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Understanding Language Teacher Motivation in Online Professional Development: A Study of Vietnamese EFL Teachers

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Abstract

Online teacher professional development (oTPD) for English language teachers is of increasing interest, and so is research into teacher motivation as one potential success determinant of oTPD courses. Situated in an oTPD programme for English as a foreign language (EFL) instructors in Vietnam, this study aims to explore motivation for oTPD in a context where development is obligatory for in-service teachers, and online options appear to work best for them. Responses to semi-structured interviews were analyzed to understand nineteen participants' initial and sustaining motivations for the programme. The results showed an important role of technology in driving teachers to both start and remain in the course; a strong influence of second language motivation on teachers' learning experiences, and a challenge to the established value of collaborative learning in virtual environments. Keywords: teacher education; teacher motivation; English language learning; L2 motivation; technology-mediated learning

Introduction

Online training programmes for EFL teachers have recently emerged as a promising professional development option because of their relatively low cost, high flexibility, and ease of access (England, 2012). The outcome of an online training course, however, is believed to depend on participants' motivation to a large extent (Day, 1999). However well-intentioned a program may be, it is primarily the teachers themselves who determine whether or not they receive its full benefits (Schieb & Karabenick, 2011).

The study reported in this article investigated teachers' motivation for an online teacher professional development (oTPD) course, namely English Discovery Online (EDO), which was a component of the National Project 2020 run by Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) to upgrade the English language proficiency of in-service English teachers to a new national standard. Teachers identified as having below-standard English language were required to attend face-to-face English language classes while maintaining their normal working schedule. The online component, EDO, was therefore intended to significantly increase the number of available learning hours for participants without affecting their work commitments. EDO is also distinct from other traditional TPD models in its strong focus on English language competence rather than pedagogical knowledge. As such, teachers joining EDO are not only developing EFL professionals but also continuing EFL learners.

We became interested in the motivation changes teachers experienced in this dual role and in the factors that caused the changes. Applying a dynamic and process-oriented view of motivation (Dörnyei, 2005; Ushioda, 2009), we sought to gain insights into EDO participants' initial motivations as well as the factors that sustained or eroded their engagement. Locally, our findings reveal the difficulties facing teachers in a specific oTPD program that involves language training, and thus indicate course areas that need adjustment to be more responsive to participants' needs in that context. On a wider scale, our study uncovers new facets of EFL teacher motivation that may be useful for designers of oTPD courses in general.

Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

Human motivation, generally defined simply as the reasons "why individuals […] behave as they do" (Graham & Weiner, 2012, p.367), has long been a focus of research across various disciplines. Since the literature on motivation in general is vast and addressing all of it is beyond the scope of the study, we will focus on motivation in the fields of second language (L2) acquisition and teacher professional development to situate our argument.

Motivation in second language acquisition

Having long been recognized as a significant predictor of L2 achievement, L2 motivation has been rigorously researched over the last five decades, commencing with the social-psychological approach proposed by Gardner and Lambert (1972). They theorized that it was primarily learners' *attitudes* towards the L2 native speakers and culture that shaped their L2 learning and that differentiated L2 motivation from the motivation to learn any other subjects. Two kinds of L2 motivation were suggested as a result: the "integrative" type referring to a genuine desire to resemble the targeted ethnolinguistic group, and the "instrumental" one denoting a wish to obtain practical advantages through L2 proficiency (Gardner & Lambert, 1972).

This perspective was considered radically ahead of its time since it was the first one to introduce the social-psychological angle (attitudes, learning orientations) into the view of the motivational construct, thus distinguishing L2 motivation research from the mainstream motivational psychology (Dörnyei, 2005). The notion of integrativeness in the model, however, is difficult to apply to the L2 learners who demonstrate very little or no genuine interest in the target culture due to limited contact with native speakers. The model has also been criticized as being too deterministic and static (Ellis, 2008). Considering motivation as an obvious

determinant of learner's L2 success, it seems to ignore the fact that motivation is dynamic and continually changes over different learning experiences.

Such limitations led to the subsequent emergence of the cognitive-situated approach, which viewed motivation in a particular learning situation through the lens of mainstream psychology (Dörnyei, 2005).Examples of the cognitive concepts included "self-determination", relating to the proposition that higher motivation is engendered when learners are more self-determined in their learning process (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991), and "self-efficacy" ,the stronger one believes in his/her ability to succeed in L2 learning, the more motivated s/he is supposed to become (Clément, Dörnyei & Noels, 1994).This shift in L2 motivational research was said to mark one significant development in L2 motivation study: acknowledging the dynamic nature of the motivational construct (Ellis, 2008). The cognitive-situated approach, however, still has not sufficiently addressed the longitudinal instability of motivation (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012).

The process-oriented approach was therefore introduced at the turn of the 20thcentury to capture the temporal aspect of motivation. Exemplifying this approach was Dörnyei and Ottos' (1998) process model, which described L2 learning motivation as experiencing three distinct stages: "pre-actional", featuring choice motivation, "actional", concerning executive motivation, and "post-actional", involving learners' evaluation of past learning experiences. Such a flexible model was argued to be superior to the static antecedents in its ability to conceptually distinguish the *choice* motivations (reasons, goals) from the *executive* ones that sustain the engagement during the learning process (on-going reactions to learning environment) (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012). The model also successfully incorporates other motivational concepts, for example, instrumental motivation in the pre-actional, or self-efficacy in the actional stage (Ellis, 2008). The procedural approach, however, exhibits two shortcomings: (i) assuming a precise definition of the starting and ending point of a learning process; and (ii) not acknowledging the possible interference from other motivational processes which a learner may be simultaneously experiencing (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012).

