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A study on self-efficacy of students majoring in the Chinese language at a university in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam



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ABSTRACT

This article investigates the belief in self-efficacy in learning among Chinese language students in Vietnam, looking for differences in demographics, and the effect of self-efficacy beliefs on student academic performance. The results of a questionnaire survey with 142 students of a university in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam showed that: First, the self-efficacy of Vietnamese Chinese language majors has a high level; Second, there is no significant difference in the self-efficacy in learning the Chinese language between male students and female students; Third, there is no significant difference in the self-efficacy in learning the Chinese language between students from urban areas and students from rural areas; Fourth, there exists a significant difference in the self-efficacy in learning the Chinese language between firstyear students and third-year students; Fifth, there is no correlation between the self-efficacy and Chinese language learning' academic performance. The findings provide a basis for the future cultivation of Vietnamese students' self-efficacy in the Chinese language classroom. Based on the research results, the article makes some recommendations.

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activity efficiency (Nie et al., 2011). In conclusion, self-efficacy affects academic achievement directly or

indirectly by affecting other learning variables, and academic achievement in turn affects self-efficacy.

mentioned in many different fields, such as

education, psychology, etc. Research on self-efficacy in the field of foreign language education, especially

Currently, research on self-efficacy has been

1. Introduction

Self-efficacy is a concept introduced by Banciura (1977), in Social Learning Theory. Bandura (1982) defined self-efficacy as a judgment of the extent to which an individual is able to take the necessary actions to cope with future situations. Since then, the theory of self-efficacy has been constantly supplemented and developed, and verified by various empirical studies.

Self-efficacy plays a huge role in learning, especially under conditions of equal ability. There is a positive correlation between self-efficacy and goal orientation (Hsieh et al., 2007), that is, individuals with high self-efficacy tend to choose tasks with a certain degree of difficulty. Students with higher learning efficacy are more persistent, can better monitor their learning schedule, and tend to delay gratification (Ramdass and Zimmerman, 2011). Students with high self-efficacy will adopt more cognitive and metacognitive strategies and are more likely to have academic help-seeking behavior. High

in the field of English education, has achieved many remarkable achievements, such as the studies of Dong and Soransataporn (2012) and Genc et al. (2016). However, in the field of Chinese language education, research results on self-efficacy are still very modest, and research aimed at Vietnamese

learners is still very limited.

In order to find out the belief in self-efficacy of Chinese language students in Vietnam, the difference in demographic aspects (gender, family area, grade level) about self-efficacy, as well as the influence of self-efficacy on students' academic performance, we wanted to seek answers to the following five questions within the scope of this research: First, how is the general situation of Chinese language students' self-efficacy? Second, is there a gender difference (male, female) in Chinese language students' self-efficacy in learning? Third, is there a difference in the area of family living (urban, rural) in Chinese language students' self-efficacy in learning? Fourth, is there a grade level difference in Chinese language students' self-efficacy in learning?

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https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8219-9890 2313-626X/© 2022 The Authors. Published by IASE. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/) Fifth, is there a correlation between self-efficacy and Chinese language students' academic performance?

2. Literature review

According to our search results on the CNKI database, we only found 30 studies that mentioned the issue of self-efficacy in learning the Chinese language. These studies focus on the following four research issues: The first is the general belief in selfefficacy in learning the Chinese language, as studied by Zhu (2009) and Lin and Betz (2009). The second is self-efficacy in learning Chinese language skills, such as Wang et al. (2014) on listening skills, Wang (2012) on speaking skills, and Zhan (2015) on reading skills; The third is the relationship between self-efficacy and other psychological factors in learning Chinese language, such as Liu et al. (2021) on the relationship with fatigue in learning, Yip (2012) on the relationship with learning strategies, Zhang (2014) on the relationship with anxiety in learning, Yihong et al. (2007) on the relationship with learning motivation; The fourth is the fostering students' self-efficacy in learning the Chinese language, as studied by Hou (2015). These studies are aimed at international students in China (Zhu, 2009, Yusoff, 2012, Zhang, 2014, Zhang and Ziegler, 2016, and Yao, 2019).

