



Chinese Immigrant Teachers' Motivation for Teaching Heritage Language in Australia: A Qualitative Study

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Current studies of Chinese heritage language education mainly focussed on learners' motivations, behaviours and the appropriate pedagogies. Very few studies focussed on heritage language teachers' motivations. To close such research gap, this study aimed to examine Chinese immigrant teachers' motivations in heritage language teaching in Australia with the guidance of Social Cognitive Career Theory. With the aim stated above, the research was guided by two research questions: first, how do Chinese immigrant teachers describe their experiences of teaching heritage language in Australia; second, why do Chinese immigrant teachers decide to continue their heritage language teaching. This study adopted a qualitative approach to scaffold their mental representation of their teaching experiences and decision-making process by conducting 120 one-on-one semi-structured interviews and 24 focus group meetings with 60 Chinese immigrant teachers who are currently teaching Chinese heritage language in Australian schools. Three themes and six subthemes were categorised. The findings reflected that traditional Confucian beliefs, a favourable learning environment and the attainment of teaching goals are the factors motivating the teachers to continue teaching heritage language. The information can be useful to utilise the talents of immigrant teachers to alleviate the teacher shortage problem and provide better support for heritage language teachers.

Keywords: Chinese language, heritage language, immigrant teachers, social cognitive career theory, motivation, self-efficacy, qualitative study

INTRODUCTION

Australia has a country having a long migrant history. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Chinese migrants comprise Australia's third largest group (ABS, 2020). Moreover, there is also an increasing number of first- or second-generation Chinese students in Australian public schools. These students share one common feature – they speak Mandarin, Cantonese or sometimes other dialects at home whilst their speaking and oral competency is much stronger than their reading and writing ones (Wen, 2011; Xiao, 2006). In order to strengthen these language skills, alongside forging a close bonding with their cultural root, many of these students opt to take Chinese heritage language (HL) (Wen, 2011; Xiao, 2006; Zhang et al., 2020).

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With an increasing demand in the education realm, many international studies (Wen, 2011; Zhang et al., 2020) have reported an alarming shortage of HL teachers. While teaching HL needs highly skilled professionals with extensive understanding of both the subject knowledge, pedagogies and cultural awareness, immigrant teachers are perceived as the suitable candidates to take up these jobs (Cruickshank, 2004; Fletcher Lambert & Lambert, 2019; Mercado & Trumbull, 2018; Putjata, 2017). In Australia, immigrant teachers are also perceived as a solution to this shortage problem, particularly in regional and rural schools (Collins & Reid, 2012; Cruickshank, 2004; New South Wales Productivity Commission, 2021). However, due to the myriad challenges immigrant teachers face, they choose not to continue their teaching career in Australia. For example, some immigrant teachers are constantly bombarded by classroom discipline issues or being judged by colleagues and school management that they are not teaching in an ambiguously-defined 'Australian' style, thereby casting doubt on their professional identity and diminishing their motivation for continuing their teaching career in Australia (Bense, 2015; Collins & Reid, 2012; Datta Roy & Lavery, 2017; Seah & Bishop, 2002). Teachers' motivation is a crucial factor determining their career decisions (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Gagné & Deci, 2005). The negative impact brought by the unfavourable teaching climate makes the immigrant teachers unwilling to continue their career in Australia, thereby losing these precious human resources assets (Collins & Reid, 2012; Datta Roy & Lavery, 2017). In order to attract and retain Chinese immigrant teachers so that they are more willing to take on or continue teaching Chinese heritage language, it is necessary to examine how and why in-service immigrant Chinese teachers are motivated in teaching the HL.

Literature Review

Current studies on Chinese HL focussed mainly on motivations, pedagogies or the learning differences between heritage or non-heritage learners (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Curdt-Christiansen, 2006; Ding, 2013; Wen, 2011; Xiao & Wong, 2014). For example, Wen (2011) and Ding (2013) identified socio-cultural influence on the pursuit of identity distinguishes the heritage learners from the non-heritage one in terms of motivations. Ding (2013) further emphasised the impact on the early exposure to the HL in childhood to the heritage learners that higher proficiency of the HL can be observed among the HL learners whose parents use HL as the means of communication at home since the early infant period of the HL learners. On the other hand, some scholars (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Xiao & Wong, 2014) focussed HL learners' learning behaviours, whereby HL learners are generally less anxious due to their language background and have better morphemic awareness and manipulation; however, they showed difficulties in mastering academic vocabularies as the words are not contextualised. As for the discussion of pedagogies, many studies (Curdt-Christiansen, 2006; Wen, 2011) pointed out that Chinese HL teachers tended to use a teacher-centred approach or traditional teaching methodologies like memorisation, recital or repetitive grammar drills in their classroom, whereby casting doubt on the teaching effectiveness. Nevertheless, seldom did the current studies focus on the motivations of HL teachers, let alone Chinese HL teachers in public schools. Such paucity therefore leaves a gap to understand how and

why Chinese HL teachers develop such awareness and pedagogies to boost the HL learners' learning outcomes in a day school setting.

