

# Social media, professional understanding and professional identities amongst Vietnamese ESOL teachers

Anh Thao Ngo & James Underwood

---

## Abstract

Vietnam is one of the world's fastest-growing economies, and English proficiency has been acknowledged as crucial to Vietnam's development, leading to the implementation of the National Foreign Languages 2020 project. However, despite the emphasis placed on the professional development of teachers in Vietnam, the effectiveness of centralized and school-level professional development programmes has been questioned. Parallel to these formal structures, groups created on social media platforms have gained popularity among educators in Vietnam. The educators who engage with and create these communities demonstrate autonomy and agency over their own development. Previous research has highlighted the positive impact of social media-based communities of practice on teachers' professional growth, but little is known about their specific effect in Vietnam or in emerging economies more broadly, nor has the inter-generational conversation facilitated by such communities been previously explored. This study takes one step in furthering our understanding within this important context by examining the role of autonomously created social media communities for professional development among Vietnamese ESOL teachers. It revealed that teachers valued these virtual communities for enhancing knowledge, networking, job opportunities, research ideas, and mental health support, and also that membership positively shaped their professional identity. These findings suggest that social media can effectively support teachers' development, and while such communities could pose a challenge for mainstream, formally created communities, policymakers should encourage their use for professional development. As one of the world's fastest-growing economies, research into the Vietnamese context also has deeper relevance as a window into global change.

---

## Keywords:

communities of practice, social media, teachers' professional knowledge, teachers' professional identities, Vietnamese teachers of English.

## Social media, professional understanding and professional identities amongst Vietnamese ESOL teachers

**Abstract:** Vietnam is one of the world's fastest-growing economies, and English proficiency has been acknowledged as crucial to Vietnam's development, leading to the implementation of the National Foreign Languages 2020 project. However, despite the emphasis placed on the professional development of teachers in Vietnam, the effectiveness of centralized and school-level professional development programmes has been questioned. Parallel to these formal structures, groups created on social media platforms have gained popularity among educators in Vietnam. The educators who engage with and create these communities demonstrate autonomy and agency over their own development. Previous research has highlighted the positive impact of social media-based communities of practice on teachers' professional growth, but little is known about their specific effect in Vietnam or in emerging economies more broadly, nor has the inter-generational conversation facilitated by such communities been previously explored. This study takes one step in furthering our understanding within this important context by examining the role of autonomously created social media communities for professional development among Vietnamese ESOL teachers. It revealed that teachers valued these virtual communities for enhancing knowledge, networking, job opportunities, research ideas, and mental health support, and also that membership positively shaped their professional identity. These findings suggest that social media can effectively support teachers' development, and while such communities could pose a challenge for mainstream, formally created communities, policymakers should encourage their use for professional development. As one of the world's fastest-growing economies, research into the Vietnamese context also has deeper relevance as a window into global change.

**Keywords:** communities of practices, social media, teachers' professional knowledge, teachers' professional identities, Vietnamese teachers of English,

### Introduction

This study examines how Vietnamese teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) use social media to enhance their professional knowledge and professional identities. This research is significant given Vietnam's status as one of the world's fastest developing economies and its emphasis on English proficiency as a socioeconomic and political driver (Le & Chen, 2018; Nguyen & Hamid, 2021). This has been reflected in reformist national programmes such as the National Foreign Languages 2020 Project for the period 2008 – 2020 (VGP, 2008), later extended to Project 2025 (VGP, 2017).

The terms TESOL and ESOL are used throughout this article, as they are used throughout government, university and school generated documents in Vietnam. The acronym VCoP (virtual community of practice) is also used.

While substantial resources, 80% of the government's total teacher education budget, have been consistently invested, for successive years in centralized teacher training in Vietnam (Le, 2019), these initiatives often adopt a top-down approach that may not effectively meet teachers' specific needs (González et al., 2002; Nguyen et al., 2020). Meanwhile, research has suggested that Vietnamese teachers are exceptionally engaged in self-created professional communities linked by social media that function in parallel to conventionally structured forms of continuous professional

development (CPD) (Mai et al., 2020; Diep, 2023; Le et al., 2024). Such research has also found that this form of agentic professional development particularly reflects the nature and context of teaching in Vietnam: Vietnamese teachers are highly educated, highly motivated, but don't yet have an infrastructure which they perceive as fully fulfilling their development needs (Le et al., 2024).

Professional development is a continuous process crucial for teachers' growth, which enhances their knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Kedir & Gutema, 2022). It enables teachers to acquire new skills, stay abreast of educational trends, and advance their career prospects (Shing et al., 2015; Nugroho, 2018), ultimately benefiting student outcomes (Fletcher-Wood & Zuccollo, 2020; Tran et al., 2021), strengthening the whole education system (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Truong et al., 2021), and supporting teacher retention and academic standing (Le & Ho, 2022). It is therefore already a widely researched area. However, research has predominantly focused on the global north and, to some extent, on centrally created programmes. This article's focus on an emerging economy from the global south, specifically Vietnam, and on autonomously and independently created groups, therefore responds to a significant gap in our understanding.

Research consistently indicates that effective professional development, of any type, should incorporate focused content, active participation, teamwork, demonstration of effective practices, mentoring, feedback, reflection, and sustained engagement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Successful programmes emphasise knowledge acquisition, skills development, and behavioural change (Sims et al., 2021), while also recognising teachers' multifaceted roles as employees, instructors, and lifelong learners (González et al., 2002). This includes attention to areas such as teaching methods, language competence, and reflective practice. In other words, professional development programmes should meet teachers' expectations, which might vary based on their teaching experiences and educational backgrounds (Mekie & Gezahegn, 2023).

Most professional development programmes for Vietnamese ESOL teachers are created and led at a government or institutional level (Nguyen et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2022). At the government level, one commonly used approach follows a 'pyramid' model, where selected teachers receive training from the Ministry of Education and Training and then train other teachers in their respective schools (Nguyen et al., 2020; Le et al., 2022). This strategy aims to create widespread impact across the teaching community (Vo, 2022). Institutions, meanwhile, often offer various activities such as classroom observations, lesson study and critical friend groups (O'Leary et al., 2023; Nguyen et al., 2022).