In Vietnam, research results on self-efficacy in foreign language learning are few, we only found the study of Luu (2022) referring to the issue of Vietnamese students' self-efficacy in learning Chinese as a second foreign language, we did not find studies on this issue in the field of education of other foreign languages. Luu (2022) found that students learning a second foreign language have a high

degree of confidence in their self-efficacy, there is no significant difference in the self-efficacy between male students and female students, between students from urban areas and students from rural areas, and between students at all grades, but there exists a positive correlation between the self-efficacy and Chinese language learning' academic performance.

It can be seen that, at present, research on Vietnamese learners' self-efficacy in learning the Chinese language is still very limited, only research has been conducted on students learning Chinese as a second foreign language in Vietnam. There are no studies aimed at learners who are majoring in the Chinese language. The study on this issue will be a valuable reference for the teaching of the Chinese language in Vietnam.

3. Research methods

3.1. Research sample

This study was conducted at the Faculty of Foreign Languages of a university in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Participating in the survey are all 142 students currently studying the Chinese language at this school. The situation of the study sample is as follows (Table 1). Table 1 shows that there is an unequal distribution of the sex ratio between male and female students. The majority of students participating in the survey are female students, because the general situation in Vietnam is that very few male students study the humanities and social sciences in general, and foreign languages in particular.

Table 1: Research sample structure

The everage age	here the family lived Grade level					nder	Ge
The average age	Third-year	Second-year	First-year	Rural	Urban	Female	Male
20.24	45	39	58	74	68	128	14
20.24	31.7%	27.5%	40.8%	62.1%	47.9%	90.1%	9.9%

Table 1 also shows that no fourth-year students participated in the survey. That's because, at the time of the survey, fourth-year students just graduated, were busy with job search, and not many students participated in the survey.

3.2. Data collection tools

This study uses a quantitative method, through a survey by questionnaire to collect data. The questionnaire we used was designed on the basis of the General Self-Efficacy Scale designed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995). This is a very popular scale in the world, with 33 different language versions. The questionnaire consisted of 10 questions as follows (Table 2).

The questionnaire uses Likert's five-point scale with "1-strongly disagree," "2-disagree," "3-normal," "4-agree" and "5-strongly agree."

The scale has Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.904 (Table 3), and the questions of the scale all have Corrected Item-Total Correlation greater than 0.3 (Table 4). Thus, the scale achieves reliability.

The scale has a KMO of 0.847, a Chi-Square value of 791.974, and Sig. 0.000 (Table 5). Thus, the scale achieves the validity value.

3.3. Data analysis tools

This study uses SPSS software (version 25.0) as a tool for statistics and analysis of collected data. In this study, we use Descriptive Statistics to clarify the general situation of Chinese language students' self-efficacy in learning, use Independent–samples T-test to analyze the relationship between gender (male, female), family area (urban, rural), and Chinese language students' self-efficacy in learning, use Oneway ANOVA to analyze the relationship between grade level and Chinese language students' self-

efficacy in learning, use Pearson's correlation analysis and Regression Analysis to find out the relationship between Chinese language learning' academic performance and Chinese language students' self-efficacy.

Table 2: Scale of self-efficacy in learning the Chinese language

Code	Content
Q1	I can always manage to solve difficult problems in Chinese learning if I try hard enough
Q2	If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want in Chinese learning
Q3	It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals in Chinese learning
Q4	I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events in Chinese learning
Q5	Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations in Chinese learning
Q6	I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort in Chinese learning
Q7	I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities in Chinese learning
Q8	When I am confronted with a problem in Chinese learning, I can usually find several solutions
Q9	If I am in trouble in Chinese learning, I can usually think of a solution
Q10	I can usually handle whatever comes in Chinese learning on my way

Table 3: Reliability statistics

Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items	N of items
0.904	0.904	10

Table 4: Item-total statistics

	TROID II Term to tai o t								
	Scale mean if item deleted	Scale variance if item deleted	Corrected item-total correlation	Squared multiple correlation	Cronbach's alpha if item deleted				
	ueieteu		Correlation	Correlation					
Q1	35.11	32.038	0.514	0.424	0.903				
Q2	35.25	31.439	0.580	0.483	0.899				
Q3	35.70	29.529	0.653	0.503	0.895				
Q4	35.86	29.796	0.715	0.672	0.890				
Q5	35.82	29.834	0.755	0.651	0.888				
Q6	35.36	30.586	0.669	0.623	0.894				
Q7	35.70	30.281	0.669	0.625	0.893				
Q8	35.70	30.227	0.695	0.663	0.892				
Q9	35.65	30.199	0.709	0.631	0.891				
Q10	35.59	30.740	0.632	0.496	0.896				

