

Will I Continue Online Teaching? Language Teachers' Experience during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: Due to public health concerns, many K-12 schools were closed and switched to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since language learning emphasises interaction, this brings a discussion on its effectiveness and feasibility of online teaching beyond the pandemic. This study aims to explore language teachers' online teaching experiences in the pandemics and outline factors influencing their choices on future online teaching. Adopting the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), the researcher interviewed five language teachers internationally and examined their lived experience in this qualitative research. Participants indicated that a positive learning environment and greater well-being of teachers favoured them to continue online teaching while their doubt on students' learning outcomes impeded them from future use. These findings can be predictors of the teachers' choices on online learning and useful in devising measures or professional development courses to foster a sustainable online learning development beyond the pandemic.

1 INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has also brought great impact to K-12 schools globally (Asanov et al., 2021; Iivari et al., 2020; UN, 2020; Vial, 2019). On 11 March 2020, The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared COVID-19 as a pandemic (UN 2020). Due to public health concerns, school closure is a popular strategy in many countries which have a relatively serious outbreak, for instance, India, Brazil, Ecuador, Algeria, China and Hong Kong (UN 2020). Over 94% of the students, i.e. 1.58 billion students, had to transit to remote learning, requiring teachers to conduct online lessons in various means to ensure learning continuity (Asanov et al., 2021; UN, 2020). Generally, teleconferencing tools like Googlemeet and Zoom classroom are used for live sessions, and Google Classroom is also used to check students' daily works (Iivari et al., 2020; UN, 2020). There are also some private companies developing platforms, including whiteboard and other add-on functions for online learning (Manegre & Sabiri, 2020). With both the advantages and disadvantages of online learning, a further discussion is drawn on whether online teaching can become a 'new normal' in the post-pandemic era (Asanov et al., 2021; Blizak et al., 2020;

Iivari et al., 2020; Manegre & Sabiri, 2020; UN, 2020).

1.1 Purpose of the Study

This study aims at investigating the significant factors influencing language teachers' choices on continuing or leaving online teaching in the post-pandemic era. Through examining language teachers' online teaching experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, it scaffolds the personal and contextual factors which can be predictors of their future choice of behaviours (Brown & Lent, 2019; Lent & Brown, 1996, 2006; Lent, 2004).

Based on the purpose of the study, the researcher proposed the following research questions:

1. How do language teachers describe their online teaching experience?
2. Why do language teachers desire to continue online teaching in the post-pandemic era?
3. Why do language teachers desire to stop online teaching in the post-pandemic era?

1.2 Significance of the Study

This study is unique in examining language teachers'

online teaching experience holistically with the lens of SCCT. It provides a holistic view of how language teachers' interests and choices of online learning develops. It also outlines the interrelationship between personal and contextual factors which influence language teachers' development of future e-learning choices (Brown & Lent, 2019; Lent & Brown, 1996, 2006; Lent, 2004). Second, the findings of this research are significant as it provides insights for education policy-makers and the school management developing measures to adopt and facilitate online learning and to attain sustainability and equity.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Research studies (Asanov et al., 2021; Blizak et al., 2020; Dos Santos, 2019; Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005; Iivari et al., 2020; Manegre & Sabiri, 2020; Ogange et al., 2018; Rovai, 2007; Terrell, 2005) were done on examining the impacts, benefits and drawbacks on online learning or distant learning. The following section first summarises the current research findings in relation to both online and language teaching. Then the research gaps are identified to posit this study.