However, the effectiveness of these methods for the real-world practice of individual teachers has been questioned (González et al., 2002; Nguyen et al., 2020).

Challenges include limited time, personal constraints such as limited technological skills, and financial resources (Pham et al., 2023), and may be exacerbated by a disconnect between programme content and teachers' actual needs (Guskey, 2002; Forrest, 2018; Nguyen et al., 2020). At school level, lesson study, where teachers collaboratively design, teach and refine a single lesson in their faculty, is a frequent institutional practice in Vietnam (Nguyen et al., 2022). However, the potential stress, that teachers may experience, when engaging in lesson study has been explored in a range of contexts (Kanellopoulou & Darra, 2019; Schipper et al., 2020); and this may be exacerbated in Confucian societies such as Vietnam, which have a cultural emphasis on the importance hierarchy (Minh et al., 2018; Nguyen et al., 2024).

Similarly, while critical friends groups, in which groups of teachers critically reflect on their educational practices and make appropriate changes or revisions (Kuh, 2016), can be valuable, they can also generate stress (Minh et al., 2018). These shortcomings suggest that established programmes, while they can and often do improve professional understanding, also often do not fully meet teachers' diverse expectations (Cao et al., 2016; Pham, 2021). This has led to calls for teachers to take a more active role in their own professional learning (Hayes, 2019; Nguyen et al., 2020).

### Virtual communities of practice

Virtual communities of practice (VCoPs) are online groups of individuals who share a common interest or problem and deepen their knowledge through ongoing interaction (Wenger et al., 2002). Rooted in situated learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and Vygotsky's cognitive learning theory (1978), VCoPs emphasize the importance of social interaction and collaboration (Handley et al., 2006). Effective communities of practice are characterized by a shared domain of interest, a community engaged in collective activities and mutual support, and a shared practice where members' experiences form a collective repertoire (Wenger, 2011).

Existing research underscores the value of online communities for teacher development globally (Macià & García, 2016; Bett & Makewa, 2020). Studies from Belgium (Muls et al., 2019), China (Xue et al., 2021), and North Macedonia (Underwood & Joshevska; 2019) have shown that online social media platforms can foster collaboration, information sharing, and peer support. Community membership also potentially promotes teachers' critical thinking skills (Brandt, 2006), and positively influences their professional identity formation (Duong & Duong, 2020; Kiss, 2020; Suarez & McGrath, 2022; Hong, 2024) and identity reconstruction (Toom, 2019).

In his influential work on communities of practice, Wenger (1998) argued that communities which effectively support learning also contribute to the positive construction of identity. In such communities, learners develop both their individual identity,

defined by Wenger as their sense of self as unique individuals shaped by personal traits, values, experiences, and self-concept, and their relational identity, understood as their sense of who they are through relationships with others and the social roles they inhabit (Wenger, 2011). Although Wenger was not writing about communities facilitated by social media specifically, other writers have found this same connection between professional communities and professional identity to exist online (Abedini et al., 2021).

Much of the existing research on professional development, through communities of practice, whether formally established or agentically formed, has been conducted within the context of the global north. Research in Vietnam, however, needs to be carefully contextualised, as Vietnamese society is shaped by Confucian cultural traditions that emphasise respect for hierarchy and societal roles (Truong & Underwood, 2023; Nguyen et al., 2025). These values are reflected in everyday language use, where different forms of address are employed depending on age and relative seniority, including within institutional settings such as workplaces (Oanh, 2015). It is therefore reasonable to expect that such cultural norms may influence interactional patterns, participation, and power relations within communities of practice, shaping how professional learning is enacted in this context (Hoang et al., 2023).

Despite the advantages and possibilities that virtual professional communities offer, challenges including: time constraints, technological proficiency, competitive environments (Abedini et al., 2021), and the underestimation of knowledge-sharing activities (Farahian & Parhamnia, 2022) can hinder their effectiveness. More broadly, participation in social media-based professional communities is shaped by additional tensions. Engagement may be uneven due to disparities in digital literacy, access, and institutional support (Yan et al. 2023), while the informal nature of these spaces can lead to superficial exchanges or the circulation of unverified practices (Kaufmann & Vallade, 2020). Power dynamics and self-presentation pressures may privilege certain voices, and algorithmic curation can reinforce echo chambers rather than critical dialogue (Chueca Del Cerro, 2024).

In Vietnam, social media is emerging as a valuable tool for teachers' learning (Le et al., 2024; Ngo & Nguyen, 2023), yet limited research has examined Vietnamese ESOL teachers' experiences within these online communities.

## Summary and research questions

In summary, this study aims to fill the research gap defined above by exploring the specific role that social media plays in the professional growth of ESOL teachers in Vietnam; specifically in enabling the autonomous, inter-generational, teacher-led creation of communities with the intention of professional development. Generational

diversity within this study is defined by years of teaching experience. This is an appropriate way to contextualise this within a Vietnamese context in which Confucian norms mean that experience is highly regarded but can also lead to power distance within workplaces (Nguyen, et al., 2024). The study addresses two research questions: (1) *What knowledge do Vietnamese ESOL teachers expect to share and to gain from TESOL community groups on social media?* (2) *What other gains are there from group membership?*

By exploring these questions, the research highlights how virtual communities can supplement traditional training and support Vietnamese TESOL teachers in navigating professional challenges and refining their teaching identities.

Although this study focuses solely on Vietnam, research into English language learning in the country has clear global relevance. Vietnam's population is larger than that of any European country other than Russia, and its economy has consistently grown faster than that of any European country (IMF, 2025). Its scale, combined with this rapid economic growth, therefore makes understanding Vietnam especially important for those seeking to understand education, or indeed any aspect of society, in developing economies in the 2020s (Lim et al., 2025). However, beyond this, the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training has set out distinctly ambitious, long-term, and relatively well-funded goals for English language learning (Tran et al., 2022). Therefore, just as Vietnamese education policy has the potential to influence education policy globally, developments in English language education in Vietnam can likewise provide insights with significance beyond the national context.