Table 5: KMO and Bartlett's test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measu	0.847	
	Approx. Chi-Square	791.974
Bartlett's test of Sphericity	df	45
	Sig.	0.000

4. Research results and discussion

4.1. General situation

The results of descriptive statistics show that the self-efficacy in the learning of Chinese language students at a university in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam has Mean=3.9528, SD=0.61005 (Table 6). This shows that Chinese language students have a high degree of self-efficacy in learning.

This result is higher than the level of self-efficacy in learning the Chinese language among

international students in China (Mean=3,337) (Lin and Betz, 2009), Korean students, and Japanese students in China (Mean=3.30) (Zhu, 2009), Mexican students in China (Mean=3.68). This result is higher than the level of self-efficacy in learning the Chinese language among students in Korea (Mean=3,364) (Zhang, 2014) and students in Russia (Mean=3.467) (Yao, 2019). At the same time, this result is also higher than Vietnamese students' self-efficacy in learning Chinese as a second foreign language (Mean=3.81) (Luu, 2022).

Table 6: Descriptive statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
Self-efficacy	142	2.50	5.00	3.9528	0.61005
Valid N (listwise)	142				

It can be seen that for Vietnamese students who use Chinese as their first foreign language or their second foreign language, their self-efficacy is higher than that of Chinese learners from other countries. There are many reasons for this, among which the similarity of students' mother tongue and the target language they have learned in terms of language type and culture has a greater impact. The languages and cultures of western countries such as Russia and Mexico are quite different from those of China, so Chinese learners from these countries have low self-

efficacy. South Korea and Japan are both Chinese cultural circles, and their culture has a lot in common with Chinese culture, but Korean and Japanese are both agglutinative languages, and their grammatical characteristics are quite different from Chinese, which is an isolated language, Chinese learners' selfefficacy also has a certain influence. Vietnam is different. the linguistic and cultural and characteristics between Vietnam and China exist many similarities. Vietnamese and Chinese are both isolated languages, with many similarities in grammatical features. In the Vietnamese vocabulary system, there are a large number of words of Chinese origin. In addition, in the process of cultural contact between Vietnam and China for a long time, the two countries have quite similar ideologies. These have partly helped students overcome obstacles and difficulties in learning and using Chinese. Thereby, helping students have self-efficacy in learning Chinese as a first foreign language or as a second foreign language.

4.2. The relationship between gender and selfefficacy in Chinese language students' learning

Participating in the survey were 14 male students (accounting for 9.9%) and 128 female students (accounting for 90.1%). Male students' self-efficacy in learning the Chinese language has Mean=4.2286, SD=0.77997. Female students' self-efficacy in learning the Chinese language has Mean=3.9227, SD=0.58447 (Table 7). The results of the

Independent–samples T-test show that t=1.424, p=0.175 (Table 8). Thus, there is no significant difference between male and female students in their self-efficacy in learning the Chinese language. In other words, gender did not affect the difference in self-efficacy in Chinese language students' learning.

This result is similar to the research result of Luu (2022) on the case of students learning Chinese as a second foreign language in Vietnam. This result is similar to the results of many previous studies on the case of international students in China, such as Zhu (2009) and Lin and Betz (2009). In addition, this result is similar to the results of previous studies on the case of students learning the Chinese language in a target non-linguistic environment, such as Zhang (2014) and Zhang and Ziegler (2016). However, this result is not similar to the research results of Liu et al. (2021), Yihong et al. (2007), and Yao (2019).