Most recently, L2 motivation research has shifted to a more context-specific perspective in analysing motivation, the socio-dynamic approach, which no longer treated motivation as an independent variable, but rather, as an integral part of organic dynamic systems which evolve non-linearly under the influence of multiple personal, social and contextual factors (Dörnyei, 2009; Ushioda, 2009). Dörnyei's (2009) "L2 Motivational Self System" is one noteworthy illustration of the approach. Central in the model is the concept of the "ideal self", representing all the attributes that a person ideally *wishes* to possess, and the "ought-to self", signifying the attributes that a person *feels necessary* to hold. A key principle is that one's psychological desire to bridge the gap between the "current actual selves" and the "future selves" will serve as motivation for one to learn. An investigation into the selves must also contemplate "the situation-specific motives related to the immediate learning environment" (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 106), such as instruction quality, delivery mode, or the dynamics of the learner group.

Dörnyei's (2009) L2 Motivational Self System demonstrates several advantages. It offers the most comprehensive framework for motivation research so far (Ellis, 2008), and has laid an important foundation for research into practical strategies to initiate, sustain, and enhance learners' motivation throughout a learning process (e.g., Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2013). A

challenging question, however, remains about how to operationalize the versatile relationships between the learner, the L2 and the learning environment in measurable terms (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012).

Overall, the motivation concept with its full complexity has been gradually revealed by the increasing sophistication of the available theoretical models, despite their weaknesses. It should be noted, however, that most L2 motivation research has mainly focused on learner motivation in conventional L2 learning contexts. The application of the above theoretical framework in the teacher development domain has been found, to the best of our knowledge, in only one study, which will be reviewed in the following section.

Teacher motivation in teacher professional development (TPD)

Teachers have been found to pursue TPD for various reasons.

Scribner (1998) reported two distinct groups of motivations: the *intrinsic* factors extending from "a sense of moral obligation" to "the felt need to enhance subject matter knowledge and pedagogical skills"; and the *extrinsic* group comprising "top-down requirements", "financial remuneration", "district policy reforms", and an urge to solve "classroom problems". In another empirical study, Hildebrandt and Eom (2011) quantitatively identified five significant reasons for teachers' PD engagement: (i) *improved teaching;* (ii) *financial gain*; (iii) *collaboration* (referring to the opportunities to interact with others); (iv) *internal validation* (when benefits of PD engagements agree with personal goals and values); and (v) *external validation* (when PD is pursued to avoid bad consequences or to gain a reward). Among these, collaboration resembles what Dzubay (2001) labelled "teachers' psychological needs for relatedness"; and internal validation is comparable to what in Fernet et al. (2008) termed "identified regulation". Findings of more recent studies largely echo Hildebrandt and Eom's (2011) list (Bigsby & Firestone, 2017; Durksen, Klassen, & Daniels, 2017), with the addition of only one more motivator, namely career advancement (Heystek & Terhoven, 2015, McMillan et al., 2016).

Offering an apparently comprehensive list of teacher motivations for PD as such, the above literature, nevertheless, is limited in the purely quantitative nature of almost all available studies and the consequent lack of individual contextualised insights into the motivation process. In the only qualitative one which offers rich data, Heystek and Terhoven (2015) acknowledged the biased choice of highly-motivated staff as research participants, making the findings less able to reflect the motivation picture in the reality of an average teacher.

The study that offers the most open-ended answer to why teachers embrace or reject TPD may be Kubanyiova's (2012). Adopting Dörnyei's (2009) L2 Motivation Self System, the qualitative study found that teachers welcome a development opportunity if it benefits their *future self*-images and tend to ignore the TPD course content that does otherwise. Specifically, the reasons eight participating teachers gave for joining a TPD course were consistent with the future self-images they were pursuing, being for example a competent English user, or a linguistically influential model for learners (Kubanyiova, 2012). The first to successfully apply an L2 motivation model to explore teacher motivation, the study was unfortunately restricted to the initial motives; longitudinal changes of the construct were not explored.

EFL teacher motivation in online teacher education

In the online teacher education literature, teachers' participation in technology-mediated learning has been reportedly driven by four major inter-related factors, namely *online interaction*, *web tools*, *autonomy,* and *accessibility*. The first motivational force, *interaction*, which was mainly investigated through the qualitative approach (Xiao, 2012), and mixed methods (Murphy, Shelly, White, & Baumann, 2011) included two main aspects: i) the tutors' motivating roles as facilitators, and ii) the tutor's positive characteristics, such as being approachable. Tutors' personalized feedback was also reported to be motivating, even when it was not instant (Nunan, 2012). Ellis and Phelps (2000) also observed that online learning environments were motivating because they enabled teachers to seek support and advice from almost anyone: colleagues, peers, and even strangers. Regarding the use of web tools as a means to motivate teachers in oTPD, Bonadeo (2013) and Stockwell (2013) warned that their effectiveness depended on teachers' tool-using skills and technology availability. Regarding *accessibility* and *autonomy*, authors agreed that online courses were attractive mainly because their time and space flexibility allowed trainees to maintain their regular work commitments (England, 2012; Young & Lewis, 2008). According to Simpson (2012), accessibility was also beneficial psychologically and socially. He suggested that online learning might create a certain level of "isolation" that may positively reduce the anxiety of direct communication and the fear of losing face when asking questions - the negative psychological states that are visible in less confident learners attending face-to-face classes. This claim, however, was challenged by Nunan (2012), and O'Bannon, Lubke, and Brit (2013), who actually found isolation a threat to learning. In fact, participants in O'Bannon and colleagues' study appreciated the collaborative value of their technology-enhanced course, and attributed their poor participation to a lack of a face-to-face element. Other sources of motivation in online teacher education include trainees' achievement of mastering online tools (Hung, 2012), the close connection between online members (Tseng & Kuo, 2013), and quality course materials (Nunan, 2012).