Languages have always perceived to be a subject which needs communication and interaction (Hyland, 2007; Skehan, 2003). With features like social media, forums and chats, scholars (Blizak et al., 2020; Luis M. Dos Santos, 2019; Hyland, 2007; Manegre & Sabiri, 2020; Skehan, 2003) suggested that online learning is beneficial as a student-centred and interaction-oriented learning delivery in an authentic context connected to their real lives to express meaning without pressure. Some scholars (Blizak et al., 2020; Coulter et al., 2007; Ellis, 2000; Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005; Hyland, 2007; Skehan, 2003) also suggested that those interactive tasks and timely feedback are essential in language learning to offer learners opportunities to process and use the information in a higher cognitive and critical manner by challenging students on valued discourse and bring reflection and understanding on values, beliefs and cultures. These technological features fostered flexibility and enhanced students' performance at a faster rate, particularly on learning colloquial language (Dos Santos, 2019; Jurkovič, 2019; Manegre & Sabiri, 2020). Such advantages not only benefit ordinary students, but also students in remote areas who are with limited access to educational resources to achieve social equity (Jurkovič, 2019; Manegre & Sabiri, 2020; Rovai, 2007). Besides, with

the mastery of technological skills and familiarity of online environments among teachers and students, teachers experimented with some digital solutions to the continuity of learning during the COVID-19 pandemic (Blizak et al., 2020; Iivari et al., 2020). Moreover, remote learning also promotes an opportunity for collaborative teaching as teachers can team up to share the workload (Iivari et al., 2020). With the advantages mentioned above, some teachers perceived optimistically on the possibility of distance learning in some teaching periods in future due to their successful experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020; Blizak et al., 2020; Iivari et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, with more than 80% of the course content is delivered online and typically no face-to-face meetings, students suggested that online learning limit their time to communicate with their teachers (Blizak et al., 2020; Stodel & Thompson, 2006). Some studies (Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005; Stodel & Thompson, 2006) also suggested that teachers expressed worries on students' meaningful engagement in class due to their physical absence. Scholars (Acton & Glasgow, 2015; Hastings & Bham, 2003; Hebert & Worthy, 2001; Iivari et al., 2020; MacIntyre et al., 2020) also identified that stress created by increasing workload, difficulties in assessment and the abrupt transition to online teaching could be detrimental to teachers' mental health. Another concern is that teachers are not prepared to adapt to new teaching methodologies and receive little training on the online delivery mode (MacIntyre et al., 2020; UN, 2020). While social equity and quality education are under the limelight as one of the stated sustainable development goals by the United Nations, students who are from a lower socio-economic background who have less access to the internet are less likely to attend classes and do their homework (Asanov et al., 2021; Sachs et al., 2019; UN, 2020).

Previous studies (Asanov et al., 2021; Blizak et al., 2020; Dos Santos, 2019; Garrison & Cleveland-innes, 2005; Iivari et al., 2020; MacIntyre et al., 2020; Manegre & Sabiri, 2020; Ogange et al., 2018; Rovai, 2007; Terrell, 2005) indicated there were both advantages and disadvantages of implementing online learning through an examination of the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Very few of the studies (Iivari et al., 2020; MacIntyre et al., 2020) examined teachers' teaching experiences in relation to online teaching. One of the shortcomings of focussing on effectiveness is that it reduces choices to behaviours and may fail to recognise the sense-making process (Slezak, 1991; Talbot, 1982). Such

reduction can be useful in generating methods to reach desirable outcomes such as stimulus control (Slezak, 1991; Talbot, 1982). However, successful teaching incorporates a variety of variables, including teachers' beliefs, classroom setting, social cultures and appropriate pedagogies (Cantrell et al., 2003; Placer & Dodds, 1988). These factors can act together to influence teachers' motivations, attitudes and behaviours (Hackett & Byars, 1996; Lent & Brown, 1996, 2008; Lent, 2004). Therefore, the mental process of language teachers making decisions on online teaching, which is overlooked in previous studies, should be taken into consideration.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) is chosen as the theoretical framework in this study. Gaining inspiration from Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), researchers developed the SCCT to specifically focus on how academic and career choice develop and persist through examining the triadic causal relationship between self-efficacy, behaviours and choices (Brown & Lent, 2019; Lent & Brown, 1996, 2006; Lent, 2004). Since language teachers' choices on teaching tools and teaching methods comprise a myriad of personal and contextual factors (Blizak et al., 2020; Cantrell et al., 2003; Iivari et al., 2020; Placer & Dodds, 1988), a few benefits can be achieved by adopting the SCCT as a theoretical framework.