## Methodology

This study adopted a case study approach, which allowed in-depth exploration of the phenomenon in a real-life context (Crowe et al., 2011; Yin, 2017). The study focused on a single social media-based community. This group has over 23,000 members and is widely used by Vietnamese ESOL teachers for professional development. Its prevalence among Vietnamese educators made this group a suitable example of social networking for teacher professional growth (Mai et al., 2020).

The focus on a single case study community enabled both feasibility of access and later in depth analysis; it does though position this study as an ideas generating study, one that has the potential to contribute to further debate rather than a study capable of more secure generalizations (Robson & McCartan, 2024). From this positioning the decision to limit the sample size to sixty and to recruit through self-selection and self-reporting are logically coherent, and further embed this study within the genre of voice-research, whether that be student or, as in this case, teacher voice (Gillett-Swan & Baroutsis 2024).

According to Yin (2017), case study research is appropriate when the boundaries between a phenomenon and its context are not sharply defined. In this study, the phenomenon is ESOL teachers' use of an informal professional community to enhance their professional understanding and identities, while the context is the social platform, where these interactions occur naturally. Previous research has shown that teachers' professional learning and identity development happen organically in both face-to-face settings (Alkahtani, 2024) and online communities (Mai et al., 2020; Farahian & Parhamnia, 2022). Consequently, there are no sharply defined boundaries between the phenomenon and its context in this research. In other words, this study satisfies the conditions outlined by Yin (2017) for using a case study approach.

Questionnaires were used to gather both qualitative and quantitative data. Initial closed questions explored the expectations of members of this virtual professional community. This was followed by qualitative open-ended questions, examining the diverse perspectives of the participating ESOL teachers. Specifically, why the information gained in the group is beneficial for them, and why it helps them to enhance their professional knowledge and identities. The questionnaire was distributed through an online post in the studied group, whose members work in both private and state-owned institutions. In the post, a brief description of the research approach and purpose was provided. 60 participants completed the questionnaires within two weeks: 36 of whom were novice teachers who had less than five years of teaching experience, and 24 of whom were experienced teachers who had at least five years of teaching experience.

Vietnam is a Confucian culture in which experience is highly valued (Truong & Underwood, 2023; Nguyen et al., 2024). This means that seniority is closely associated with authority, professional validity and moral standing in educational settings. A teachers' experience, thus, indicates their hierarchical standing and influence within professional communities rather than merely describing a career stage. As a result, a division based on years of teaching experience is used as the analytical lens through which inter-generational perceptions are compared. It is also unusual in Vietnam to enter the teaching profession later in life. Therefore, as would be expected, all the novice teachers involved in this study were younger than their more experienced colleagues.

This study followed the British Educational Research Association's (BERA) Ethical Guidelines (2024). Participants were informed of their rights, including consent, transparency, withdrawal, and data confidentiality. A bilingual consent form, approved by the group administrators, was provided online to ensure participants understood the research scope and implications. Data collection remained anonymous and data was securely stored, with survey duration minimised to respect participants' time constraints. These ethical practices fostered a safe and respectful research environment. Ethical approval was granted by the University of Northampton.

For the qualitative section of the questionnaire, a thematic analysis was employed, which enabled the researchers to identify, evaluate, and present the key themes from the data, and to explore and understand the shared meanings and experiences of the target population (Braun et al., 2019). The six steps of Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis were followed: (1) reading for initial patterns and familiarizing with the data by tabulating participants' responses; (2) generating codes using colour-coding; (3) searching for themes by grouping related codes into overarching patterns within a revised thematic table; (4) reviewing the themes for coherence and consistency; (5) defining and naming the themes; and (6) the final stage of selection for inclusion in this written account.

## Results

In the first part of this results section, four tables are presented which explore the following themes, which are, as follows: what motivates Vietnamese teachers, including both novice and experienced teachers, to engage with professional communities; what forms of knowledge they value; and who they value gaining advice and knowledge from.

**Table 1**  
*participants' expectations from social media-based groups.*

Motivation	Novice Teachers (n=36) Responses* (n= 60)	Experienced Teachers (n=24) Responses* (n=42)
Seeking advice from experienced educators	35 (97%)	23 (96%)
Sharing knowledge with other educators	15 (42%)	11 (46%)
Sharing personal experiences	9 (25%)	6 (25%)
Other	1 (3%)	2 (8%)

*\*note: the bracketed percentage indicates the percentage of participants selecting that option. However, participants could choose more than one response.*

As Table 1 indicates, the primary motivation for both the novice and experienced participants engaging in virtual communities of practice (VCoPs) is to seek advice from other colleagues. However, there was also a desire to share their knowledge and

experience. The importance of participating in this two-way process was recognized almost equally, inter-generationally, by novice and experienced teachers.

**Table 2**  
*TESOL professionals' expectations of gains from membership of a virtual community of practice.*

Type of Advice	Novice Teachers (n = 36) Responses* (n = 159)	Experienced Teachers (n = 24) Responses* (n = 87)
Teaching theories	20 (55%)	12 (50%)
Teaching experiences	35 (97%)	17 (71%)
Teaching strategies	29 (80%)	16 (67%)
Teaching materials	29 (80%)	18 (75%)
Career guidance	22 (61%)	5 (21%)
Professional development programmes	24 (67%)	18 (75%)
Other	0 (0%)	1 (4%)

*\*note: the bracketed percentage indicates the percentage of participants selecting that option. However, participants could choose more than one response.*

The table above illustrates the types of knowledge the group members expected to gain through interacting as members. As it shows, both novice and experienced teachers prioritised gaining practical advice, particularly about teaching experiences and strategies. The most commonly chosen reason that novice teachers gave for joining this social media-based community was seeking advice about teaching experiences; 35 (97%) of novice participants indicated this, while only 20 of them (55%) desired guidance on teaching theories. However, this still indicates that a relatively large number of the participants are interested in learning more about the deeper pedagogical underpinnings of their teaching practice.