The most recent research in online teacher education that reviews, enriches, and even challenges these findings is a mixed-method study conducted by Banegas and Busleiman (2014). Utilizing a "mixed" method research approach, the authors found that "obtaining a formal teaching degree", and "accessibility" were the initial drivers for teachers to enrol in an online course (p.139). What later sustained their engagement was "autonomy", "course status", and "personal feelings of accomplishment" while "collaboration" was surprisingly reported as a demotivating factor for trainees in the learning process. Such findings have successfully captured the temporal and dynamic characteristic of the motivational construct, and moreover assumed the value of collaborative learning established by many authors in both TPD (e.g. Hildebrandt & Eom, 2011) and online teacher education (e.g. Xiao, 2012). A valuable concern that Banegas and Busleiman (2014) raised was that the value of collaborative learning, although long anchored in a socio-cultural view of education, should not be automatically considered as a motivating factor in online environments. The study, however, did not consider teachers' language motivation as one possible reason for their maintained participation in the course.

In the only study based on a fully online TPD setting that we were able to locate, Kao, Wu, and Tsai (2011) employed an intrinsic/extrinsic framework to construct a six-factor model of teacher motivation:

- **Personal interest** refers to teachers' inherent joy of participating in online learning.
- **Occupational promotion** indicates the purpose of advancing professionally, for example, salary increase. [Ex**ternal expectations** are the desires to meet requirements at work.
- **Practical enhancement** denotes the aim of "doing good" in the profession.
- **Social contact** represents the joy of communication and teamwork.
- **Social stimulation** relates to the desire to escape from a lonely or boring regular life.

This model, while appearing comprehensive and having furthermore been empirically supported, still has not included teachers' motivation for the course content, which, as mentioned above, can be an important driver of teachers' engagement in an oTPD course.

In summary, the existing literature has named different types of teacher motivations for professional development in general, and therefore laid an initial foundation for the understanding of EFL teacher's motivation for the online-only variants in particular. There remain, however, several limitations that prompted this present research. Firstly, there have been no motivation studies targeting oTPD programs that incorporate a language enhancement component for EFL teachers. Second, the quantitative nature of most available research indicates a neglect of teachers' insights and concerns in the whole motivation process. Finally, the available literature appears to demonstrate inadequacies in the way it depicts the hugely complex nature of motivation. Most studies framed the construct in the simple intrinsic-extrinsic dichotomy. In the only one study that employed a dynamic view of motivation (Banegas & Busleiman, 2014), intrinsic interest in the language as one potential incentive for EFL teachers to engage in oTPD was not discussed.

This qualitative study, which adheres primarily to the dynamic and process-oriented approach to motivation, which views EFL teachers also as L2 learners, and which is situated in a specific oTPD context that emphasizes teachers' L2 development, was therefore a timely and necessary response to this gap.

Context

As briefly introduced earlier, English Discovery Online (EDO) is the "virtual" component of a broader English language training programme offered by Project 2020 for teachers whose English proficiency has not met Vietnam MoET's new language requirement.

Originally a computer-assisted language learning programme designed to develop users' English proficiency (Edusoft, 2012), EDO was adopted in Project 2020 as a purely online TPD intervention. Structurally, EDO consists of 10 courses encompassing different language levels. The course content is delivered entirely online with the assistance of various educational resources such as radio broadcasts, discussion forums and self-assessment tools. Participating teachers are required, in their own time and over three months, to complete at least 80% of the EDO course content at a level determined by their existing English ability. They can also choose to participate in optional interactive "extra-curricular" activities such as joining a discussion forum in an area of interest. All these activities would add approximately 150

flexible e-learning hours to the main face-to-face English language training programme, which was expected to address the common issue of time constraints facing Project 2020 participants due to their work commitments and the fixed schedule of face-to-face classes (Parks, 2011; Pham, 2012).

Research questions

In view of the above literature and context, and adhering to a dynamic and process-oriented view of motivation (Dörnyei, 2005; Ushioda, 2009), the present study sought to answer two research questions:

(1) What motivates Vietnamese EFL teachers to participate in EDO?

(2) What are the factors that sustain/reduce their motivation?

Method

To answer these questions, we employed a qualitative research approach, collecting data using semi-structured interviews.

In motivation research, although there is a "robust tradition of quantitative psychometric measurement", the qualitative approach which particularly employs interview as a data collection method has been strongly advocated within the current decade (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012, p. 401). Although promising precision in indicator measurement, quantitative research findings have been criticised for a neglect of individual respondents' insights and concerns in the whole motivational process (Patton & Cochran, 2002). Since the items in motivation measurement instruments are usually designed based on previous studies, there is also a danger that the quantitative results may be constrained by existing theories. Most importantly, the "linear" models of motivation drawn by quantitative research as a result of its "typically relying on superficial snapshot measures at an arbitrary point in time" (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012, p. 401), are obviously unable to adequately depict the temporal, dynamic, and complex nature of the motivational construct. Interview studies, in contrast, can offset all these limitations by yielding rich insights into motivational experiences (Kim, 2009; Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012). Giving participants a chance to freely express their emotions and feelings, in-depth conversations can not only help uncover different types of motivation experienced at different phases of learning, but also probe the meanings and reasons underlying them.

