experiences

The types of vicarious experiences identified by teachers in the study ranged widely.

Many participants indicated the usefulness of their recollections of teachers from their student days. Recollections illuminated both teaching techniques and strategies that were beneficial to incorporate and others that should be excluded as ineffective. By taking up these techniques, teachers were able to incorporate effective strategies into their own teaching.

Besides previous teachers as models, some participants spoke of the mentoring support they received as novice teachers, which new teachers were asked to visit the experienced teachers' classes and teach under their supervision. The development of teaching skills in turn enhanced their teaching self-efficacy. The mentoring program functioned as both vicarious experience and as social persuasion. Interestingly, in the case of Phuong, she reported exposure to effective mentoring could also lower her confidence – at least temporarily. Critical comparisons of one's teaching with that of a masterful teacher gave her an uncomfortable sense of her own weaknesses. However, this was still considered positive for Phuong as she

stroved to use these feelings to motivate improvement in her teaching skills.

In general however, participants complained of having few opportunities to watch others teach. Consequently, they relied on secondhand information from colleagues such as descriptions of how classes were going or feedback from students. Thu remarked that when some teachers “boasted about students’ praise for their lessons, I felt less confident” because she did not receive such enthusiasm from her students. The vicarious information from students often came from conversations where the students would describe their favorite teachers. Some participants felt vicariously criticized as these same students had not given similar praise for their own teaching. Envy of another teacher’s reported success can undermine a teacher’s relational sense with their students.

Social persuasions

As expected, following Bandura, in addition to mastery and vicarious experiences, social persuasion also arose as an influential source of teachers’ self-efficacy. Participants commonly cited student evaluations as a source of confidence and professional assurance. When positive, such feedback motivated teachers and reinforced their perceived instructional effectiveness. Student evaluations also acted as a driving force to the teachers’ commitment to teaching. Situations such as this provide a clear illustration of reciprocal social cognitive processes for the teacher and students self-efficacy raised in tandem – a phenomenon

that has been reported in other studies (e.g., Anderson, Greene, & Loewen, 1988).

Some teachers also indicated that negative evaluations from students lowered their teaching confidence. Thu was shocked when her students talked frankly to her: “Can you make your lessons less boring?” and compared her lessons to another teacher’s superior lessons. In fact, Thu repeatedly received such feedback and now clearly carried a powerfully reinforced sense of herself as a boring teacher. Through social persuasion, this had become her belief. The constant repetition of a negative evaluation caused her severe distress and lowered her self-efficacy. This observation was consistent with psychological studies that message repetition tends to create greater agreement with the message, along with easier recall (Cacioppo & Petty, 1979, 1989).

It is worth noting that several teachers reported that the detailed comments of student evaluations meant more to them than a high numeric rating. They explained that the numeric feedback had little effect on their confidence in contrast to specific comments. They also expressed doubts concerning the validity and reliability of the feedback survey.

The other formal evaluation reported by participants was that received from their mentor during practice as novice teachers. Positive mentor feedback was uniformly felt to be encouraging by participants, whilst negative mentor feedback could be taken constructively or

as a personal attack. As mentors were generally regarded to be experts in teaching, the perceived strength and credibility of their messages was high. For the most part, participants expressed receiving largely positive evaluations with some actions flagged to improve. However, several participants expressed being hurt by the negative evaluations of mentors and this wounded their sense of teacher identity.

Physiological and affective states

Although few teachers mentioned physiological states as the influential factor, many teachers indicated motivation as a powerful confidence building factor. A main source of encouragement reported by teachers was the students' positive attitude towards studying. When students were curious and showed eagerness to learn, teachers were more motivated to teach and believed in their ability to provide a successful lesson. Being more motivated the teacher had greater desire to research further on the subject matter and invest more time and effort in preparation and planning. This in turn lead to better quality teaching, which inspired the class further and so a mutual motivation situation evolved. On the other hand, when students appeared sluggish or unwilling to study, teachers claimed they tended to lose motivation to teach. The lack of energy in the students seemed to infect teachers, encouraging the teachers dull performance and draining them of their enthusiasm to teach. Once again, the relationship between the teacher's and the students' attitudes or behaviours has a

mutuality where one side sustains or inhibits the other.

The second source of motivation was intrinsic motivation for teachers stated their love for teaching or for their favorite subject content. It was enjoyable for these teachers to devote time to improve their teaching skills and lesson delivery. Inevitably this resulted in increased classroom success and thus enhanced self-efficacy. In some instances, the love of teaching made the classroom something of an oasis from the difficulties of the outside world. The intrinsic motivation of a teacher could also be blocked or frustrated if they were dissatisfied with the required teaching materials. Syllabus and course materials were controlled by a top down vetting process at the university, thus many teachers had no say in the materials used in their classroom. The lack of freedom in what they were teaching hampered their sense of professionalism and had an adverse effect on the teachers' job satisfaction and teaching efficacy.

A final factor that may be deemed physiological, was the tiredness expressed by many of the participants due to their complex working conditions. Several teachers complained that the low salary they received from the university, which meant they had to additionally teach part-time in an English center. Working more than full time, they often felt physically exhausted and consequently struggled to be enthusiastic about their teaching. Having to teach in private centers to earn their livings eroded the teachers' health

and energy, and accordingly, their teaching quality and personal efficacy.

Other sources

In this section we detail those responses that fell outside the above four efficacy categories.

The teacher-student relationship was a clear factor in the teachers' sense of success. Several teachers highlighted that a positive relationship with students reflected a valued sense of their teaching, which in turn gave the teachers a good feeling about themselves. It was also pointed out, that an effective relationship would often help motivate students that were struggling (particularly those students from ethnic minority language areas who tended to be weaker in their language learning).

However, a strong student relationship might also have a negative consequence. For example, Hoang was a senior member of Youth Union of the university and worked with a large number of students outside the classroom, and as a result he found the students being overfamiliar with him in the classroom. His teaching confidence decreased considerably when teaching these students, as he felt he had lost their respect for him as a teacher, and saw him merely as a friend. He thus struggled in the more regulating aspects of classroom management and delivery.

Some teachers also spoke of their embarrassment when teaching students of greater teaching experience. For example, several instructors in the faculty were assigned to train teachers of other subject

areas in English teaching methodology and proficiency, to prepare them for the national standard as a qualified English teacher (the National Foreign Language Project, 2020) (Hung, 2013). Hoang expressed a sense of inferiority when teaching to these teachers because "I am younger, I have less experience" than them. Due to the way Vietnamese pronouns reveal social relationship and age difference, he was repeatedly reminded of this disparity during task delivery.

Classroom facilities were another factor that affected participants' teaching quality. Overcrowded classrooms with no air conditioning made classroom life difficult. Students felt uncomfortable and easily fatigued, which frustrated the effectiveness of the teacher. Moreover, overcrowding in the classroom (more than 30 students) created a challenge for teachers to provide students with individualized instruction and feedback. A smaller class allowed teachers to give individual attention and detailed feedback to each student, and manage the classroom more effectively. This enabled them to develop a stronger bond with students and help them to feel successful.

Personal characteristics also contributed to some teachers' sense of efficacy. Nguyen, for example, mentioned his loud and clear voice as a factor helping him to control students more easily. He believed teachers with a soft voice might encounter difficulties in classroom management, especially with noisy or disruptive students. Nguyen also reported

being disturbed by his poor communication skills in his early teaching. He remembers feeling such a lack of confidence that he could not look directly at the students, but rather at the ceiling or the floor. He had striven hard to overcome this difficulty and now prided himself on effective communication.

And as a final factor, it seems some people arrive in their career as teachers with a natural capacity for the profession. One such participant was Viet, recording particularly high efficacy, which aligns with her belief that her capacity to teach is inborn and stems from her creativeness, flexibility, and teaching talent. Her perceived innate ability had made her very confident in teaching ever since her beginning as a student-teacher.

Conclusion

This study sought to explore the sources of self-efficacy identified by a small sample of university English teachers in Vietnam. The interviews revealed that teachers' self-efficacy judgments were attributed to a combination of sources and the degree of influence of each source varied to each teacher. Besides the four categories of self-efficacy previously demarcated by Bandura (1986), several other sources were found to have an influence on teachers' sense of efficacy.

Also, in agreement with earlier research, all of the sources contributed to teachers' self-efficacy beliefs are closely related with each other. It was found that the teachers' interpretation of success (mastery experience) was often informed

by positive feedback from students and mentors (social persuasion); whereas teacher modeling by observation (vicarious experience) offered many teachers a chance to improve their pedagogical skills (mastery experience); student and mentor evaluations (social persuasion) were used by some instructors to compare their performances to those of other colleagues (vicarious experience); and finally, student engagement and attainment (mastery experience) had a powerful impact on teachers' emotions (physiological and affective states), and such efficacy-relevant information enhanced their teaching confidence. These interrelationships in the findings serve as an important reminder of the inextricable link of the sources of self-efficacy as complex social cognitive phenomena (Bandura, 2009, cited in Morris & Usher, 2011).

Most of the participants solidified their teaching confidence within the first four to five years of their career. However, some described fluctuations in their teaching confidence over the years as a result of challenges in the face of contextual demands. This finding serves as an illustration of the reciprocal interaction between teaching self-efficacy and local conditions (Bandura, 1993). The support of university and colleagues in some instances helped teachers to overcome difficulties in teaching, particularly the critical period when they were novices (Hoy, 2004; Nordin, 2001). Some systemic conditions in the university, such as salary, work pressures, support for students with challenges, do appear to

inhibit high self-efficacy in some, but not all, teachers. Additional resources and support, may well be beneficial for these teachers.

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