Γable	7:	Gender	group	statistics
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	Tuble 7. delider group statistics									
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error mean					
Self-efficacy	Male	14	4.2286	0.77997	0.20846					
Self-efficacy	Famale	128	3.9227	0.58447	0.05166					

Table 8	Gender	's inde	pendent	sampl	les test
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		Larragala		bic or dem	aer s muept	enacht ban	ipies test			
		Levene's equal varia	ity of			t-te	est for equality	of means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean difference	Std. error difference	95% con interva differ	l of the
									Lower	Upper
Self-	a	5.031	.026	1.795	140	0.075	0.30592	0.17039	-0.03095	0.64278
efficacy	b			1.424	14.640	0.175	0.30592	0.21476	-0.15282	0.76465

a: Equal variances assumed; b: Equal variances not assumed $% \left(\mathbf{b}\right) =\left(\mathbf{c}\right) =\left(\mathbf{c}\right)$

It can be seen that the relationship between the gender of Chinese learners and their self-efficacy will have different results in different studies. Whether there is an intermediate factor between Chinese learners' gender and their self-efficacy. Of note is the male-to-female ratio in the study. An imbalance in the ratio of males to females, or the disparity between the proportion of males and females, will have a certain impact on the results of the study.

4.3. The relationship between area where the family lived and self-efficacy in Chinese language students' learning

Participating in the survey, there were 68 students from urban areas (accounting for 47.9%) and 74 students from rural areas (accounting for 62.1%). The self-efficacy of students from urban areas in learning the Chinese language has Mean=3.9485, SD=0.58450. The self-efficacy of students from rural areas in learning the Chinese language has Mean=3.9568, SD=0.63657 (Table 9). The results of the Independent–samples T-test show that t=0.080, p=0.936 (Table 10). Thus, there is no significant difference between students from urban areas and students from rural areas in terms of self-

efficacy in learning the Chinese language. In other words, the area where the family lived did not affect the difference in Chinese language students' self-efficacy in learning.

This result is similar to the research result of Luu (2022) on the case of Vietnamese students learning Chinese as a second foreign language.

This has a greater relationship with the contact with the Chinese. Most Vietnamese students, whether from urban areas or from rural areas, learn English as a foreign language at the primary and secondary levels. Therefore, for most Vietnamese students, Chinese is a relatively unfamiliar foreign language. They only started to learn Chinese when they were in university. Therefore, there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups of students' self-efficacy in Chinese learning.

4.4. The relationship between grade level and self-efficacy in Chinese language students' learning

Participating in the survey were 58 first-year students (accounting for 40.8%), 39 second-year students (accounting for 27.5%), and 45 third-year students (accounting for 31.7%). The first-year

students' self-efficacy in learning the Chinese language has Mean=4.1828, SD=0.595640. The second-year students' self-efficacy in learning the Chinese language has Mean=3.8897, SD=0.63320.

The third-year students' self-efficacy in learning the Chinese language has Mean=3.7111, SD=0.50372 (Table 11).

Table 9: Area's group statistics

	Area	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error mean
Solf officacy	Rural	74	3.9568	0.63657	0.07400
Self-efficacy	Urban	68	3.9485	0.58450	0.07088

Table 10: Area's independent samples test

		Levene's equal varia	ity of			t-t	est for equality	of means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean difference	Std. error difference	95% con interval differ	l of the
									Lower	Upper
Self-	a	0.432	0.512	0.080	140	0.936	0.00823	0.10284	-0.19510	0.21155
efficacy	b			0.080	140.000	0.936	0.00823	0.10247	-0.19436	0.21082

a: Equal variances assumed; b: Equal variances not assumed

The results of One-way ANOVA between these three grades show that F=8,722, p=0.000 (Table 12). However, the results of Tamhane's T2 test showed that there was only a significant difference in self-efficacy between first-year students and third-year students (p<0.05) (Table 13). Thus, there exists a

significant difference between first-year and thirdyear students in their self-efficacy in learning the Chinese language. In other words, the self-efficacy of Chinese language students in Chinese language studies declines over time.

Table 11: Grade level's descriptive

	Level	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error mean
	First-year	58	4.1828	0.59564	0.07821
Self-efficacy	Second-year	39	3.8897	0.63320	0.10139
	Third-year	45	3.7111	0.50372	0.07509

Table 12: Grade level's ANOVA

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	5.851	2	2.925	8.722	0.000
Within groups	46.623	139	0.335		
Total	52.474	141			

Table 13: Grade level's multiple comparisons

(I) Level	(I) Level	Mean difference	Std. Error	C: ~	95% Confidence interval	
(I) Level	()) Level	(I-J)	Stu. El l'Ol	Sig.	Lower bound	Upper bound
Einst waan	Second-year	0.29302	0.12805	0.073	-0.0194	0.6055
First-year	Third-year	0.47165	0.10842	0.000	0.2084	0.7349
Cocond woon	First-year	-0.29302	0.12805	0.073	-0.6055	0.0194
Second-year	Third-year	0.17863	0.12617	0.410	-0.1298	0.4870
Third-year	First-year	-0.47165	0.10842	0.000	-0.7349	-0.2084
Tilliu-year	Second-year	-0.17863	0.12617	0.410	-0.4870	0.1298

This result is not similar to the research results of Luu (2022) on the case of students learning Chinese as a second foreign language.