Novice teachers also expressed a greater desire for career guidance compared to experienced teachers, possibly reflecting their early career challenges. Conversely, experienced teachers exhibited a higher interest in information about professional development programmes

**Table 3**  
*the knowledge TESOL professionals want to share with other educators via virtual communities of practice.*

Knowledge Type	Novice Teachers (n = 36) Responses* (n = 83)	Experienced Teachers (n = 24) Responses* (n = 56)
Teaching theories	12 (33%)	6 (25%)
Teaching experience	24 (67%)	20 (83%)
Teaching strategies	11 (30%)	7 (29%)
Teaching materials	18 (50%)	10 (41%)
Career guidance	11 (30%)	5 (21%)
Professional development programmes	6 (17%)	7 (29%)
Other	1 (3%)	1 (4%)

*\*note: the bracketed percentage indicates the percentage of participants selecting that option. However, participants could choose more than one response.*

The first two tables illustrate the knowledge that these group members expected to gain through membership. However, these groups are intended to facilitate interactive processes in which members are expected to share knowledge as well as gain. This third table (above), therefore, illustrates the knowledge that members expected to share rather than to gain. Both groups (novice teachers and experienced teachers) prioritised sharing teaching experiences, with 67% of novice (n=24) and 83% of experienced teachers (n=20) selecting this option. Notably, mirroring the knowledge that they expected to gain, novice teachers also showed less interest, than experienced teachers, in sharing information about professional development programmes.

Overall, these ESOL teachers, participating in autonomously created VCoPs, primarily wished to provide practical advice for peers, with the findings highlighting a clear preference for this over theoretical insights. Notably and importantly many of the novice teachers perceived themselves as having valuable knowledge to share despite their relative inexperience.

**Table 4**  
*perceived value of the knowledge and experience shared by different types of members*

Information Type	Novice Teachers (n=36) Responses* (n=141)	Experienced Teachers (n=24) Responses* (n=92)
Knowledge shared by members	35 (97%)	22 (91%)
Experience shared by members	36 (100%)	23 (96%)
Knowledge shared by group admins	35 (97%)	24 (100%)
Experience shared by group admins	35 (97%)	23 (96%)

*\*note: the bracketed percentage indicates the percentage of participants selecting that option. However, participants could choose more than one response.*

In this final table the distinction between ‘admins’ and ‘members’ is significant because admins, within the group that all participants belong to, tend to be more deeply involved in the community and more experienced professionals. Most group admins possess over 10 years of teaching experience and at least a master’s degree in TE-SOL. However, as the table illustrates, these participants appreciated information from both group members and admins, with only a slight preference for admin-shared content. One strength of these communities it seems is even the newest members are valued and affirmed.

## Results from the open-ended questions

In this second part of this results section, the qualitative results are presented based on the themes that emerged during the coding of this data.

### *Theme 1: Enhancing teaching practices and knowledge*

As is illustrated in the tables above. The participants placed a strong emphasis on enhancing their teaching practice through community membership. Therefore expectedly, most participants highlighted enhancing teaching practices and sharing knowledge as key reasons for joining social media-based communities within their qualitative answers too. Many mentioned aims like “*motivating students*”, exploring “*gamification*”, and addressing “*teaching difficulties*”. Some provided more detailed responses, noting that the community offered practical support and insights into teaching across different institutions. Notably, the novice teachers emphasized in their answers, their desire to learn from others, with statements such as: “*I very much want to learn from other experienced teachers.*” One participant described, as

important, gaining knowledge on “*reasonable ways to collect tuition fees from students*”, indicating that these communities both facilitate knowledge sharing and help build resilience and coping strategies in a complex profession.

As regards technology-related knowledge, specifically in light of Project 2025, mandating the integration of technology into English teaching in Vietnam (VGP, 2017), these communities occupy an increasingly significant role. Participants valued technology-related advice, including “*guidance for applying IT into teaching*” and highlighted the importance of practical advice that could translate virtual interactions into real-life activities. One participant emphasized that: “*there are some activities [that they had learned] that can bring virtual groups to real life*”.

Interestingly, experienced teachers, within the community, expressed a desire to learn from their less experienced colleagues, challenging the expectation that learning would primarily be, generationally, one-directional. As one experienced teacher remarked, “*Updates on new technologies, new applications from young teachers. These are the most valuable for me*”. The readiness of experienced teachers to learn from younger colleagues, especially about technology, underscores the value of the collaborative learning fostered within these communities.

### *Theme 2: Professional growth and career development*

The participants highly valued the group for its role in professional growth and career development, particularly in facilitating “*essential networking*”, a finding that was also clearly present in the quantitative data. They described how these connections not only enable collaboration but also lead to “*job opportunities*”, helping teachers gain access to positions aligned with their skills and aspirations, potentially leading to better-paying or more suitable roles.

Beyond job opportunities, these connections also enable teachers to enhance their understanding of the profession. One participant stated, “*The group helps me to connect with other English teachers across the country and learn more about the profession*”. By engaging with colleagues from diverse educational settings, these teachers described gaining insights into different administrative systems, school cultures, and development strategies across institutions, fostering a holistic view of career development and adaptability.

Participants also appreciated discussions beyond classroom strategies, including business insights such as “*managing a language centre*”, underscoring the multi-faceted professional development opportunities the group offers. Additionally, the participants also described how the community also supports teachers’ education and research pursuits. An experienced teacher remarked that they had “*gained some ideas for my research*”. They went on to describe how by engaging in small-scale

research, they could refine decision-making skills and implement innovative teaching strategies, contributing to both academic and practical applications.

Overall, beyond enhancing teaching practices, the teachers valued the group for networking opportunities, career perspectives, job leads, and research ideas. These elements they perceived as supportive of the development of their professional identities and of progression throughout their teaching careers.

### *Theme 3: Personal support and community engagement*

The two themes discussed earlier are instrumental and goal-focused. However, group membership had other less pragmatic reasons. This can be defined as; gaining a sense of community and identity through group membership alone, without a need for further external instrumental gains. This aspect represented a significant finding of the study and extended insights beyond that which was revealed by the quantitative data

The participants described how, through community membership, teachers could “connect with other English teachers across the country.”. Participants appreciated group membership because it helped them broaden their perspectives. They also described how this broadening happens thanks to the “*sharings of other peers*” or “*other group members*”, “*especially from experienced teachers*”. They further explained how they tended to learn actively by reflecting on their experiences rather than by consuming knowledge passively.