First, the SCCT underscores the dynamic interplay between individual, environmental and behavioural variables to draw a more precise representation on the decision-making process of adopting online teaching (Brown & Lent, 2019; Lent & Brown, 1996; Lent, 2004). Researchers (Powazny & Kauffeld, 2020; Sparks & Pole, 2019) also praised its power on outlining a more accurate and holistic cognitive and psychological mechanism in relation to personal factors, social supports and barriers. Second, the interrelation between the SCCT variables self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goals allowed researchers to look into how career interest develops and turns into actions (Lent, 1994; Lent & Brown, 1996). It allows researchers to examine specific beliefs influencing teaching pedagogies and teaching outcomes (Cadenas et al., 2020; Cosnolly et al., 2018). Third, the SCCT stresses individuals as an active agency for changes (Bandura, 1986, 1997; Lent & Brown, 1996; Lent, 2004). Such transformative and predictive power of self-efficacy, affirmed by substantial empirical evidence (Capri et al., 2017;

Dos Santos, 2019b; Fouad et al., 2008; Pham et al., 2019; Wang, 2013), enables the different stakeholders to devise intervention strategies to orient teachers' choices and preferences on online teaching in future.

4 METHODOLOGY

The Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is selected as the methodology as the researcher would like to look into the language teachers' online teaching experience instead of producing objective statements about the teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and performance outcomes in a distant learning environment (Alase, 2017; Pringle et al., 2011; Smith, 2004, 2015; Smith & Osborn, 2008). IPA gives full appreciation to individuals' account and allows an in-depth analysis and richness of every single participant by making sense of their personal and social world without distortions (Pringle et al., 2011; Smith, 2004; Smith & Osborn, 2008). This allows the researcher to examine how their personal and contextual factors influence their perception of self-efficacy and performance outcome through their lived stories (Lent et al., 2003; Lent & Brown, 1996; Smith, 2004; Smith & Osborn, 2008).

4.1 Participants

According to the IPA handbook and other scholars (Alase, 2017; Creswell, 2007, 2012; Pringle et al., 2011; Smith, 2004, 2015; Smith & Osborn, 2008), a smaller sample size, with five to six participants recommended, can allow for a richer depth of analysis from the original meanings of the participants and 'go beyond' the apparent content. To ensure the research study to shed light on a broader context, a fairly homogenous sample to whom the research questions were significant was found through purposive sampling (Alase, 2017; Bernard, 2006; Etikan, 2016; Patton, 2002; Pringle et al., 2011; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008). As a result, five participants from different countries were selected through purposive sampling. These participants had similar lived experience, which was online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic (Alase, 2017; Creswell, 2007, 2012; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008).

Based on the guidelines of the IPA on qualitative research studies, detailed demography of participants is listed in Table 1 for an understanding of the participants' background (Alase, 2017; Creswell, 2007, 2012; Pringle et al., 2011; Smith, 2004, 2015; Smith & Osborn, 2008).

Table 1: Brief demography of the participants.

Name	Gender	Age	Subject taught	Years of experience	Campus Location
Melina	F	Mid-30s	English, Literature in English	8	Australia
Sam	M	Early-40s	Chinese, Chinese Literature	10+	Hong Kong
Catherine	F	Mid-20s	English, English Literature, ESL	3	Canada
Jason	M	Mid-40s	Chinese, ESL	10+	New Zealand
Natalie	F	Late-30s	ESL	2	Russia

Since the participants are all in-service teachers, the researcher used pseudonyms to protect their identities from their current and further employers in the field (Creswell, 2007, 2012; Merriam, 2009).