It can be seen that there are differences in the relationship between grades and self-efficacy between students majoring in the Chinese language and students who use Chinese as a second foreign language. Students who take Chinese as their second foreign language only learn basic Chinese, and the number of class hours per semester is not much (3 credits), and they only study for four semesters, so there is no difference in Chinese learning self-efficacy among students of different grades. However, Chinese language majors are different. They have quite a lot of Chinese class hours each semester, and the nature of the courses they study is also varied. In the first grade, students majoring in the Chinese language mainly study Chinese skills,

that is, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, which is not difficult and does not require high thinking ability. However, by the third grade, students majoring in the Chinese language mainly study difficult and demanding courses, such as Chinese linguistics, translation, interpretation, and Chinese for special purposes. Therefore, the self-efficacy of Chinese language majors tends to decline.

4.5. The relationship between academic performance and self-efficacy in Chinese language students' learning

The results of Pearson correlation analysis between academic performance and self-efficacy in learning the Chinese language showed that the correlation coefficient r=0.132, p=0.116 (Table 14). Thereby, it is shown that Chinese language academic

performance and self-efficacy in learning have no correlation with each other. In other words, self-efficacy in learning did not affect the academic performance of Chinese language majors.

The results of the regression analysis (Table 15) also show that self-efficacy explains only 1.8% of the academic performance of students majoring in the Chinese language.

Table 14: Correlations

		Academic performance	Self-efficacy
	Pearson Correlation	1	0.132
Academic performance	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.116
	N	142	142
	Pearson Correlation	0.132	1
Self-efficacy	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.116	
	N	142	142

Table 15: Regression analysis

_	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate	Durbin-Watson
	0.132	0.018	0.010	0.60684	1.918

It can be seen that self-efficacy is not a direct factor affecting the academic performance of Chinese language majors. In other words, self-efficacy is not a factor that determines the academic performance of Chinese language majors. However, self-efficacy may affect the academic performance of Chinese language majors together with other factors such as learning strategies, learning concepts, and autonomous learning ability.

5. Conclusion

Students majoring in the Chinese language at a university in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam have a relatively high degree of self-efficacy in learning the Chinese language. There was no significant difference between male and female students in their self-efficacy in learning the Chinese language. There was no significant difference between students from urban areas and students from rural areas in terms of self-efficacy in learning the Chinese language. There exists a significant difference between first-year and third-year students in terms of self-efficacy in learning the Chinese language. There is no correlation between self-efficacy and Chinese language academic performance.

In teaching Chinese language students in Vietnam, we believe that teachers need to strengthen the training of third-year students in their selfefficacy. Thereby, limiting the decline in the level of self-efficacy over the current study time. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy stems from personal experience, emotional arousal level, the experience of others, and social persuasion. Therefore, teachers can adopt the following methods to improve students' self-efficacy: The first is to encourage students to set reasonable goals in learning the Chinese language; The second is to create more opportunities for students to have a sense of success; The third is to build an exemplary image in the eyes of students; The fourth is to guide students to find the causes of academic success and failure.

6. Limitations of the study

This study currently has some limitations as follows: Firstly, the ratio between male and female

students is quite high, which has a certain impact on the research results; Secondly, the study only mentions self-efficacy, not considering correlation between self-efficacy and issues such as self-control, learning motivation, learning strategies, learners' beliefs... as well as their impacts on student's Chinese language academic performance; Third, the study also did not specifically address about self-efficacy for a particular Chinese language skill or for a particular Chinese language domain; Fourth, the research method is still limited in the investigation, lacking in-depth interviews and empirical research. In the following studies in the future, researchers need to overcome the above limitations, in order for the research to have more specific and clear goals, the research results also have higher application value in Chinese language teaching.

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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