It is commonly known that teachers' professional identity can influence their motivation strongly, whereby an identity crisis can lead to early attrition (Datta Roy & Lavery, 2017; Richardson & Watt, 2010; Seah & Bishop, 2002). However, in HL teachers' studies, there are still divergent opinions on the perception of HL teachers' professional identities. For example, Wu et al. (2011) once suggested in a study of Chinese HL teachers in a community language school that although Chinese HL teachers have strong cultural awareness, they have weak professional identity due to their perception of teaching Chinese as a secondary or volunteering job, whereby they perceive such teaching posts as more inferior compared to those teaching core subjects like English or Mathematics. Contrarily, Kim & Kim (2016) pointed out in another study that HL teachers can have a strong sense of professional identity owing to their early migration experiences, alongside their responsibilities and relationship with the social and cultural communities, can impact HL teachers' identities and instructional practices. Teachers' professional identity comprises teachers' motivation, beliefs and attainment of their teaching outcomes (Day & Kington, 2008; Sedikides, 2015). An inconsistent understanding of HL teachers' perception of their professional identities implies that currently there is also a dearth of understanding of the development of HL teachers' motivations in relation to their teaching performances and self-confidence. In addition, such paucity also reflects a piecemeal understanding of HL teachers' teaching experiences, leading to difficulties in identifying the driving forces behind their career actions and decisions of HL teaching, as well as the incapability to attract and retain these professional HL teachers.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to study the significant factors influencing Chinese immigrant teachers' motivation in continuing their HL teaching. By looking into their self-efficacy during their selection of course materials, preparation and lesson delivery, the researcher identified the personal and contextual variables for their career decisions of continuing HL teaching, alongside their strategies of delivering successful HL lessons, which can be predictors of the future directions of HL teaching and learning (Brown & Lent, 2019; Lent et al., 1994). With the aim stated above, the research was guided by two research questions:

1. How do Chinese immigrant teachers describe their experiences of teaching heritage language in Australia?
2. Why do Chinese immigrant teachers decide to continue their heritage language teaching?

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), which was developed specifically to examine career motivations, decisions and actions from Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986; Lent et al., 1994). The SCCT theorises the interrelationship between an individual's self-efficacy, outcome

expectations, performance goal and its attainment. Figure 1 outlines the key constructs of the SCCT and their relationship.

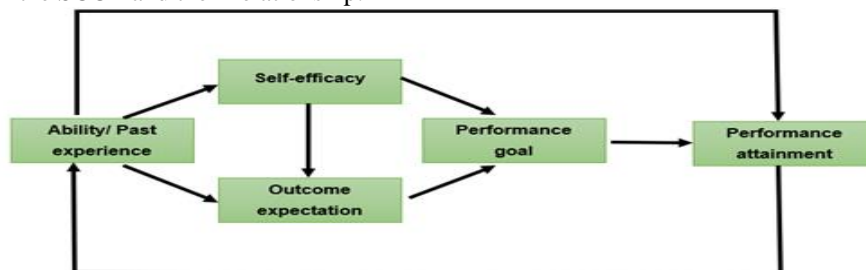


Figure 1

The relationship of the key constructs of the Social Cognitive Career Theory

The reciprocal relationship between self-efficacy, outcome expectations and performance goal attainment unfolds an individual's sense-making process on various personal and contextual factors such as race/ethnicity, education background, support and barriers from their proximal environment to permit a gaze into how their motivation develops into career interests and decisions (Brown & Lent, 2019; Lent et al., 1994). Since immigrant teachers' motivation is influenced by myriad factors (Datta Roy & Lavery, 2017; Kwee, 2020), adopting the SCCT in this study brings two major benefits. First, it allows the researcher to find out how the specific personal and contextual factors influence Chinese immigrant teachers' motivation in teaching HL. Second, it draws a holistic understanding of how their self-efficacy develops in relation to their teaching performance, thereby gaining insights not only about their career motivation but also effective pedagogies or strategies for a successful HL lesson (Brown & Lent, 2019; Dos Santos, 2022; Lent et al., 1994).

METHOD

The researcher employed a qualitative research method as the structure of this study (Dos Santos, 2019, 2020c; Kwee, 2021a, 2021b). Scholars (Dos Santos, 2019, 2020a; Kwee, 2021b; Zhang et al., 2020) pointed out limitations on a quantitative approach in unfolding the complexity of teacher motivation; therefore, this study adopted a qualitative approach to overcome this limitation by understanding Chinese immigrant teachers' sharing of their lived stories, education background, HL teaching experience and the sense-making process of such experience of each individual Chinese immigrant teacher (Alase, 2017; Brown & Lent, 2019; Creswell, 2012; Lent et al., 1994). This allowed the researcher to gain in-depth and rich data on how these teachers' motivation develops in their career journey and why they make such a decision of continuing teaching HL in relation to various personal and contextual factors by scaffolding their mental representation of such experiences (Dos Santos, 2019, 2020c; Kwee, 2021b, 2021a).

Research Location

New South Wales and Victoria in Australia was the research background of this study. They are the two states having the largest migrant population and overseas-born and

second-generation school pupils (ABS, 2016, 2020). Therefore, it provides rich data of Chinese immigrant teachers' teaching experiences while dealing with different groups of HL learners from myriad backgrounds. In these two states, HL learners have to develop their reading, writing, listening and writing skills to explore the relationship between language, culture and identity, alongside intercultural and global issues in their Chinese HL learning (NESA, 2021a, 2021b; VCAA, 2021a, 2021b). This provided a substantial understanding of how Chinese immigrant teachers are motivated to attain their teaching outcomes, thereby pertaining insights for the successful strategies in HL teaching.

Participants

Sixty (60) in-service Chinese immigrant teachers who are currently teaching Chinese as HL in New South Wales and Victorian high schools were invited. Following the advice of the qualitative researchers (Alase, 2017; Dos Santos, 2019, 2020c; Kwee, 2021a, 2021b), the researcher recruited these participants with the purposive sampling strategy via community networks and channels due to the relatively few Chinese immigrant teachers teaching HL. Please see Appendix A for the participants' detailed demography. All the participants in this study had to meet the following criteria:

- Was born in a country other than Australia;
- At least one of the parents is of Chinese descent;
- Received qualified teachers' training prior to their teaching;
- Currently teaches heritage Chinese language in one of the public, independent or Catholic schools in New South Wales or Victoria, Australia.