Through reflection, they could identify what information was beneficial and new for them. One participant noted: “*the things I have gained from this group help me not only to enhance my professional skills but also to develop a broader perspective on life through the numerous stories shared by group members*”. This highlights the value of peer sharing in fostering active learning and personal growth. Whilst an experienced teacher added, “*Sometimes I don't really need advice; I just read and learn from others' sharings*”. These comments reflect a shared purpose of enhancing knowledge and skills through interaction within the community.

Beyond professional development, participants valued the support the group offered. Reading other people's experiences helped normalize their personal struggles and fostered a sense of belonging. Supportive discussions, including about “*experiences with relieving stress from work, and tips on staying healthy while teaching*” were particularly appreciated. This suggests that these teachers seek not only pedagogical support but also strategies for maintaining well-being. Generally, these teachers, regardless of their level of experience, valued the group for both professional knowledge and personal support, which enhanced their well-being and, in turn, improved their confidence in their professional identity.

## Discussion

In answer to the research questions presented earlier: the participants in this study identified multiple expected gains from membership of virtual communities of practice (VCoPs). As regards knowledge: they expected to gain above all other forms: knowledge of teaching strategies, of others' teaching experiences and of teaching materials. However, they also expected to gain through group membership a sense of community and a stronger identity as teachers. This was the case inter-generationally for both novice and experienced teachers.

Their desired practical gains align with previous research that has indicated that advice-seeking is a key activity in online professional learning communities (Mai et al., 2020; Ngo & Nguyen, 2023); however, for these participants, this came through particularly strongly. These Vietnamese ESOL teachers, facing pressures from evolving educational policies and societal expectations to ensure student success, perceive advice from fellow teachers as crucial for overcoming challenges and maintaining teaching quality.

The participants specifically valued practical classroom knowledge that enhanced teaching practices. This does not mean though that they rejected the learning of pedagogical theory. It is simply that they prioritized it less. That it was also valued indicates that these teachers are highly sophisticated thinkers about their professional craft, keen to understand it at multiple levels. These findings challenge previous portrayals of English teacher communities in high pressure education systems as conformist and constrained (Pham, 2018). Instead, these teachers demonstrated agency, reflection, and autonomy, within virtual communities of practice (VCoPs) that foster knowledge sharing and the development of strong, confident professional identities.

Participants particularly emphasized the value of both theoretical and practical information when it directly improved students' academic performance. However, interestingly and in direct contrast to other related research (Nugroho, 2018), the studied community did not provide opportunities for teachers to improve their English proficiency, nor did the participants desire this. In this case, the goal of the community was to exchange teaching-related knowledge (rather than language competence). This may well reflect that these teachers already possess a high level of confidence in their level of English.

Beyond these practical gains, the participants view autonomously created VCoPs as dynamic communities, catering to their diverse professional, life long, development needs, including the need for community affirmation of their professional identity. This has also been found in studies in a European context (Underwood & Joshevska, 2019) that have suggested that such platforms fulfil a need for teacher growth and, at their best, foster a rich professional knowledge-sharing environment. For example,

the participants valued the support provided by the community to overcome stress; this finding corroborates earlier studies (Macià & García, 2016; Ngo & Nguyen, 2023) that emphasize the emotional support that VCoPs offer, particularly in high-pressure environments such as are usual in Vietnam. Another highly specific set of practical gains that the participants desired and gained from community membership related to career networking,

An important finding from this study was that for all the forms of knowledge provided by these groups, the reality of what the community provided consistently exceeded participants' initial expectations. This contrasts with research into traditional teacher development programmes, which world-wide have often been criticized for lacking relevance (Nguyen et al., 2020; González et al., 2002). In Vietnam, where "pyramid" model-driven training programmes dominate (Forrest, 2018; Guskey, 2002; Nguyen et al., 2020), VCoPs appear to deliver parallel practical and relevant information for ESOL teachers that centralized teacher education cannot entirely fulfil.

However, another important finding from this study, which contrasts with other research, was that the experienced teachers involved were also interested in learning, through these communities, about other formally created opportunities for development. These teachers in Vietnam are not rejectionist but see autonomously created online communities as part of a larger continuous professional development (CPD) landscape, which includes centralized, formally structured training as well. This has not been found in comparable studies in other countries and perhaps attests to the relatively higher quality of centralized training in Vietnam.

In summary, this study found that membership of VCoPs benefits Vietnamese ESOL teachers by fostering professional understanding and shaping their professional identities. The community provided four key affordances. First, contextual and cultural affordances that involved sharing experiences from diverse teaching settings. Second, critical reflective skills were developed as teachers engaged in reflective dialogue within the community. Third, collegial collaboration and professional relationships were strengthened through connections and networking, enabling members to interact and reinforce their identity as teachers. Finally, the supportive environment within the community offered both intellectual and emotional assistance, helping teachers navigate the pressures of Confucian social expectations and educational policies. All these have been found within communities in separate studies in other contexts (Toom, 2019; Suarez & McGrath; Pham, 2012; Hong, 2024), but the presence of all indicates the distinctly positive value placed upon the community by the participants in this study.

## Conclusion

This study examined how Vietnamese TESOL teachers use a large, teacher-created social media-based platform as a professional learning community to enhance their knowledge and shape their professional identities. It found that, for these teachers, regardless of age and experience, virtual communities of practice offer significant professional benefits, including: practical teaching advice, networking, job opportunities, research insights, mental health support and community affirmation. Participation fosters a supportive learning environment where teachers receive both intellectual and emotional support, reinforcing their awareness of their roles, responsibilities, values and value as English educators in Vietnam.

Within the context of research in the global north, these findings would be consistent with previous studies. However, the positivity expressed by these teachers regarding the online community they chose to join is particularly noteworthy, in a Vietnamese context. This study challenges prior research suggesting that autonomy and creativity are more difficult for teachers to develop independently in developing economies; as well as studies indicating that hierarchical structures in Confucian societies limit teachers' ability to contribute to professional conversations. The teachers in this study, whether experienced or novice, clearly demonstrated confidence, creativity, reflection, and agency. Moreover, the findings highlight the potential benefits of enabling expert professionals to participate in autonomously created communities.