4.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Two online one-on-one interview sessions were done (Seidman, 2013). Each individual interview lasted 75-90 minutes. The first interview was to establish rapport and empathy with the participants (Patton, 2002; Smith & Osborn, 2008; Welch & Patton, 1992). It focussed on language teachers' personal backgrounds, lived experiences and previous traditional and online teaching experiences in their countries (Alase, 2017; Smith et al., 2005; Smith & Osborn, 2008). The second interview focussed on their current online teaching experiences. Through semi-structured interviews with open-ended interview questions, the participants can not only narrate their online teaching experience during the COVID-19 pandemic, but the researcher can also follow the participants' interests and concerns for more in-depth discussion (Alase, 2017; Smith et al., 2005; Smith & Osborn, 2008). Guided by the SCCT, the interview questions aim to explore language teachers' personal variables (e.g. health, language, race and family) and contextual variables (e.g. classroom management, teaching support and learning environment) in relation to their teaching experiences (Brown & Lent, 2019; Lent 2004, Lent & Brown, 1996, 2006).

All the conversations were recorded and transcribed (Creswell, 2007, 2012). The transcripts were then sent to the participants to gain approval to process the data information (Creswell, 2007, 2012). To ensure the validity of the collected data, triangulation was employed, including observations of recorded lessons and teaching materials (Creswell, 2007, 2012).

After data collection, a general inductive approach was employed to first, identify the first-

level themes by open-coding techniques with the concepts from the grounded theory (Creswell, 2007, 2012; Thomas, 2006). Then axial coding was used to categorise the open-coding results to generate second-level themes (Merriam, 2009; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002). During the data analysis, three themes and six subthemes emerged.

5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To answer the research questions, the researcher categorised the findings into three themes and six subthemes. Transcribed quotations from participants are inserted to substantiate the findings. The major themes and subthemes are listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Themes and Subthemes.

<p>1. Positive learning environment: Reasons for continuing online teaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Great power from teachers 1.2 Greater students' engagement
<p>2. Better well-being: Reasons for continuing online teaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Work efficiency 2.2 Work-life balance
<p>3. Uncertain teaching performance: Reasons for stopping online teaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Evaluation of students' learning outcomes 3.2 Difficulties in implementing formative assessment

5.1 Positive Learning Environment: Reasons for Continuing Online Teaching

Previous studies (Dos Santos, 2019; Garrison & Cleveland-innes, 2005; Manegre & Sabiri, 2020) showed that online learning creates mixed influences on students' learning due to its positive impact on facilitating discussion and negative impact on capturing students' attention. In this study, it showed students' concentration problem does not have a significant relationship with online learning (Lent & Brown, 1996; Nauta & Epperson, 2003). Instead, this study showed that online platforms offer a variety of tools to ensure students on track and engage in the lessons. The positive learning environment fostered by online learning influences language teachers' self-efficacy beliefs positively (Bandura, 1997; Lent & Brown, 1996, 2008; Robert & Brown, 2013). The successful online teaching experiences constitute experiences of prior accomplishments and become a strong predictor of future accomplishment, resulting in a decision of continuing online teaching among

language teachers (Lent & Brown, 1996, 2008; Robert & Brown, 2013).

5.1.1 Greater Power from Teachers

Previous studies (Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005, 2010; Stodel & Thompson, 2006) showed that teachers expressed worries on students' attention and concentration due to their physical absence in online learning. This study found that there is no significant relationship between students' attention span and their learning outcomes (Lent & Brown, 1996; Lent et al., 2003). One said,

"Good students are always good. Mischievous students are always mischievous. It's not related to online or traditional teaching... If they want to learn, they learn no matter it is online or face-to-face." (Sam, Hong Kong)

Some participants shared similar views. For example, another participant, Jason, said,

"It is not about whether they [students] can focus during the whole online session. It's about whether they want to focus... In classrooms students can also be distracted if they are bored. They can be daydreaming... You can't really tell..." (Jason, New Zealand)

However, online platforms offer some functions, which serve as an indicator of how actively students participate in lessons (Dos Santos, 2019; Jurkovič, 2019; Manegre & Sabiri, 2020). Previous studies (Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005) suggested that these technologies allow teachers to have more power to control their lessons. This study affirms that language teachers found such tools are effective means to keep students on tasks. One said,