Data Collection

To gain insights into Chinese immigrant teachers' motivations for teaching HL, the researcher collected data from February 2020 to September 2020 to find support evidence from multiple sources (Creswell, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The primary data sources of this study were 120 semi-structured one-on-one interviews and 24 focus group interviews. Figure 2 summarises the timeline of the data collection process.

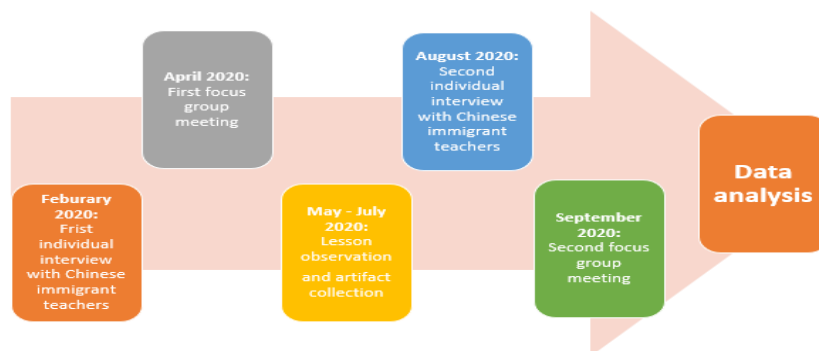


Figure 2
Timeline of the data collection

Since the research period was in the COVID-19 pandemic, all the interviews were conducted online via the video-conferencing platform Zoom due to travel restriction. By following the protocols and experts' suggestions, the researcher paid extra attention to the participants' facial expressions, verbal and non-verbal clues to ensure the quality of the data collected from the online interviews (Hai-Jew, 2015; Janghorban et al., 2014; Sullivan, 2012). Although the researcher was unable to observe the participants' live lessons due to border closure and COVID-19 public health concern, she observed the recorded lessons and invited the participants to share their teaching materials and students' work to add trustworthiness to this study with multiple data sources (Creswell, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The researcher conducted two semi-structured interviews with 60 Chinese immigrant teachers in February 2020 and July 2020, which lasts from 62 to 108 minutes each. The individual interviews were conducted in a private sharing environment to explore the participants' personal and educational background, social and cultural values and beliefs, career interests and goals, alongside their HL teaching experiences so as to unfold the sense-making process of their HL teaching career decision. Before the individual interviews, the researcher first developed a set of interview protocol and interview questions using the SCCT constructs, such as self-efficacy, outcome expectation and performance goal attainment (Alase, 2017; Brown & Lent, 2019; Lent et al., 1994; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The first interview was to establish rapport and trust with participants. It mainly focussed on their educational background, their values and belief on teaching and learning, personal experiences of migration and teaching in general (Brown & Lent, 2019; Lent et al., 1994). This allowed the researcher to empathise with the participants so that they were more willing to share some important personal experiences without hesitation (Alase, 2017; Creswell, 2012). The second interview specifically explored their HL teaching experiences. It explored their teaching, challenges, supports, barriers and actions, like pedagogies applied in classrooms and materials used in preparation influence their self-efficacy and performance goal attainment, thereby permitting a gaze into how their motivation developed in relation to their teaching performance (Brown & Lent, 2019; Lent et al., 1994).

After the participants had completed an individual interview, they were invited into two focus group meetings on the video-conferencing platform Zoom with five participants in each meeting. The participants shared their teaching experiences collectively, thereby allowing the researcher to explore further evidence and increase the credibility of this study (Brown & Lent, 2019; Lent et al., 1994). In total, 24 focus group meetings were conducted, and each meeting lasted from 91 to 121 minutes. Upon finishing all the interviews, the researcher transcribed all the interviews. Each interview contributed 64-103 pages of written transcripts filled with rich and in-depth data in these 120 individual interviews and 24 focus group meetings. The researcher later employed member-checking for the participants to agree and approve their parts before data analysis (Creswell, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Data Analysis

The data sources used in the analysis included 120 individual interviews with Chinese immigrant teachers and 24 focus group meetings, while the lesson observations,

teaching materials and students' works are additional supporting evidence (Creswell, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Due to a concern with students' privacy and the agreement with the participants, evidence collected from lesson observations and students' works were only used in the process of triangulation but not in the final stage of publication (Creswell, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

First, the researcher transcribed all the recorded interviews and focus group meetings. Following the scholars' suggestions (Alase, 2017; Creswell, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), the researcher started the data analysis by reading the transcripts several times to identify the important statements and applying a general inductive approach to reduce the large chunk of data into meaning themes and subthemes. Later the researcher applied the open-coding technique and categorised 18 themes and 38 subthemes at the first level using the SCCT constructs (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2009). Then the researcher applied the axial-coding technique to reduce the number of themes and subthemes to standard reporting. After the axial coding, three themes and six subthemes emerged. Figure 3 summarises the data analysis procedure.

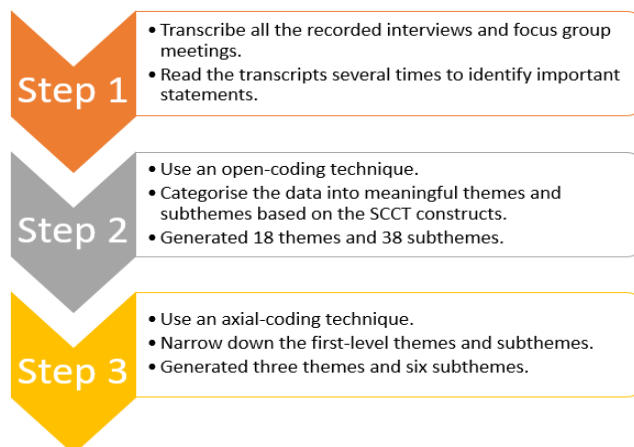


Figure 3
The procedure of the data analysis

Human Subject Protection

The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki. The researcher took all necessary measures to protect the human subjects in this study. First, before data collection, all the participants were invited to sign a written consent to participate in this study. Second, all the individual interviews and focus group meetings were recorded in a separate password-protected electronic device with the sole access of the researcher. Third, to protect the participants from their current and future employers, they were given a pseudonym each and all their identifiable personal information was masked. Fourth, all the materials related to personal privacy were deleted and destroyed immediately after the study was completed (Alase, 2017; Creswell, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Seidman, 2006).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher categorised the data from individual interviews and focus groups into three themes and six subthemes in order to answer the research questions. Table 1 summarises the themes and subthemes of this study.