Given these findings, school leaders and policymakers, in Vietnam, and possibly in other contexts internationally too, should value and support social media as a tool for continuous professional development. Integrating online communities into teacher training programmes and providing guidelines for responsible engagement could enhance their effectiveness. For example, school leaders could create and use an online-based community simultaneously with lesson study; a popular institution-led approach to teachers' professional development. Educational authorities could develop guidelines to help teachers maximize the benefits of these platforms while maintaining professional boundaries and ensuring the accuracy of shared information. ESOL organisations should also promote peer-to-peer learning via social media, which could be incorporated into existing top-down continuous professional development frameworks, ensuring both novice and experienced teachers benefit. Emphasizing digital literacy in teacher training would equip educators to use these platforms effectively and responsibly.

ESOL teachers could be encouraged to actively create and participate in online-based learning communities within their faculties, their educational settings or even outside their temporary settings. By leveraging social media's potential, we can cultivate a more dynamic, well-supported teaching community and enhance the quality

of English language education in Vietnam, and this is quite possibly the case in other countries, too. This does not obviate the important role that formal, centralized teacher education has. However, it is important that leaders and participants in teacher professional development of all kinds recognize and acknowledge the importance of a diverse range of opportunities and communities.

### Statement on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)

We declare that GenAI tools were not used for any purpose. The authors are solely responsible for the content of their manuscripts.

### Acknowledgments

This research was not funded. The authors thank David Meecham for his guidance at an early stage of researching and writing this article.

### References

- Abedini, A., Abedin, B., & Zowghi, D. (2021). Adult learning in online communities of practice: A systematic review. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 52(4), 1663–1694. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.13120>
- Alkahtani, K. D. (2024). Professional development: Improving teachers' knowledge and self-efficacy related to emotional and behavioral disorders. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, 32(1), 14-23. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10634266221130049>
- BERA. (2024). *Ethical guidelines for educational research*. BERA. <https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-fifth-edition-2024>
- Bett, H., & Makewa, L. (2020). Can Facebook groups enhance continuing professional development of teachers? Lessons from Kenya. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 48(2), 132–146. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2018.1542662>
- Brandt, C. (2006). Allowing for practice: A critical issue in TESOL teacher preparation. *ELT Journal*, 60(4), 355–364. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccl026>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Braun, V., Clarke, V., Hayfield, N., and Terry, G. (2019) Thematic analysis. In Pranee Liamputtong, P. (ed) *Handbook of Research Methods in Health Social Sciences*: Springer, pp. 843-860.
- Cao, P. T. H., Ta, B. T., & Hoang, C. H. (2016). National policies for teaching English in Vietnamese educational contexts: A discussion of policies. *Thailand TESOL*, 29(2), 1–17.
- Chang, W.-C., Lu, C.-C., Liu, C.-C., Liao, K.-W., & Yao, C.-Y. (2019). The problems and coping strategies of collaborative lesson study for junior high school teachers: A case study. *School Administrators*, 121, 141–156.

- Chueca Del Cerro, C. (2024). *The power of social networks and social media's filter bubble in shaping polarisation: An agent-based model*. *Applied Network Science*, 9(1), Article 69. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41109-024-00632-9>
- Crowe, S., Cresswell, K., Robertson, A., Huby, G., Avery, A., & Sheikh, A. (2011). The case study approach. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 11(100). <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-11-100>
- Darling-Hammond, L., Hyster, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2017). *Effective teacher professional development*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED606743.pdf>
- Diep, L. (2023). Facebook, Zalo and YouTube the most popular social media platforms. *VnEconomy*. <https://en.vneconomy.vn/facebook-zalo-and-youtube-the-most-popular-social-media-platforms.htm>
- Duong, H. T., & Duong, A. T. H. (2020). Professional identity construction of three teachers based in community of practice in a university of Vietnam. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 10(1), 588–593. <http://dx.doi.org/10.29322/IJSRP.10.01.2020.p9789>
- Farahian, M., & Parhamnia, F. (2022). Knowledge sharing through WhatsApp: Does it promote EFL teachers' reflective practice? *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*, 14(1), 332–346. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JARHE-12-2020-0456>
- Fletcher-Wood, H., & Zuccollo, J. (2020). *The effects of high-quality professional development on teachers and students: A rapid review and meta-analysis*. Education Policy Institute. <https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/effects-high-quality-professional-development/>
- Forrest, S. (2018). Can CPD enhance student-centred teaching and encourage explicit instruction of International Baccalaureate approaches to learning skills? A qualitative formative assessment and summative evaluation of an IB school's in-house CPD programme. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 17(3), 262–285. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14752409188164>
- Gillett-Swan, J., & Baroutsis, A. (2024). Student voice and teacher voice in educational research: A systematic review of 25 years of literature from 1995–2020. *Oxford Review of Education*, 50(4), 533–551. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2023.2257132>
- González, A. M., Montoya, C., & Sierra, N. (2002). What do EFL teachers seek in professional development programs? Voices from teachers. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 7(13), 29–50. <https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.ikala.3208>
- Guskey, T. R. (2002). Professional development and teacher change. *Teachers and Teaching*, 8(3), 381–391. <https://doi.org/10.1080/135406002100000512>
- Handley, K., Sturdy, A., Fincham, R., & Clark, T. (2006). Within and beyond communities of practice: Making sense of learning through participation, identity and practice. *Journal of Management Studies*, 43(3), 641–653. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2006.00605.x>
- Hayes, D. (2019). Continuing professional development/continuous professional learning for English language teachers. In S. Walsh & S. Mann (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of English language teacher education* (pp. 155–168). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315659824-14>