The interviews we conducted consisted of two main parts. The first one gathered data on teachers' initial motivations, i.e. the reasons why they joined EDO. It must be noted that they did not have an actual choice as to whether or not they participated, but we were interested in exploring whether there were any other motivational factors operating at the outset. The second, more extended, elicited in- depth discussion of the factors that sustained or eroded their motivation during the course. Being "semi-structured", the questions were informed by the main insights of the dynamic and process-oriented view of motivation, but allowed a certain degree of "flexibility" for the new issues not yet covered in the literature to emerge (Merriam, 1998; Richards, 2009).

After approval was obtained from Macquarie University Research Ethics Committee, data collection took place in June and July 2014. Respondents of the study were 19 EFL teachers, participating on a voluntary basis, from 17 primary, secondary and higher-education schools located across the North of Vietnam. This is recognised as a sufficient number for a qualitative study which seeks to explore the range of experience of participants, and the data collected from them reached the "saturation" point Dörnyei (2007). At the time of the interviews, all participants had been participating in EDO as part of Project 2020 for at least two months. The interviews were conducted by the first author in Vietnamese because the participants' English level would otherwise have prevented them from fully communicating their intentions and feelings. The whole process was entirely voluntary, and written consent form was obtained from every participant before their interview. All conversations were recorded, then transcribed verbatim and finally translated into English for data analysis.

The data in the form of interview transcripts were analysed qualitatively, following the thematic analysis procedure suggested in Miles and Huberman (1994) and Murray (2009). Firstly, codes are determined and given to segments of data, which can be words, phrases or sentences and carry a unit of meaning relevant to what the research seeks to answer. Different data segments conveying a similar meaning are given the same code. A new code is created and "tagged" to a data segment whenever it refers to an idea that does not fit in the previously created codes. The second step after whole-data coding is "categorization", which is when the researcher compares and contrasts across pieces of coded data and pulls the similar or related codes together to form categories. Each category was named using the phrase that represents the idea all its belonging codes imply. Finally, emerging themes noticed within the categories are then examined in light of the research questions. To ensure the participants' privacy, pseudonyms are used for the rest of the paper.

Results

The results generally demonstrated the confidence of all 19 respondents in their answers to what motivated them to participate in and stay on the EDO course. It was interesting that hardly any pauses or hedging language were noticed during the interviews, even when participants described the negative side of EDO. Most teachers reported instrumental motivations at the beginning of the course, but their drives and the nature of their participation tended to shift as they progressed. There was a balance of motivating and demotivating factors, and participants' reported feelings were usually illustrated with instances from their learning experiences.

The emerging themes from the data fall into four main categories: teachers' *initial motivations* to participate, the *motivating factors*, the *demotivating factors* and *future orientation*. These will be discussed in turn below.

Initial Motivation to Participate in the Online English Course

As anticipated, in relation to why they started EDO, 16 out of 19 respondents directly stated that they were **obliged** to. Below are two typical responses:

Thuong: I was **required to** (attend the course). I did it because I was **forced to**. [Excerpt 1]

Thuy: To be honest, I joined it just **to get through the exam**. [Excerpt 2]

However obligation was not the only motivation. Three other teachers mentioned **a perceived responsibility**, and **an intrinsic love for English and the teaching profession** as their initial drive to EDO. Two of them emphasized:

Hien: There must be a good reason for HANU to bring EDO for us, so I felt lucky, not really obliged to join it. […] I joined it because I felt **the responsibility** to do it. [Excerpt 3]

Phuong: I am **passionate** about teaching, so I'm **never fed up** with professional development. […]. I **don't feel** it (EDO) as **compulsory** for me at all. [...] Why not following a wonderful program as EDO? [Excerpt 4]

Perhaps surprisingly, two teachers nominated **a need for learning English that was unrelated to their professions** as a driving force to participate.

Tam: I think I did not join EDO for my students' sakes only but **also for me myself**. For example, when meeting with foreigners, **speaking** in a way that they can understand me is very important. [Excerpt 5]

Ongoing Motivating Factors

Though starting with quite a narrow range of initial motivations, the participants later disclosed a much wider one once they discovered that EDO also offered them other benefits than merely professional knowledge improvement. Three teachers stated they used EDO also to relax, broaden their general knowledge and even to enhance information and technology (IT) skills; and their nature of participation could be seen to shift to being more voluntary as a result.

Thuy: I **was required** to join it **first**, **but** besides that reason [….] EDO is **one way of relaxation** for me after doing many other things. I can choose many sections there […] **to relax and enjoy myself**. […] It is beyond my expectations. It **has made me so excited** about learning so far. [Excerpt 6]

Hai: I find the community section **very interesting**. When I am tired of studying, I can join this part to read the news or […] to play some games **to relax** and to **enhance my IT skills** at the same time. [Excerpt 7]

Do: It was **first obligatory**, **but then I like** learning with EDO a lot, […] because apart from helping me to develop all language skills, it also **broadens my knowledge about many topics in the world**, food, for example. When I join the "community", I can see different recipes, and places, and **enhance my social knowledge** about many countries. [Excerpt 8]

The themes that emerged in the analysis of ongoing motivation, namely course quality, learner autonomy, and positive feelings of progress provide potentially valuable insights for designers of oTPD courses both in and beyond the immediate context of Vietnam. These will be discussed below.