"Zoom has got an attention tracker and video recording function. It's good... I remind my students that the app can track and record their performance... Another app ClassIn allows students to collaborate to write a text. You can see real-time what they are writing... That's the evidence proving they're working..." (Melina, Australia)

Previous studies suggested that teachers' greater leadership role can facilitate discussions better (Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005). This study affirmed such finding as participants suggested that online platforms' instant video and audio sharing functions can ensure students' engagement (Dos Santos, 2019; Jurkovič, 2019). These features grant teachers to have greater administrative power to enforce classroom discipline and foster a better environment for class discussions. One participant

shared his view on students' positive learning attitude. One said,

"I asked my students to switch on their webcams. Then I can make sure that they sit still. This can ensure they are engaging in the class... This is the respect they should pay to the speaker." (Sam, Hong Kong)

Another participant, Natasha, reinforced such finding that features like muting participants in teleconferencing platform could create a better learning environment. She said,

"Sometimes in classrooms, students tend to have silly arguments or off-track discussions. In Zoom It seems I can manage them better. While I am giving my instructions, I can mute all the participants to ensure them are in a quiet environment and... focus on my teaching. I unmuted all participants for Q&A or discussion time." (Natalie, Russia)

Reflected on the previous studies (Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005), this study affirmed that online learning platforms offer video recording, tracking and text collaboration functions to allow greater control power for language teachers. According to the SCCT, teachers' job satisfaction and professional identity can be boosted due to better classroom management (Lent & Brown, 1996, 2008; Lent et al., 2003). The findings of this study aligned with such hypothesis. Due to a surge in job satisfaction, language teachers are more likely to continue using online learning platforms (Lent & Brown, 1996, 2008; Lent et al., 2003).

5.1.2 Greater Student Engagement

Previous studies (Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005; Grant & Lee, 2014) suggested that interaction is a cornerstone of educational experience, and technologies provide great possibilities in communications. Educators enjoy a more democratic approach in teaching, and this can engage students to develop a higher-order and more critical discussions without pressure (Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005; Grant & Lee, 2014). The findings in this study affirmed with the previous studies (Blizak et al., 2020; Ellis, 2004; Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005) that online learning can build a community of higher-cognitive inquiries. One said,

"I changed a bit of the class structure. Before [the pandemic], I did the reading with students in-class... English is not their first language. They didn't want to read aloud. They were afraid of making mistakes... Now I can assign the reading as pre-task... They do it at home. I put more mini-

discussions in the lessons... Students like it... They feel more free to share and talk. They are not afraid that they will be judged because of mispronunciation. I'm so proud of them... they volunteered some great ideas..." (Natalie, Russia)

The findings suggested such community is built due to a better lesson structure in online platform. With a better structure, students feel more comfortable to input information to construct knowledge. A successful language learning experience emphasises on getting one's meaning across and convey information (Canale & Swain, 1980; Skehan, 2003). This study also showed that some other features in other online teaching platforms also fosters a positive learning environment by enacting positive reinforcement and giving rewards to actively-participated students (Lent & Brown, 1996, 2008; Lent et al., 2003). One said:

"ClassIn [an online teaching platform] has a feature giving trophies...I awarded each student a trophy when they completed a task or answered a question... Younger students are excited with that... They like the animation and sound effects when they were awarded with trophies. They asked for more." (Melina, Australia)

In a favourable learning environment, students can develop confidence from positive experience, which serves as a motivation in further language acquisition (Peirce, 1995). This study showed that online learning enabled students to engage in the lessons more actively and language teachers utilised the lesson structure and in-app features to attain their teaching goals. As a result, more effective communications, which is an important learning outcome of language education, creates a positive learning environment (Hyland, 2007; Skehan, 2003). According to the SCCT, a more favourable contextual environment makes language teacher perceive their experiences positively (Lent & Brown, 1996, 2008; Lent et al., 2003). Reflected in their positive affections and confidence, it can be seen that such successful experiences boost their self-efficacy, and they can expect a similarly successful teaching outcome in the future (Lent & Brown, 1996, 2008; Lent et al., 2003). As a result, they are more willing to continue their online teaching in future.

5.2 Better Well-being: Reasons for Continuing Online Teaching

Previous studies (Hebert & Worthy, 2001; Iivari et al., 2020; MacIntyre et al., 2020) suggested that an increase of challenging workloads and a blurred line

between home and work could lead to frustration among teachers. This study showed another perspective that language teachers found online teaching lessened their workload and boosted their work efficiency. Besides, language teachers could also benefit from working from home to obtain a work-life balance. With insights from the SCCT, the researcher concluded that online teaching can boost language teachers' well-being as they can manage their life, time and teaching more efficiently (Lent & Brown, 1996, 2008; Lent, 2004). The higher work efficiency and attainment of both work and personal goals foster language teachers' positive outcome expectations on personal and job satisfaction to decide on continuing online teaching (Bandura, 1986, 1997; Lent & Brown, 1996, 2008; Lent, 2004).

5.2.1 Work Efficiency

Previous studies (Iivari et al., 2020; MacIntyre et al., 2020) indicated that teachers' work efficiency was negatively affected due to the extra time needed to prepare for lessons and personalised assignments in distant learning. However, in this study, the researcher found that online teaching brings a surge in work efficiency, which is one of their reasons for continuing using online teaching. On the other hand, this study affirmed some of the previous findings (Blizak et al., 2020; Iivari et al., 2020) that online teachings can boost their work efficiency with a mastery of technologies and utilisation of teaching time. Participants agreed that online teaching boosted their working efficiency as more time could be spent on teaching-related activities. One said,

"I use Google Classroom to collect and return their homework...No hassle... I haven't been that efficient during my 20 years of teaching career. I'm superb in marking students' writing... I can mark seven pieces of Secondary Six writing, five pieces of Secondary Five writing and integrated tasks for each form..." (Sam, Hong Kong)

Another participant also advocated with a similar view:

"In the online lesson, I can instantly access their classwork and give feedback. I don't have to mark them after the lessons... Once I switch off the camera, I can send the annotated notes back to students...It's fast." (Melina, Australia)

Previous literature (Acton & Glasgow, 2015; Hastings & Bham, 2003) indicated that teachers with greater well-being would think positively about the demands of the job and a sense of professional competence. They attained happiness when they achieve their pedagogic goals (Acton & Glasgow,

2015). Aligned with the SCCT hypothesis (Lent & Brown, 1996, 2008; Lent et al., 2005), this study showed that online teaching yields language teachers' job satisfaction as working from home provides goal-relevant supports. Such positive affections from the progress and successful attainment of the work goals foster a self-aiding effect on future choice on online teaching (Acton & Glasgow, 2015; Lent et al., 1994, 2005; Lent & Brown, 2008).

Apart from greater engagement in teaching-related activities, many participants also expressed that minimising the time on teaching non-related duties such as administrative work, managing student discipline outside classroom can boost their work efficiency. One said,

"I'm so happy that I don't have to patrol around during lunchtime to keep students in the classrooms... School office is closed. There are no students at school. There are almost no administrative duties and meetings..." (Sam, Hong Kong)

Another participant, Natalie, also echoed with a similar statement. She said,

"Now there are no more chores like cleaning class and yard duty. I don't need to attend unscheduled meetings... You know... they are rather meaningless." (Natalie, Russia)

In short, participants in this study believed that online teaching could boost their work efficiency by maximising the time on desirable teaching-related activities and minimising the time on undesirable teaching non-related activities. According to the SCCT, making progress towards one's work goal can obtain well-being (Lent & Brown, 1996, 2008; Lent et al., 2005). The results of this study showed that online learning environment is a supportive environment in which language teachers are more likely to reach pleasurable positive emotional states and achieve their career goals (Lent & Brown, 1996, 2008; Lent et al., 2005).

5.2.2 Work-life Balance

Previous studies (Acton & Glasgow, 2015; Burke et al., 1996; Hastings & Bham, 2003; Iivari et al., 2020; Leehu & Ditzka, 2017; Tsarkov & Hoblyk, 2016) suggested that teachers have to spare more time on preparation in an online learning environment, and their well-being is greatly affected by increased workloads, leading to stress, burn-out and emotional and mental exhaustion. This study, on the other hand, reflected that there is a positive relationship between online learning and language teachers' well-being due to the attainment of personal goals (Lent & Brown,

1996, 2008; Lent et al., 2005). Participants expressed that work-life balance could be achieved through working from home. Through online teaching, they could manage their time better. One said,

"I can utilise my time better... Before the COVID-19 [pandemic], lots of time was spent on administrative work, going to school... It's tiring... Now I don't have to travel to work and switch classrooms [between lessons]... I only have to work half day." (Sam, Hong Kong)

Another participant, Melina, resonated with a similar view. Besides, she also expressed the proximity to home enable her to fulfil her personal goals. She said,

"I really wish to doing online [teaching] forever... I meant I don't want the pandemic to continue... But it's really good to stay at home to work. Back in the days at school, I could only have little time for lunch... Sometimes I had sports or yard duties... Now once I switch off the cam, I can prepare my lunch... Hot meals..." (Melina, Australia)

The fondness of working from home due to the attainment of personal goals can be observed among the participants (Lent & Brown, 1996, 2008; Lent et al., 2005). For example, one participant, Jason, also expressed the flexible working hours enriched his family life. He said,

"I stay at home... He [the participant's son] is happy to see me all day round... We play. We cook... I take him to sleep... Then I get back to work at night after my son has slept... I feel like I'm Dad, a real one... I like my family... if possible, I want to keep this [online learning]." (Jason, New Zealand)

The above findings affirmed with the previous studies suggesting that flexible work arrangements and spending more hours at home can reduce the teachers' work stress (Cinamon 2005, Frone 1997). According to Bandura (1986) and Lent & Brown (Lent & Brown, 1996), personal goals play a key role in career choice making as it influences individuals' perceptions of outcomes. The positive relationship between work-life balance and personal goal attainment found in this study affirmed with the previous study (Guo & Liu, 2020; Johari et al., 2016) that work-life balance harmonises language teachers' work and personal life, enriches their life experiences and they become more motivated and productive. With the lens of the SCCT, the perceptions and behaviours affect work and life satisfaction, and hence language teachers are more likely to continue online teaching (Lent & Brown, 1996, 2008; Lent et al., 2005).

5.3 Negative Teaching Outcome Expectation: Reasons for Stopping Online Teaching

Scholars (Dungus, 2013; Reeves, 2000) identified that the major directions of assessments included cognitive assessment (i.e. assessment on students' higher-order thinking skills), performance assessment (i.e. engagement in activities) and portfolio assessment (i.e. reviewing both students' work as process and product). In previous sections of this paper, together with some previous literature (Blizak et al., 2020; Dos Santos, 2019; Iivari et al., 2020), language teachers affirmed that cognitive and performance assessments could be achieved via features of the online teaching platforms. However, when it comes to portfolio assessment, language teachers expressed difficulties in evaluating students' learning process and achievements. Such difficulties induce self-doubt and make them postulate a negative outcome expectation (Lent & Brown, 1996). Such negative outcome expectation, according to SCCT, will have a self-hindering effect on teachers' performance attainment and hampered them to further continue online teaching (Lent & Brown, 1996, 2008; Lent et al., 2006).

5.3.1 Difficulty in Evaluating Students' Learning Outcomes

One of the purposes of formative assessment is to provide on-going feedback and evaluate their learning outcome (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Lawton et al., 2012; Oganje et al., 2018). Previous literature (Hwang et al., 2017; Oganje et al., 2018) suggested that features in online platforms such as discussion forums can allow teachers access students' learning process. In contrast, the researcher found out in this research that language teachers did not feel online platforms are effective means to access students' instant learning outcome and such uncertainty arose from a limitation of instant evaluation of students' learning outcome. One participant said,

"Sometimes teaching is like a monologue... Teaching is done in one-way... I have covered all the contents... When I deliver the content well, I have the illusion that I teach well. In fact, it is hard to know how much students have learnt." (Sam, Hong Kong)

A similar view is shared by another participant:

"I feel insecure because I can never really tell how well they take everything in...I might prefer going back to face-to-face teaching... With more

interactions, I know how they learn." (Catherine, Canada)

From the findings, this study concluded that language teachers were sceptical towards students' learning outcome when effective communications or active discussions did not happen in their online lessons (MacIntyre et al., 2020; Perera-Diltz & Moe, 2014). As a result, they felt hard to evaluate students' learning outcome in the class. Reflected in previous studies on learning outcomes (Looney et al., 2018; Skehan, 2003; Taylor & Tyler, 2011), this study affirmed that when teachers are unable to develop knowledge on how far students had reached, they perceive that is a failure damaging their professional identity. From the lens of the SCCT, the findings in this study show that such failing experiences can create self-doubt and constitute a negative learning experience leading to an avoidance of the similar future task, i.e. online teaching in this case (Lent & Brown, 1996, 2008; Lent et al., 2006).

5.3.2 Difficulties in Implementing Summative Assessment

Summative assessment includes examinations and tests to measure students' learning outcome and achievement (Knight, 2002; Perera-Diltz & Moe, 2014). Previous studies (Chiu et al., 2007; Perera-Diltz & Moe, 2014) indicated that employing security measures like lock-down web browsers or text comparison tools to avoid plagiarism could ensure the fairness and security of exam procedures. The findings in this study suggested another view that language teachers felt fairness was a concern when they had to conduct summative assessments. Participants also pointed out that assessment could be a challenge on an online platform as students' integrity and honesty were hard to guarantee. One said,

"Learning is less effective when it's something related to assessment... and some tasks that require a lot of routine practice...like dictations... It's hard to manage. You can't make sure students aren't cheating." (Catherine, Canada)

Another participant, Melina, also expressed a similar concern. She said,

"It's hard to do the half-yearly online. You don't know whether they rely on some external support to complete their assessment. Though there is a declaration form, it doesn't mean anything. It's an honour system anyways." (Melina, Australia)

From the findings, language teachers feel powerless in assessing their students. Reflected by the previous literature (Lynn, 2002; Peeler, 2002), this

study affirms that powerlessness in quality control can lead to doubts, turning to an erosion of language teachers' beliefs and values due to the diminishing effectiveness in teaching. The SCCT suggested that when language teachers experience self-doubt, they are more likely to postulate a negative image that they will be unable to attain teaching goals in future (Lent & Brown, 1996, 2008; Lent et al., 2005). Such postulation can lower their self-efficacy and perceive online teaching as a threat and hence more likely they choose not to persist in online teaching due to the projected failure (Lent & Brown, 1996, 2008; Lent et al., 2005).

6 CONCLUSION

This study is a unique international one in examining the interrelation between personal and contextual variables influencing language teachers' perception of online teaching by adopting a SCCT lens. Nevertheless, it shows certain limitations. First, most of the participants are coming from developed countries. The teachers' teaching experience may be limited by the relatively higher socio-economic backgrounds of the teachers and students. Further comparative studies can be conducted across higher and lower socio-economic background to gain an understanding on the social equity issues (Brown & Lent, 2019; Flores & Day, 2006; Lent & Brown, 2008). Besides, this study also shows another limitation as it focuses on the language teachers' online teaching experience. Further studies can also be done to examine the experiences of teachers teaching other subjects such as STEM. They can look into whether certain significant variables identified in this study are subject-based or universal (Lent et al., 2000; Robert & Brown, 2013). Despite the limitations mentioned above, the findings of this study shed light on language teachers' difficulties in evaluating students' learning outcomes and implementing summative assessments using online teaching. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a sudden revolutionary change to both the society and education. Such insight can be useful for education policy-makers and school management in reviewing the current policies and implementation of online learning to attain both fairness and learning efficiency, and probe into the possibility of implementing online teaching as a regular component in the curriculum.

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