- Hoang, A. L., Phan, A. T. T., Dong, D. X., Tran, T. T. H., & Nguyen, C. T. (2023). Exploring team collective voice: The case of software development teams in Vietnam. *International Journal of Organization Theory & Behavior*, 26(1–2), 78–97. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOTB-08-2021-0127>
- Hong, M. (2024). Status, influencing factors and paths on professional identity of special education teachers: Taking Guangdong Province, China as an example. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 1(1) 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2024.2318614>
- International Monetary Fund. (2025). *World Economic Outlook Database, April 2025 [Dataset]*. <https://www.imf.org/en/publications/weo/weo-database/2025/april>
- Kanellopoulou, E.-M. D., & Darra, M. (2019). Benefits, difficulties and conditions of lesson study implementation in basic teacher education: A review. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 8(4), 18–35. <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v8n4p18>
- Kaufmann, R., & Vallade, J. I. (2020). Exploring connections in the online learning environment: Student perceptions of rapport, climate, and loneliness. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 30(10). <https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2020.1749670>
- Kedir, A., & Gutema, H. (2022). Primary school EFL teachers' continuous professional development needs. *Communication and Linguistics Studies*, 8(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.cls.20220801.11>
- Kiss, T. (2020). Language use and novice teacher identity in an online community of practice. *Indonesian JELT: Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching*, 15(2), 104–124. <https://doi.org/10.25170/ijelt.v15i2.1845>
- Kuh, L. P. (2016). Teachers talking about teaching and school: Collaboration and reflective practice via Critical Friends Groups. *Teachers and Teaching*, 22(3), 293–314. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2015.1058589>
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge University Press.
- Le, H. P. H., & Ho, C. T. T. (2022). A study on professional development needs of EFL teachers at some upper secondary schools in the central area of Vietnam. *Hue University Journal of Science: Social Sciences and Humanities*, 131(6C), 5–19. <https://doi.org/10.26459/hueunijssh.v131i6C.6903>
- Le, M. X., Phan, D. T., & Le, T. T. (2022). Pedagogy training courses in the Mekong Delta. *FOSTER: Journal of English Language Teaching*, 3(3), 123–135. <https://doi.org/10.24256/foster-jelt.v3i3.99>
- Le, T. T., & Chen, S. (2018). Globalisation and Vietnamese foreign language education. In J. Albright (Ed.), *English tertiary education in Vietnam* (pp. 16–27). Routledge.
- Le, V. C. (2019). English language teaching in Vietnam: Aspirations, realities, and challenges. In C. V. Le, H. T. M. Nguyen, M. T. T. Nguyen, & R. Barnard (Eds.), *Building teacher capacity in English language teaching in Vietnam* (pp. 7–22). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429457371-2>

- Le, V. H., McConney, A., & Maor, D. (2024). Social networking sites as affordable tools for high-potential personal learning networks: The case of teachers as learners in Vietnam. *Educational Research for Policy and Practice*, 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10671-024-09369-4>
- Lim, G., Xu, C., & Dang, T. B. (2025). Vietnam's growing economic integration with the world: More or less Asian? *Asia Europe Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10308-025-00726-3>
- Macià, M., & García, I. (2016). Informal online communities and networks as a source of teacher professional development: A review. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 55, 291–307. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.01.021>
- Mai, T. M., Nguyen, L. T., Tran, T. L., & Le, T. V. (2020). EFL teachers' Facebook groups as online communities of practice: Toward configurations for engagement and sustainability. *call-ej*, 27(3), 140–158.
- Mekie, M. E., & Gezahegn, G. (2023). EFL teachers' continuous professional development: Reflections and target needs. *Journal of Pedagogical Sociology and Psychology*, 5(3), 247–262. <https://doi.org/10.33902/jpsp.202320247>
- Minh, T. K., Dung, D. T., Hue, H. T. K., Giang, N. T. H., Cui, V., & O'Leary, M. (2022). Sorting or supporting teachers? An exploration of the imbalanced role of classroom observation in the development and assessment of Vietnamese secondary schoolteachers. *Professional Development in Education*. 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2022.2041178>
- Muls, J., Triquet, K., Vlieghe, J., De Backer, F., Zhu, C., & Lombaerts, K. (2019). Facebook group dynamics: An ethnographic study of the teaching and learning potential for secondary school teachers. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 44(2), 162–179. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2019.1583670>
- Ngo, P. L. H., & Nguyen, C. N. B. (2023). Online community of practice on Facebook: A case study of EFL teachers in Vietnam. In D. Tafazoli & M. Picard (Eds.), *Handbook of CALL teacher education and professional development: Voices from under-represented contexts* (pp. 531–548). Springer Nature Singapore. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-0514-0\\_30](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-0514-0_30)
- Nguyen, A. T., Nguyen, H. T., Phuong, H. Y., Le, T. T., Pham, T. T., & Huynh-Thi, A. T. (2024). Teachers' continuous professional development through lesson study: Voices of Vietnamese EFL teachers at university. *Qualitative Research in Education*, 13(1), 64–82. <https://doi.org/10.17583/qre.12154>
- Nguyen, D. T. K., Nguyen, H. H. D., Nguyen, H. T., & Duong, H. T. T. (2020). Self-perception of teachers and managers of the impact of teachers' professional development in Vietnam. *Education and Self-Development*, 15(2), 21–30. <https://doi.org/10.26907/esd15.2.03>
- Nguyen, T. D. B., Nguyen, H. Q., & Le, T. T. (2022). EFL teachers' perceptions of professional development activities and their effects in a non-Anglosphere context. *Focus on ELT Journal*, 4(2), 70–86. <https://doi.org/10.14744/felt.2022.4.2.5>
- Nguyen, N. T., Nguyen, T. T. H., Nguyen, T. M. H., & Nguyen, T. T. H. (2022). Application of the lesson study model in training teachers in Vietnam. In *Education innovation in Vietnam* (pp. 117–134). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-9217-3\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-9217-3_8)