Table 1

Themes and subthemes

Themes and Subthemes
Traditional Confucian Values and Beliefs
Familial Duties
Responsibilities of a Teacher
Favourable Learning Environment
Respect from Students
Constructive and Corrective Feedbacks in Assessments
Attainment of Teaching Outcomes
Improvement in Students' Reading and Writing Skills
Enhancing Students' Higher-order Thinking

The researcher of this study followed the qualitative scholars' suggestions by putting the textual evidence alongside the analysis (Dos Santos, 2019; Kwee, 2021a; Nakahara & Black, 2007; Okamura & Miller, 2010). Thus, the readers can gain a better understanding of the development of Chinese immigrant teachers' self-efficacy in relation to the personal and contextual factors, as well as the setting and context of HL learning in Australia (Alase, 2017; Brown & Lent, 2019; Creswell, 2012; Lent et al., 1994).

Traditional Confucian Values and Beliefs

Previous studies (Bense, 2015; Datta Roy & Lavery, 2017; Putjata, 2017; Stikhin & Rynkänen, 2017) had divergent opinions on the influences of home cultures on their motivation in continuing their teaching career at their new home. For instance, some scholars (Datta Roy & Lavery, 2017; Seah & Bishop, 2002) suggested immigrant teachers perceived their cultural roots and values negatively due to the unwelcoming behaviours in classrooms and staffroom, thereby leading to their early attrition. On the other hand, some studies (Putjata, 2017; Stikhin & Rynkänen, 2017) pointed out that some cultural values and beliefs can positively influence immigrant teachers' job satisfaction, thereby motivating them to persist in their teaching career. This study showed a positive correlation between Chinese immigrant teachers and the traditional Confucian values and beliefs, whereby their responsibility towards their greater families and students becomes a driving force to continue their HL teaching.

Familial Duties

Studies (Dos Santos, 2020a; Kim & Kim, 2016; Wang & Du, 2014) have indicated that East Asian beliefs highly influence the Asians in western countries in the course of their career pursuit. Similarly, Chinese immigrant teachers in this study showed a similar concern. Chinese immigrant teachers consider teaching HL in high school as a stable

job, which is an indicator of success in traditional Chinese cultural values, thereby bringing honour to their families. One participant said,

“I received most of my education in China... Mandarin is my mother tongue. I’m a native speaker... I can claim expertise in my subject area. I know more than my students. It’s easier for me to get a job... I’m in my 30s... If I don’t have a well-paid permanent job, people will think I’m a loser... I have to be responsible to my family, making my parents proud of me...and my achievement.” (Participant 3, Individual Interview 1)

Similar to previous studies (Wang & Du, 2014; Wu et al., 2011), Chinese immigrant teachers feel more certain and confident when they believe they have the ability to complete the assigned tasks, which contributes to their rising self-efficacy of postulating a successful career outcome. Interestingly, this study suggested that immigrant teachers’ self-efficacy does not merely lie in their mastery of skills and knowledge. Influenced by the traditional Chinese values of filial piety, the Chinese feel that being successful means having a stable job with a reasonable income, whereby they can bring honour to their family (Dos Santos, 2020a). However, it cannot be achieved easily by immigrant teachers in Australia. Studies (Collins & Reid, 2012; Cruickshank, 2004) reflected that immigrant teachers have to start or continue their teaching career in Australia from casual or part-time positions, whereby the contract is renewed year by year. When Chinese immigrant teachers are able to get a permanent teaching position, they can fulfil their parents’ expectations, thereby more likely entering or continuing teaching HL. One participant said,

“I’m happy to be a HL teacher... Before [becoming an HL teacher], I was working as a tutor. My parents felt that was not a decent job. They felt ashamed to tell our relatives what I’m doing for living... There is somehow a shortage of Chinese language teachers... in regional areas. Some people don’t really wanna go there [regional areas]. I have to make my parents happy. That’s filial piety. Now I’m happy cos they’re happy.” (Participant 6, Individual Interview 1)

Previous studies (Bense, 2015; Roy, 2016) suggested the unfavourable working and living conditions in regional or rural areas hamper immigrant teachers’ motivation in continuing or starting their teaching careers. However, most immigrant Chinese teachers in this study rank the job opportunities offered in those areas higher than other factors, owing to the fact that it can fulfil their responsibility to their parents. Another participant said,

“At least I end up with a professional government job here. I fulfilled my parents’ hope of having a ‘professional future’. After all it’s not easy for an immigrant to get a job in this country [Australia]... Many of my friends can’t get a job for two years... Sometimes they [other colleagues] just disliked us. They said we just stay in our LOTE [Languages other than English] staffroom, speaking in Mandarin... You can’t complain much.” (Participant 26, Focus Group 2)

This study has shown that an unfavourable work environment is not a significant factor impeding immigrant teachers to become HL teachers. As mentioned in previous studies (Bense, 2015; Roy, 2016), immigrant teachers generally feel that being a LOTE

(Language other than English) teachers have a lower status, Chinese immigrant teachers in this study generally feel the same. However, they are more resilient and overcome such hurdle more readily due to the influence of the traditional Chinese belief on success. When they can fulfil their parents' expectations and bring honour to their family, they are more likely to feel contented and satisfied with the financial stability and social status of an HL teacher. According to the SCCT, such positive affection has become a source of their self-efficacy, making them persist in their HL teaching career in the midst of challenges (Brown & Lent, 2019; Lent et al., 1994).

Responsibilities of a Teacher

Traditional Confucian philosophy greatly emphasises an individual's responsibility to the community (Kim & Kim, 2016; Wu et al., 2011). This study showed that such belief strongly influences Chinese immigrant teachers, whereby they perceive themselves to be responsible for the betterment of their ethnic community by providing chances for advancement for the HL learners. One said,

"Many of my students told me that doing Chinese and Literature [An HL course in New South Wales] can gain a higher ATAR [a score deciding university admission]. They come from Auburn, Prairiewood [some disadvantaged suburbs]... I have a duty to make sure they get the knowledge and skills for the high grades in HSC [university entrance examination]. We have to contribute to our community. That's the only way getting rid of poverty." (Participant 58, Individual Interview 2)

This study showed that Chinese immigrant teachers feel obliged to prepare students for further academic pursuit so as to attain their personal goals, whereby it is also a pathway to social equity. By helping students from lower socio-economic backgrounds to obtain better results, immigrant teachers feel that they provide a pathway for them to pursue their academic or career goals. Such changes can positively impact the ethnic minority communities that upward mobility is possible and help attain social equity (Baglama & Uzunboylu, 2017; Sparks & Pole, 2019). Such sense of responsibility stems from their early education. Another participant shared a similar view:

"Being a first-generation migrant is not easy. You have nothing. The feeling is horrible. Needless to say growing in such family. I put myself into others' shoes. That's Ren [Compassion]...in Confucian Analects. We have to help others to become established with what they want to improve or perfect themselves. We have to have such quality too. This is the norms...I feel like I'm not a small potato anymore." (Participant 11, Individual Interview 2)

In this study, Chinese immigrant teachers reflected that they have to follow the Confucian virtue to understand their HL students' plight, whereby being connected empathetically with their personal background experiences. Such connection, coupled with the duty of being a virtuous individual, helps Chinese immigrant teachers to establish their self-esteem and self-worth, which is a crucial element in their positive professional identity (O'Connor, 2008; Pellegrino, 2011; Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011). Most participants in this study reflected a similar view. One participant said,

“My students feel confused as they feel a sense of non-belonging as they can’t read or write anything Chinese. Han Yu [A Confucian scholar] said teachers have to deliver knowledge and dispelling confusion. So I help them to dispel such confusion by delivering the right knowledge... They [The HL learners] thanks me. They no longer doubt if they are really Chinese. That’s what I wanna do.” (Participant 33, Individual Interview 2)

The sense of accomplishment, alongside the positive encouragement received by the Chinese immigrant teachers create an extra source of self-efficacy. From the perspective of the SCCT, such higher self-efficacy correlates positively to Chinese immigrant teachers’ career interests, leading them more likely to take actions and continue their HL teaching in future (Brown & Lent, 2019; Lent et al., 1994).

Favourable Learning Environment

Different from previous studies (Bense, 2015; Okamura & Miller, 2010; Roy, 2016) that students usually do not have high interest or motivation in learning languages, this study reflected that in a day school setting, HL learners are more motivated as they can learn effectively from different well-structured tasks and assessment. Coupled with their positive learning attitude, these form a successful teaching experience and make Chinese immigrant teachers more motivated to teach HL.

Respect from Students

This study reflected that HL learners’ classroom behaviours create a positive learning environment, whereby Chinese immigrant teachers feel satisfied and contented towards such learning community. Such positive feeling reinforces their confidence in delivering their lessons successfully and effectively, making them more enthusiastic about HL teaching (Dos Santos, 2020b; Kwee, 2021b). One participant said,

“They [HL learners] will not ask distracting questions like ‘can we have a free day’, ‘how come your eyes are so tiny’... They are from China..., or their parents are from China, Taiwan or Malaysia... They are always told to sit up straight and listen to their teachers in lessons... Respect for teachers is very important among Chinese. They are attentive and studious... It makes them... follow my instructions and work on-task most of the time. I can focus on teaching. That makes my day.” (Participant 46, Focus Group 1)

Most participants in this study suggested that generally their HL students are more obedient and well-mannered. Better classroom discipline allows Chinese immigrant teachers to apply what they have learnt in their previous teaching training, including theories and teaching techniques, in their lessons, thereby boosting their self-efficacy, self-confidence and effectiveness in teaching (Dos Santos, 2020b; Peeler & Jane, 2005; Richardson & Watt, 2010; Yaghmour, 2022). Another participant echoed with this:

“I don’t have to waste time to manage some destructive behaviours in the classroom, like listening to music, taking selfies... That’s common in other lessons. My students know they have to respect [their teachers]. A teacher for a day. A mentor for life... They know they will benefit from following the teachers’

instructions. They trust our abilities to work best for them. I felt like I'm back to the good old days [teaching in China].” (Participant 38, Individual Interview 2)

Instead of confronting the immigrant Chinese teachers, heritage learners placed trust in immigrant teachers and perceived them as pedagogical experts due to the acceleration in their learning progress. Previous studies (Bense, 2015; Collins & Reid, 2012; Datta Roy & Lavery, 2017) reflected that immigrant teachers are always bombarded by classroom discipline issues, thereby their professional identity is challenged. This study reflected that the respectful attitude from HL learners boosts Chinese immigrant teachers' professional identity as they can plan for and implement effective teaching and learning to attain the standards required for professional teachers (AITSL, 2018). One participant said,

“I need not to struggle with rigid classroom rules and I'm happy that I finally did that. I can assign different tasks to my students. Better classroom discipline makes me have more time to cater for their learning needs... I can give them individualised instructions while some others are working on another task based on their abilities. Sometimes they encourage each other to complete the tasks... I'm proud of them [HL learners]. Next year and perhaps in coming years I would still do that [teaching HL].” (Participant 24, Individual Interview 2)

This study reflected that Chinese immigrant teachers generally receive positive comments from students and their proactive learning behaviours help create a positive learning atmosphere in their HL classrooms. According to the SCCT, such attainment of the teaching goals, coupled with Chinese immigrant teachers' positive affection towards such attainment, boosts their self-efficacy, making them more likely to continue their HL teaching in future (Brown & Lent, 2019; Lent et al., 1994).

Constructive and Corrective Feedbacks in Assessments

To attain their learning targets, HL learners have to master not only language competency, but also higher-order thinking skills such as comparing and contrasting, analysis and evaluation (NESA, 2021a, 2021b; VCAA, 2021a, 2021b). This study reflected that when HL students understand their learning targets, the aims of the well-designed written and oral tests, they feel that their learning is more structured and organised, thereby more willing to put in effort and contribute meaningful input and discussion in lessons.

“Chinese in Context and Chinese & Literature [Two heritage language syllabuses] need both students' intercultural and linguistic skills. It needs their understanding of Chinese on personal, community and international issues. We have to develop our assessment tasks and marking criteria... When I'm sending my students the assessment notification, I include detailed rubrics aligning with the NESA [New South Wales Education Standards]... When I'm giving them back their work, I'm not just putting ticks on what they did. I also write a paragraph giving them detailed feedback on what they did well and how to improve... My students like these feedback.” (Participant 20, Focus Group 2)

Many of the participants also reflected that they used evaluative tools such as self and peer rating forms to ensure students to understand their milestones. Some scholars (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Wagner & French, 2010) suggested that students' learning progress is a source of teachers' motivation. In this study, Chinese immigrant teachers combine both the pedagogies they learnt in their home country and Australia to maximise the quality of their feedback. Another participant said,

“They [Australian educators] always say positive reinforcement and rewards. I think it's important but we also have to point out specifically what to improve. Sometimes they [HL learners] may need more help on how to craft their work. I gave them samples to show them how those students achieve the rubrics. Sometimes I helped them to rewrite... That's common in China... My students felt that's more specific help. I also ask them to share their opinions and reflection with me... I know whether they understand about the comments. That makes me feel I'm on the right track.” (Participant 56, Individual Interview 2)

Suggested by Curdt-Christiansen (2006), HL teachers normally use I-R-E approach (Initiation-Response-Evaluation) on evaluating students' responses. However, such approach shows rigidity in the question-answer response mode in a correctional manner and limitation on students' input. This study, however, showed that Chinese immigrant teachers tend to give both corrective and constructive feedback, whereby HL students deepen their understanding of good performance from exemplars, reflect on their work and make changes to fine-tune their work. One participant said,

“Usually my correctional feedbacks are on the authentic expressions and for other aspects, I ask them [HL learners] to critically assess their point of view to see if it is coherent or [includes] multi-perspectives... Students like the feedback session. They discuss with their peers the feedback they received... I like their dedication and effort. Even there is a lot of work, I don't mind work till midnight.” (Participant 10, Individual Interview 2)

This study specifically identified how Chinese immigrant teachers' self-efficacy and thus motivation develops in boosting students' learning process in relation to the forms of feedback HL learners receive. When Chinese immigrant teachers are able to gain supports from students to foster a positive learning environment, such proximal environmental influence positively influences their career actions. In line with the SCCT, Chinese immigrant teachers are then more likely to attain their performance goals and such attainment become their background experience in boosting their self-efficacy, thereby more devoted and determined in persisting in HL teaching (Brown & Lent, 2019; Lent et al., 1994).

Attainment of Teaching Outcomes

Many previous studies (Kondo-Brown, 2010; Wu et al., 2011) mentioned that teachers feel that the formula of a successful HL lesson lies in the use of content-based learning or interactive approach, whereby students feel fun and have ample opportunities to communicate in the target language. This study, however, reflected that such communicative components do not significantly motivate immigrant Chinese teachers; instead, HL learners' mastery of reading and writing skills, alongside their high-order

thinking skills are the major sources of boosting immigrant Chinese teachers' self-efficacy.

Improvement in Students' Reading and Writing Skills

Chinese HL learners generally have quite a good understanding of the language in speaking and listening, whilst their writing and reading skills usually are not as well developed as the other two skills (Wen, 2011; Xiao, 2006). Chinese immigrant teachers utilise authentic teaching materials alongside the pedagogies they learnt in Australia and their home countries to facilitate their students to respond to real-life situations, leading to the attainment of teaching outcomes (Brown & Lent, 2019; Ghunu, 2022; Lent et al., 1994). One said,

"My students first felt it is difficult to produce creative texts... I asked them to recite some of the good samples or works from famous authors. Every kid in China is doing that... But I didn't ask them to 'dictate' the whole text. Instead, I prepare some literary analysis questions to identify, analyse and evaluate the use of metalanguages. That's similar to what they did with their prescribed texts [in their English lessons]." (Participant 29, Individual Interview 2)

Similar to previous studies (Curdt-Christiansen, 2006; Wen, 2011), Chinese immigrant teachers in this study also consider reciting texts, which is a prevailing means of learning writing in China, as an effective teaching tool. However, Chinese immigrant teachers readapt the traditional way of mere memorisation to the Australian context. Knowing students have already acquired the schemas (i.e. literary analysis framework and skills) in another subject, Chinese immigrant teachers require the HL learners to interpret, gain inspiration and synthesise from the texts through a constructivist approach (Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005; Grant & Lee, 2014; Skehan, 2003). HL learners perceive these exercises as stimulating and challenging, thereby feeling motivated, confident and competent to achieve their learning targets. Another participant shared a similar view:

"Sometimes I put them [HL learners] into groups for some oral or written quizzes to assess their prior knowledge... Activating their prior knowledge is important. I'm not just knowing what they [HL learners] have previously learnt in HL lessons. Also in other subjects. Also whether they were born here or when they arrived here [Australia]... That's what I consider when I choose appropriate reading materials and pre-reading tasks for them... They [HL learners] appreciated my effort... They felt I'm a good teacher." (Participant 50, Individual Interview 2)

Previous studies (Cruickshank, 2004; Seah & Bishop, 2002) suggested that immigrant teachers were generally perceived as unqualified by the authorities and their peers as they were unable to adopt the pedagogies commonly used in Australian classrooms, such as activating students' prior knowledge, task-based learning and student-centred approach. This study, however, pointed out that Chinese immigrant teachers are able to and willing to apply these strategies in their classroom, whereby gaining compliments from their students and thus boosting their confidence (Acton & Glasgow, 2015; Ellis, 2000; Hastings & Bham, 2003). Many participants also shared similar views on how students' compliments and achievement reinforce or build their professional identity.

HL learners particularly appreciate how Chinese immigrant teachers help to improve their weaknesses, like reading and writing. One said,

“I choose some texts which are relevant to them, like youth culture, perspectives on identity... They have to read articles, journals and reports on pressures on young people today and the influence of traditional values on today's young people. From those texts, they learn the language features of academic writing or formal writing, which is an area they have to strengthen... They found it useful... They got Band 6 [highest band in university entrance examination].” (Participant 53, Individual Interview 2)

Previous studies (Curd-Christiansen, 2006; Xiao, 2006) suggested that HL learners have difficulties in learning academic vocabulary as it is not contextualised. This study shed light on how HL students can learn academic vocabulary and features of academic writing in a contextualised thematic approach (Bai, 2018; Gong et al., 2018; Susanto, 2017). While Chinese immigrant teachers adopt such approach in their teaching, they are able to attain their teaching goals, which is reflected in HL students' academic performance. Affirming with the SCCT hypothesis, such attainment of teaching goals engrave their sense of satisfaction, which is an additional source of self-efficacy leading them to persist and continue their HL teaching career (Brown & Lent, 2019; Lent et al., 1994).

Enhancing Students' Higher-order Thinking

Higher-order thinking skills include system thinking, critical thinking and analytical skills and evaluation skills, which are crucial for youngsters to combat the challenges in the 21st century and attain a sustainable and equitable society locally and globally (Atwa & Bank, 2022; UNESCO, 2005, 2017). In this study, Chinese immigrant teachers also perceive these are their teaching outcomes. When they can attain such teaching outcomes, they have a great sense of satisfaction. One participant said,

“My lesson is not just about grammar or generic skills. I develop their cognitive abilities... When teaching the role of family and marriage in contemporary society, students have to write a letter to the editor to express their concerns on the single parents' needs in Sydney... They have to research on what kind of support single parents need, for example, financial support, flexible working hours... From that, they compare and contrast the changing concept of family in contemporary Chinese and Australian society, identify... and discuss the martial and familial issues of Chinese immigrants... I'm glad that they can have such reflection.” (Participant 2, Focus Group 2)

Although previous studies (Eli et al., 2020; Summers et al., 2005) suggested that language teachers are less motivated in bringing in sustainable development topics in their lessons, this study reflected that Chinese immigrant teachers perceive sustainable development topics such as gender equality and responsible consumption as an opportunity to achieve higher-order thinking skills. Such perception influences them positively that they are more willing to devote more time to prepare the relevant materials, thereby enhancing the overall quality of their lessons (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020; Kwee, 2021a). Another participant echoed with such view:

"I asked my students to read a poem on a cold day in the street in China... Apart from asking students to describe the scenes in the poem, I asked them to reflect on the traditional Chinese values and modern consumerist behaviours... Though it's a challenging task, eventually, students were able to substantiate their point of view effectively... by using textual and research evidence. They were able to discuss and evaluate the point of view presented in the text. I feel my hard work paid off." (Participant 40, Focus Group 2)

Previous studies (Cho, 2010; Roy, 2016; Santoro, 2007) suggested that immigrant teachers generally have to spend more time on lesson preparation. This study affirmed such findings. However, this study showed that Chinese immigrant teachers do not perceive that as laborious or tedious; instead, they have a sense of accomplishment while selecting a range of texts helping students to respond to the texts personally and critically (Ellis, 2000; Lambert & Lambert, 2019; Skehan, 2003). Many participants in this study also shared a similar view that such positive affection makes them more persistent in teaching HL. One participant said,

"I like my students. I like my HL class... I like asking students to examine and discuss socio-cultural elements in the texts in my lessons...and then I ask them to think of solutions. I believe that's the key competency... After all one aim of communication is to foster collaboration and devise solutions. They learn communication skills and problem-solving skills... and language. They achieved more than the previous cohort... That's a very new experience to me... I like teaching HL in this way. Probably I will include that next year." (Participant 20, Individual interview 2)

When students are able to achieve their learning outcomes, Chinese immigrant teachers attain higher self-efficacy from these successful teaching experiences. Such higher self-efficacy makes them postulate more optimistic outcomes of their future teaching, whereby they are more likely to achieve the performance standards and attain the teaching targets (Dos Santos, 2019, 2020b; Kwee, 2021b). According to the SCCT, the attainment of the teaching outcomes reinforces Chinese immigrant teachers' motivation to continue their HL teaching in the future (Brown & Lent, 2019; Lent et al., 1994).

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTION

Although this study identified personal and contextual factors motivating Chinese immigrant teachers to continue teaching HL by examining the development of their self-efficacy, it still has shown two major limitations. First, this study focussed on the two states with the highest immigrant population, particularly most participants in this study are from metropolitan cities like Sydney and Melbourne. It may bring a limitation in understanding how environment and local culture in regional or rural areas influence HL teachers' motivation. Further research can be expanded to a comparative study between the urban and regional settings so as to examine the impact on the specific contextual variable (Brown & Lent, 2019; Kwee, 2021b). Second, this study focussed on teachers' motivation for continuing HL teaching. Although Chinese immigrant teachers mentioned how they overcame hurdles and challenges in HL teaching during interviews and focus group sessions, this study does not go further and draw conclusion on how the

challenges may hamper their motivation during their teaching journey as it is beyond the scope of this study. Further research can be done on HL teachers' negative self-efficacy, i.e. how HL teachers are demotivated and decide not to continue their HL teaching. This can also respond to the scholars' call to fill the theoretical gap of the dearth of SCCT research on ethnic minorities and negative self-efficacy, thereby pertaining to a more socially equitable society in the future (Brown & Lent, 2019; Lee et al., 2015).

CONCLUSION

Despite the limitations, this study is unique and novel in probing into Chinese immigrant teachers' experience of heritage language teaching by adopting Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) as a theoretical framework. On the one hand, it identified specific personal and contextual factors boosting Chinese immigrant teachers' self-efficacy to understand what motivates them to continue teaching HL. For instance, this study is novel in specifically identifying the traditional Confucian values and beliefs as an impactful personal factor to HL teaching among Chinese immigrant teachers. It also extended from previous studies (Wang & Du, 2014; Wu et al., 2011) to explain further how and why Chinese immigrant teachers are becoming more confident in their teaching in relation to their challenges, decisions and actions of teaching Chinese HL in the western world through a thorough investigation on their teaching materials, pedagogies and curriculum. On the other hand, it gave a holistic view on the interrelationship between self-efficacy and teaching performance attainment, thereby allowing insights on effective pedagogies Chinese immigrant teachers adopt to attain their teaching goals alongside boosting their motivation (Brown & Lent, 2019; Lent et al., 1994). For example, this study challenged the previous studies (Eli et al., 2020; Summers et al., 2005) that there is low motivation of language teachers incorporating topics related to sustainable development; instead, this study reflected that such topics allow Chinese immigrant teachers to enhance students' higher-order thinking, leading to their high self-efficacy and positive teaching outcome expectations. Such information provides insight for educational institutions and universities to provide or polish their professional development courses and teacher training for both HL teachers and immigrant teachers. This can be useful not only in improving the quality of HL teaching, but also in ways to utilising the talents of immigrant teachers.

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APPENDIX A.

DEMOGRAPHY OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Participant	Age	Gender	Years of experiences	State
1	Mid-30s	F	8	New South Wales
2	Early-30s	F	2	New South Wales
3	Mid-40s	M	10+	New South Wales
4	Early-40s	F	10+	Victoria
5	Mid-40s	F	10+	New South Wales
6	Early-30s	F	3	New South Wales
7	Mid-30s	M	5	New South Wales
8	Mid-40s	F	8	New South Wales
9	Early-40s	F	10+	New South Wales
10	Mid-30s	M	7	Victoria
11	Late-40s	M	10+	New South Wales
12	Mid-40s	M	5	New South Wales
13	Early-40s	F	6	New South Wales
14	Late-40s	F	8	Victoria
15	Mid-30s	F	5	New South Wales
16	Mid-40s	F	10+	New South Wales
17	Late-40s	F	10+	New South Wales
18	Mid-30s	M	4	New South Wales
19	Mid-30s	F	3	Victoria
20	Mid-40s	F	6	Victoria
21	Late-20s	F	1	New South Wales
22	Late-30s	M	9	Victoria
23	Mid-40s	F	8	Victoria
24	Early-30s	M	4	Victoria
25	Early-30s	F	5	New South Wales
26	Late-20s	F	2	Victoria
27	Early-40s	F	7	Victoria
28	Mid-30s	F	2	Victoria
29	Late-40s	M	10+	New South Wales
30	Late-20s	F	1	New South Wales
31	Mid-30s	M	5	New South Wales
32	Late-30s	F	10+	New South Wales
33	Late-30s	M	8	Victoria
34	Early-30s	M	3	New South Wales
35	Early-40s	F	8	New South Wales
36	Mid-40s	F	8	Victoria
37	Late-20s	F	2	New South Wales
38	Mid-30s	F	5	New South Wales
39	Early-30s	F	3	Victoria
40	Mid-30s	F	9	New South Wales
41	Late-30s	M	5	New South Wales
42	Late-30s	M	9	New South Wales
43	Early-40s	M	8	New South Wales
44	Late-40s	F	10+	Victoria
45	Early-30s	M	2	New South Wales
46	Early-50s	F	10+	New South Wales
47	Mid-30s	F	6	Victoria
48	Mid-20s	F	1	Victoria
49	Early-40s	M	10+	Victoria
50	Mid-20s	F	2	New South Wales
51	Late-20s	F	1	Victoria
52	Late-30s	F	8	New South Wales
53	Early-40s	F	8	New South Wales
54	Late-40s	F	6	Victoria
55	Mid-30s	F	8	New South Wales
56	Mid-30s	M	6	Victoria
57	Late-30s	F	7	Victoria
58	Mid-40s	F	10+	New South Wales
59	Early-50s	F	10+	Victoria
60	Early-30s	F	6	Victoria