Course quality

From the data, **course quality** emerged as a significant motivating factor. Almost all participants (n=18) highlighted their increasing interest in the course materials (n=14), the nature of content (n=15), and content presentation (n=13).

EDO course materials were frequently described as informative, useful, interesting, suitable to learners' level, and relevant to their teaching practice. One participant commented:

Nhung: I find it **really useful**. [...] There are also many useful grammatical lessons that I **can apply** to my lessons. I sometimes copy the reading exercises there for my students to do. […] I think **all parts** of the course are **useful for my teaching**. [Excerpt 9]

Another teacher expressed her appreciation of the challenging but interesting nature of EDO course content:

Tam: There are **many difficult tasks** as well, apart from the easy ones. [...] It is not **an easy task** to do, but it is **quite interesting** to practice. [Excerpt 10]

Two teachers showed favour for the technical aspects of EDO:

Thuy: I really **enjoy** learning with it (EDO) so far. **The images and sounds are both good.** […] The content **layout** is so **easy to follow**. [...] I **like** it **a lot**. [Excerpt 11]

Thoa: It is true that I **was required at first**, but after a while learning with it, I have been **really interested** in it. This is **the first time I can** hear my voice [...]. I **like the function** of showing the definition of a word just by a right click on it. [Excerpt 12]

Some teachers (n=6) were particularly motivated by the fact that the course materials were written by English native speakers:

Tam: I find speaking and listening very **useful** for my English. In listening, I can listen to a **native speaker** and imitate him/her in terms of **intonation and sounds**. [Excerpt 13]

Thoa: The pronunciation, the language is **standard** because the course is made by the English **native speakers**. […] Once I started, I felt much more **interested** and **motivated.** [Excerpt 14]

Thoa: The content is good, and is **prepared by the native speakers**, so is **usually accurate**. Face-to-face classes are usually taught by Vietnamese instructors and cannot be as **standard** as online courses. [Excerpt 15]

The second prominent motivating factor emerging from the interviews is the **flexible accessibility** of learning time and venues (n=8). One teacher explained:

Dung: With EDO, I am **not required** to gather with other teachers **at one time in one place.** I can learn **whenever** I want. […] I can learn when I stay at home. It means I **have more time to develop**. That's **what I wanted**. [Excerpt 16]

Learner autonomy

Another factor that sustained teachers' motivation during the course is their autonomy to manage their own learning pace and strategies (n=6). Below is an example:

Long: I **can definitely quit one unit** if I think it is too difficult for me and look for something easier, and I feel **really comfortable** with that. After all, I was forced to this program at first, but my **interest in it has grown over time** because I am **free** to choose what is **suitable for my level** to study. [Excerpt 17]

One participant associated autonomy with his favoured individual working style and the benefit of "saving face" it brought to him:

Long: I **want to be free to choose** the time I feel the most comfortable to work. [...] In class, I am **really afraid of being asked** something I don't know by the teacher. Whenever this happens, I feel extremely demotivated and the effectiveness of the lesson afterward is zero. But EDO gives me **no such fear and such problems.** I **don't feel ashamed** of myself or **with anyone else**, and I can even assess myself. [Excerpt 18]

Positive feelings of progress

Finally, personal feelings of progress and attainment over time as both learners and teachers of English contributed to keeping seven participants in the course. Two teachers below captured those sentiments:

Do: I listen to the native speakers and this can improve my **pronunciation**. And **my students are benefiting** from that. This makes me **happy.** [Excerpt 19]

Hien: EDO **has improved** my language skills and knowledge and I **can also apply** what I learn **to my teaching**. […] It (EDO) makes me feel **more excited** because my level has been **upgraded.** [Excerpt 20]

Demotivating Factors

Nearly half of the participants (n=8) indicated that they were discouraged by the **technical complexity** of EDO:

Thoa: You cannot imagine how **hard** it was for me to set everything up. The software is **difficult** to install and the course is **so difficult** to log in. [...] My Macbook Air is a modern laptop but cannot run the course just because it does not have Internet Explorer. [….] Starting it is **so complicated and difficult.** [Excerpt 21]

One respondent attributed his delayed start to his **low technology efficacy**:

Long: I am usually **overwhelmed** with anything called "technology" so [...] this **procrastinated** my first contact with EDO somehow. […] I think I was **hindered** by my **subconscious technophobia** and the **assumption** that EDO **must be difficult** to use. When I was instructed step by step by my instructor […], I found EDO much simpler to use. […] So the **difficulty** is not in the program itself but lies in **my assumption** that it is difficult. [Excerpt 22]

Also concerning the technical aspect of EDO, one factor reported to negatively affect participant's motivation was its **heavy reliance on technology availability** (n=5), and **poor technical support** (n=1):

Hien: **Internet connection** is a **big issue**. The internet here is so slow that sometimes the course cannot run smoothly, it stands still for hours before I can move on. I usually **get bored** and **quit** in such situations. That's so **demotivating.** [Excerpt 23]

Huong: I asked the technical support team, called many times to those in charge, but they all said that they did not know anything about that. I felt quite **disappointed**. **No support** for technical problems. [Excerpt 24]

Another prevailing factor that appeared to demotivate some participants is the **lack of a face-to-face component**. Five participants signalled anxiety in the absence of a live instructor who could give immediate and individualized answers while negatively assessing the automated and rigid "feedback" in EDO.

Hai: The results are **just** the overall number; EDO **cannot** give **detailed feedback** on each part of my performance and **cannot give advice** on what I have to do to improve the part I am not good at. They just say "very good" or so. […] I **need more in-depth** analysis and feedback on my outcome like what a teacher can give me. [Excerpt 25]

Six other interviewees blamed the lack of face-to-face meetings for some negative feelings and a dearth of chances to develop communicative skills.

Tinh: […] face-to-face classes make me **more active** than studying online. Learning online means learning **alone,** and this makes me **lazy** sometimes. [Excerpt 26]

Thuong: If I had had a chance to study with a physical teacher, I would have preferred that because I have a chance to ask my questions directly and **communicate** with them to improve my **speaking and listening skills**. [Excerpt 27]

Finally, the emphasis on **learner autonomy** was considered unfavourable by one participant:

Dung: I **don't like** it when I **am free** to choose any part of the course to do anytime. I think it would be **better** if the content followed **a certain organization or sequence**, and learners are **required to follow** it. [Excerpt 28]

Future Orientation

At the end of the interviews, all the participating teachers were asked to rate their future willingness to choose oTDP. In response, four interviewees expressed a complete certainty, i.e. they would volunteer to join even if they had to pay; 15 others shared a strong agreement on future participation in oTPD, though under certain conditions, including reasonable cost (n=11), sufficiently challenging content (n=2), reasonable timing (n=3) and no excessive assessment pressure (n=1).

Thoa: I **even advertised** it to my colleagues in Thanh Hoa when I came back to my hometown […]. I talked about it whenever I had a chance. I am **trying** to […] to purchase an account to study with it on a long-term basis. [Excerpt 29]

Discussion

Research Question 1

The first question in this study investigates 19 participants' initial drives to join EDO as an oTPD intervention. The data showed two main reasons: (1) (as expected) meeting an institutional requirement, (2) a felt need to improve English language proficiency.

The first motivation – meeting an institutional requirement - appears extrinsic and instrumental in the first place, as EDO was mandatory for the participants. However, some additional comments from the interviews indicated that other types of motivation were also operating, for example, participants' genuine love for the profession (Excerpt 4) and the extrinsic benefits that they perceived quality teaching could entail (Excerpt 3). In this sense, teachers' initial motivation for oTPD intervention, even an obligatory one, could be influenced by their perceived "future selves", which incorporate their personal desires as professionals and the visible attributes they think they ought to possess (Dörnyei, 2009). In other words, their perceived ideal selves as EFL teachers who are good at English and their ought-to selves who meet the national standard are inter-related. The second motivation–a felt need to improve English language proficiency–reveals an interesting aspect of language teacher PD motivation. When explained by genuine interest in English and a wish to master it as solely a means of communication (Excerpt 5), such motivation means that teachers may choose to engage in a PD opportunity because of their love for the language and their personal need for mastering it beyond the practical requirements of classroom use. In light of a relational and dynamic view of motivation (Ushioda, 2009), this may indicate that instrumental orientation (the practical use of the L2), is present and influential. Following the process-oriented approach to motivation (Dörnyei & Otto, 1998) on the other hand, the findings support the contention that teacher motivation for a professional learning process, while experiencing its pre-actional stage (choice motivation), could possibly be strengthened by their motivation in another learning process, in this case, learning English as an L2, in its actional stage (on-going motivation). In other words, two motivational processes at different stages can have a dialogical relationship in which executive motivation of one process (e.g. L2 learning) might affect the choice motivation of the other (e.g. professional development).

It is surprising, however, that flexible accessibility, one unique advantage of online learning, was not mentioned as a possible initial driving force for teachers as concluded in some previous comparable studies (e.g. Banegas & Busleiman, 2014; Young & Lewis, 2012;). The reasons may lie simply in the participants' unawareness of this feature at the outset, or in the initially compulsory nature of EDO, which may have overridden such an inherent course advantage. The participants, however, still did not even mention flexibility as a pivotal feature when they discussed the change through which their nature of participation in EDO shifted to being voluntary (Excerpt 6, 7, 8). In light of the socio-dynamic approach to motivation (Dörnyei, 2009; Ushioda, 2009), this can be partly attributed to local cultural factors. In Vietnam, learners tend to rely heavily on instructors, and the conventional face-to-face classroom is, therefore, still preferred. As some participants explained (Excerpt 25, 27), immediate, "detailed" and "in-depth" feedback on their performance from a trainer physically present would make them opt for a traditional TPD course rather than a virtual one like EDO. In short, teachers may not be automatically attracted to an oTPD program simply because of an available distinct course advantage. Their choice motivation, instead, may depend also on their individual dynamics (e.g. self-determination) and/or the immediate socio-cultural context (e.g. traditions of learner-teacher relationship).

Research Question 2

The second question of the current research examines the factors that contributed to sustaining or undermining teachers' motivation during at least two months participating in the oTPD programme. The results show a multiplicity of complex relationships that warrant discussion.

First, when describing their motivation as they progressed in the course, participants ceased to focus on external obligation but on their growing enjoyment in learning with EDO instead (Excerpt 8); some even finally expressed a willingness to pay for similar courses in the future (Excerpt 29). These results demonstrate the temporal characteristic of motivation, and are notably consistent with Dörnyei's and Otto's (1998) process model in the L2 motivation literature, which highlights motivational changes over different stages of an action, or Ushioda's (2001) "temporal frame of reference", which emphasizes that motivation evolves over time (p.117).

In addition, an internalization of extrinsic motives inherent in the ought-to-selves perceived by the participants is evident when they expressed an increasing interest in EDO because of their knowledge advancement (Excerpt 19). In other words, the initial primary motive of meeting an external requirement was somehow internalized into a need to enhance professional competence – an instance of one's idealized self. Because internalized extrinsic incentives and personal positive feelings can contribute to an increased level of endeavour and effort expenditure (Dörnyei, 2005), the participants were possibly becoming more and more motivated towards the end of EDO.

In terms of specific motivating and demotivating factors, a number of items emerging from the data are consistent with previous findings in the TPD literature. For example, exactly as Simpson (2012) described in his work on online education, ***accessibility*** in the present data also means a certain level of positive "isolation" that could reduce participants' fear of losing face in direct communication with instructors and peers – a possible demotivating psychological

state in face-to-face learning mode (Excerpt 18). In this respect, accessibility does not merely mean a benefit concerning time and space, or physically, but can also be motivating psychologically and socially. Among the demotivating factors, the negative feelings expressed as a result of ***lack of interaction with peers and instructors*** has confirmed Nunan's (2012) and O'Bannon, Lubke, and Brit's (2013) previous findings that even though isolation may be found a "face-saving" motivator for some shy learners, it actually can be a threat to learning in general.

There is, however, a newly emerging aspect of course quality that has not been mentioned elsewhere in the literature: the involvement of L2 native speakers as a motivating factor for language teachers in oTPD. As the data demonstrated, not only did participants attribute the "useful", "standard" and "accurate" quality of EDO to "English native speakers", but they also expressed an explicit assumption that non-native English speaker instructors in face-to-face mode are usually "not standard" (Excerpts 13, 14, 15). This is in line with Gardner's and Lambert's (1972) proposition about the role of L2 learners' attitude towards the L2 native speakers, and further confirms the influence of L2 motivation on language teachers' general interest in professional learning as raised earlier. Under the dynamic approach, such an influence represents the socio-cultural facet of the complex motivational construct in the field of TPD.

One more remarkable point in the list of on-going motivators is the total absence of *interaction* and the communicative *use of web tools*, which have been widely acknowledged in the literature as two significant driving forces for teachers in both TPD generally (e.g. Hildebrandt & Eom, 2011) and online learning particularly (e.g. Kao, Wu, & Tsai, 2011; Murphy et al., 2011). In fact, some information-exchange functions in EDO such as "community" were referred to in the interviews, but reportedly motivating for only personal uses such as self-recording, self-checking of pronunciation mistakes (Excerpt 6, 7, 8). The four main motivating factors (course quality, accessibility, learner autonomy, and positive personal feelings), moreover, can be all framed as individual learning experiences as they can engage participants without necessarily requiring them to interact with others.

Similarly, **lack of interaction with peers and instructors** paradoxically emerges as a demotivating factor in EDO. While reflecting participants' perceived value of collaborative learning, this, together with **poor technical support** as another demotivating factor, can clarify why collaboration did not appear in the list of course motivators. Given the fact that a communicative feature is actually available in EDO (Excerpt 6, 7, 8), the most likely scenario would be learners' inclination to associate online courses with self-management, their low technology efficacy plus course administrators' poor technical support which have restricted the interaction opportunities incorporated in EDO and thus demotivated learners.

Collaborative learning, therefore, should not be automatically considered as a motivating feature in an oTPD opportunity. Although teachers might generally endorse its value, they are not necessarily well aware of the collaborative component, nor do they enjoy the interpersonal learning experience in a virtual environment. From a practical perspective, to assure that participants benefit from all intended interactive opportunities, proper training should be provided prior to course commencement, and subsequent technical support with active tutors

should also be continuingly available to them. Course designers might even consider fundamentally incorporating interactive features (e.g. the communicative web tools) into the required tasks of the course to ensure users' participation in collaborative learning.

A final point warrants discussion. An overwhelmingly high proportion of the demotivating factors (three out of five) are directly related to technology. While ***technical complexity*** and ***poor technical support*** are inherent in the course, ***participants' low technology efficacy*** originates from the teacher learners themselves. Such results, on the one hand, reiterate Stockwell's (2013) warnings about the minimum standards of technological quality for online courses, which are necessary in order for them to be appealing to teacher users. On the other hand, they imply a need for thorough consideration of trainees' computer literacy and adequate provision of training on course operating skills for them before an oTPD intervention starts.

Integrating Two Research Questions

Drawing on the above discussion, a model of teacher motivation for oTPD can be generated as in Figure 1 below.

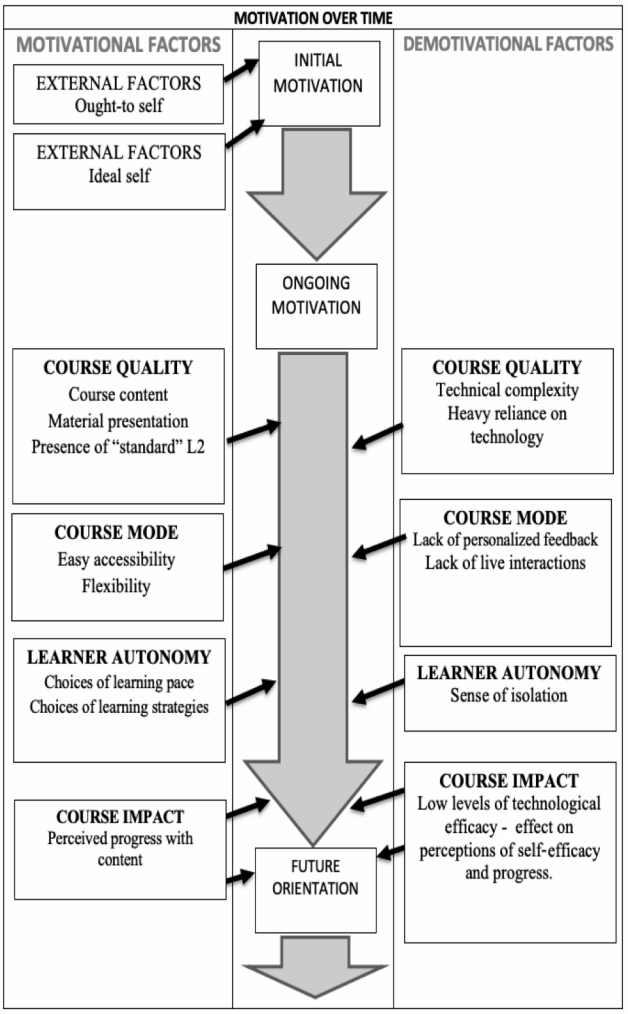

Figure 1. A model of language teacher motivation in online professional development

As depicted in the figure, EFL teachers' motivation in oTPD is a temporal, dynamic and multi-faceted construct, which changes over time under the influence of various factors: personal (e.g. ideal self), social (e.g. ought-to selves), and contextual (e.g. actual learning experience). The initial drives include external requirements, and internal wish to improve themselves as both teachers and users of English. Teachers' technology efficacy, actual learning experience, and L2 motivation were found major factors that sustain their longitudinal motivation thereafter. The motivation generated from a concurrent oTPD programme may then decide teachers' initial or choice motivation for similar TPD options in future. Such a motivation cycle as a whole is impacted to a certain extent by the immediate socio-cultural context, for example, Vietnamese teacher trainees' tendency to favour traditional classroom to online learning.

Dependent on technology availability as a prerequisite, oTPD is understandably influenced by technical factors as one crucial driving force for EFL teacher participants. Technical issues could go beyond simply reducing teacher's on-going motivation to even preventing them from continuing the course despite teachers' appreciation of the course content. To minimise erosion of motivation, this calls for an assurance of adequate technical conditions and thorough initial training for users before an oTPD intervention commences. Technical support should also be made available during the course, to maximize participants' utilization of the course features, especially the interactive ones.

In terms of a theoretical contribution, the figure demonstrates the applicability of L2 motivation models in the less conventional model of oTPD. Adhering to the process-oriented and socio-dynamic approach with the core process model and the self system commonly employed in L2 motivational research, this study has uncovered a new facet of language teachers' motivation for an online development opportunity: the drive to improve L2 proficiency. Mainstream TPD models for EFL teachers, which have typically focused on pedagogical skills, are therefore recommended to consider integrating a language enhancement component. Teacher motivation researchers are also encouraged to integrate motivational theories from other discipline into their theoretical framework.

Finally, although the model is generated from a specific oTPD course, we believe the study is useful in informing research aiming to understand teacher motivation in other contexts. Future researchers are therefore invited to test, enrich, or modify the model in studies conducted in other contexts and with other groups of teachers. Their findings will continue to add to our limited understanding of teacher motivation for virtual learning, and to a larger evidence base needed to inform course designers on matters related to the promotion of this TPD mode.

Conclusion

Although this study is context-specific, its findings contribute to the understanding of EFL teacher motivation in other TPD settings worldwide where teachers are also continuing EFL learners, and the image of e-courses as an individual rather than interactive learning venue still prevails in their perceptions.

Our findings suggest that the motivation to improve language proficiency may insert a powerful influence on language teachers' decisions to participate and remain in an oTPD course in

particular and a TPD opportunity in general. While it is not always possible to bring the "standard" native language into face-to-face lessons, online courses like EDO promise ample room for this thanks to advanced information and communication technology. Thus, schools and programme developers need to consider oTPD as a multi-function environment where language teachers cannot only develop their teaching methodology as in conventional TPD models, but also their L2 proficiency – the subject matter, an important part of their professional knowledge.

We have also presented evidence that low levels of confidence in the use of technology, and the lack of pre-course technical training and continuing technical support may affect teachers' motivation for an oTPD programme. In the situation where teachers tend to associate online learning with self-management and distance, such issues can lead to underutilisation of collaborative online tools, creating the negative and demotivating feelings of insecurity and isolation. Initial training, on-going support, and even integration of interactive learning features into the fundamental part of the course design, are therefore highly recommended.

Finally, oTPD, in general, demonstrates the potential to contribute to the professional development of in-service EFL teachers, provided that sufficient levels of motivation are able to be maintained. The overall positive learning experiences reported by participants in this study should be considered by educational authorities in Vietnam and similar contexts as a rationale for the creation of more oTPD opportunities for their EFL teaching staff to meet the increasing professional demands while still maintaining full employment. Design and evaluation of these programmes need to be well-informed by up-to-date theories of motivation, and undertaken in the comprehensive knowledge of its complexity.

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