- Nguyen, T., Underwood, J., & Ngo, A. T. (2025). Developing independent study skills, the Vietnamese student experience. *Cambridge Educational Research e-Journal*, 12(1), 272–287. <https://doi.org/10.17863/CAM.123124>
- Nguyen, V. H., & Hamid, M. O. (2021). The CEFR as a national language policy in Vietnam: Insights from a sociogenetic analysis. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 42(7), 650–662. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2020.1715416>
- Nugroho, H. M. A. (2018). EFL teachers' need of language proficiency professional development: When policy and practice collide. *International Journal of Language Education*, 2(2), 74–82. <https://doi.org/10.26858/ijole.v2i2.6373>
- O'Leary, M., Cui, V., Kiem, M. T., Dang, D. T., Nguyen, G. T. H., & Thi Hoang, K. H. (2023). The role of classroom observation in the development and assessment of schoolteachers in Vietnam: A review of national policy and research. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 51(4), 395–407. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2023.2191307>
- Oanh, H. T. N. (2015). Some thoughts on the Vietnamese vocatives provoked from the study "The Pronouns of Power and Solidarity" by R. Brown and A. Gilman. *UED Journal of Social Sciences, Humanities and Education*, 5(4A), 83–88. <https://doi.org/10.47393/jshe.v5i4A.594>
- Pham, H. (2021). Challenges defining a life purpose in an exam-driven culture: A case of Vietnam. In *Proceedings of the 17th International Conference of the Asia Association of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (AsiaCALL 2021)* (pp. 228–233). Atlantis Press. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210226.028>
- Pham, K. T., Do, L. T., Dinh, H. V., Nguyen, Q. A. T., Phan, Q. N., & Ha, X. V. (2023). Professional development of primary school teachers in Vietnamese educational reform context: An analysis from a sociocultural perspective. *Education 3-13*, 52(3), 428–443. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2023.2168502>
- Robson, C., & McCartan, K. (2024). *Real world research: A resource for users of social research methods in applied settings* (5th ed.). Wiley.
- Schipper, T. M., Goei, S. L., van Joolingen, W. R., Willemse, T. M., & van Geffen, E. C. (2020). Lesson study in Dutch initial teacher education explored: Its potential and pitfalls. *International Journal for Lesson and Learning Studies*, 9(4), 351–365. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJLLS-12-2019-0088>
- Shing, C. L., Saat, R. M., & Loke, S. H. (2015). The knowledge of teaching - pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). *MOJES: Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, 3(3), 40–55.
- Sims, S., Fletcher-Wood, H., O'Mara-Eves, A., Cottingham, S., Stansfield, C., Van Herwegen, J., & Anders, J. (2021). *What are the characteristics of effective teacher professional development? A systematic review and meta-analysis*. Education Endowment Foundation, UK.
- Suarez, V., & McGrath, J. (2022). Teacher professional identity: How to develop and support it in times of change. *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 267. <https://doi.org/10.1787/b19f5af7-en>

- Toom, A. (2019). Shaping teacher identities and agency for the profession: Contextual factors and surrounding communities. *Teachers and Teaching*, 25(8), 915–917. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2019.1703619>
- Tran, H. N., Ha, X. V., Le, V. A., & Nguyen, A. N. (2021). Principal leadership and teacher professional development in a Vietnamese high school for gifted students: Perspectives into practice. *European Journal of Educational Research*, 10(4), 1839–1851. <https://doi.org/10.12973/eu-jer.10.4.1839>
- Tran, T., Nguyen, C. H., & Nguyen, L. T. M. (2022). Policy and practice towards Education 4.0 in Vietnam. In T. Tran, C. H. Nguyen, & L. T. M. Nguyen (Eds.), *Educational innovation in Vietnam: Opportunities and challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution* (pp. 1–13). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003202424-1>
- Truong, T. D., Dinh, V. T. H., Nguyen, A. T. Q., & Tran, N. H. (2021). The current status of teacher professional learning and development in the context of educational reform in Vietnam. *Vietnam Journal of Educational Sciences*, 1(1), 48–53. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4730317>
- Truong, T. T., & Underwood, J. (2023). *The stress coping mechanisms of Vietnamese students in gifted schools*. *Cambridge Educational Research e-Journal*, 10, 84–101. <https://doi.org/10.17863/CAM.104607>
- Underwood, J., & Joshevska, M. (2019). A proposed typology of knowledge sharing within communities of teachers: A comparative case study focusing on England and Macedonia. *IAFOR Journal of Education*, 7(1), 113–128. <https://doi.org/10.22492/ije.7.1.07>
- VGP. (2008, September 30). Decision No. 1400/QĐ-TTĐ: Teaching and learning foreign languages in the national education system, period 2008–2020. VGP. <https://chinhphu.vn/default.aspx?pageid=27160&docid=78437>
- VGP. (2017, December 22). Decision No. 2080/QĐ-TTĐ: Approving, revising, and amending the national foreign language teaching and learning project in the national education system for the period 2017–2025. VGP. <https://vanban.chinhphu.vn/default.aspx?pageid=27160&docid=192343>
- Vo, D. K. (2022, December 2). Training the educators for Vietnam's future growth. *World Bank Blogs*. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/eastasiapacific/training-educators-vietnams-future-growth>
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
- Wenger, E. (2011). *Communities of practice: A brief introduction*. University of Oregon.
- Wenger, E., McDermott, R., & Snyder, W. (2002). *Cultivating communities of practice*. Harvard Business School Press.
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511803932>

- Xue, S., Hu, X., Chi, X., & Zhang, J. (2021). Building an online community of practice through WeChat for teacher professional learning. *Professional Development in Education*, 47(4), 613–637. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2019.1647273>
- Yan, S., Yang, Z., & Li, N. (2023). A literature review of the effects of virtual community of practice on medical education in China (2013–2023). *Iranian Journal of Virtual Learning in Medical Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.30476/ijvlms.2023.98470.1220>
- Yin, R. K. (2017). Designing case studies. In *Qualitative research methods* (6th ed., pp. 359–386).

**Anh Thao Ngo**

East Asia University of Technology, Faculty of English, Hanoi, Vietnam.

Email: [anhnt1@eaut.edu.vn](mailto:anhnt1@eaut.edu.vn)

[orcid.org/0009-0003-3575-0645](https://orcid.org/0009-0003-3575-0645)

**James Underwood**

University of Cambridge, Professional and Continuing Education,

Cambridge, UK

Email: [james.underwood@pace.cam.ac.uk](mailto:james.underwood@pace.cam.ac.uk)

[orcid.org/0000-0001-9351-2408](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9351-2408)

Data de submissão:

Data de avaliação:

Data de publicação: