



## Curriculum Innovation in Vietnam: A Study on Teachers' Attitudes using the Dimensions of ACB (Affective, Cognitive and Behavioral) Model

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines teachers' attitudes towards curriculum innovation in Vietnam. The paper attempts to contribute to understanding teachers' attitudes and responses towards curriculum innovation by identifying that in terms of competencies, several affective, cognitive, and behavioral abilities of teachers may affect the overall attitudes towards curriculum innovation, which has extensive ramifications for the success of an educational project. To understand the attitude of teachers, a mixed-method explanatory sequential design approach is used. The authors collected quantitative data and then designed a qualitative open-ended plan to build upon the quantitative research. ANOVA was performed to test the statistical significance and correlations were established. Data gathered from interviews were analysed using thematic analysis. This study shows that the overall attitudes of teachers and educators towards curriculum innovation in Vietnam are favourable. However, both quantitative and qualitative analysis show there are certain challenges about such innovation. No teacher had either a broad view of curriculum innovation or awareness of the interrelationship between the three dimensions of attitude and the implementation of the curriculum although aspects of each dimension were mentioned by individual teachers.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Educational systems across the world have been experiencing major changes in the last four decades (Madsen, 2020; Xiong et al., 2019). In order to enhance its competitiveness, the Vietnamese government has been managing to improve the quality of the education system and lay the foundation for a more active learning approach that would better suit the demands of globalization, continuous rapid changes and a market-based economic system (Hang, 2019). The Vietnamese Government through the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) and its provincial education offices has launched education reforms on various fronts (Griffin, 2007). The Overall General Curriculum was issued with Circular No 32/2018/TT-BGDĐT dated 26 December 2018 which clearly stated the orientations in developing the new curriculum, objectives, requirements for students' competences and qualities together with fundamental education stages. It is in this context that this study attempts to examine the attitude of teachers towards curriculum innovation in Vietnam.

Studies in both general education and in second or foreign language education show that the key factor to success of any educational reform resides with the teacher (Griffin, 2007; Hursen, 2016; Markee, 1997). Although teachers play particularly central roles in education, traditionally they have not possessed a major voice in educational change (Yildirim & Kasapoglu, 2015) especially when it comes to curriculum innovation. Teachers, at best, see such innovations as part of their evolving professional identity and social interactions with others. Carless (2001)

suggested that if teachers are to implement an innovation successfully, it is essential that they understand both the theoretical principles and classroom applications of the proposed change. Curriculum innovation is generally viewed as a single or successive event that accompanies the rolling out of a new curriculum document (Koh et al., 2014). For decades, researchers and educators (Le & Barnard, 2009; Markee, 1997; Nunan, 1989; Wallace & Priestley, 2011) in many disciplines have sought to identify the factors influencing curriculum innovation. Teacher competencies in implementing a curricular innovation are a significant factor in the formation of their attitudes towards the specific innovation (Karavas-Doukas, 1996; Openheim, 2005). With their knowledge, experience, and competencies, often teachers are central to any curriculum innovation effort. Competencies can be defined as an integrated set of personal qualities, knowledge, skills, and attitudes that is needed for effective performance in various teaching contexts. They have been divided into five categories (Koster et al., 2005): domain-specific knowledge, communication, organization, pedagogy, and attitude. Innovation within the curriculum requires a content-based approach to be replaced by a competence-based approach (Ngo, 2019).

There is no generally accepted framework of teacher competencies for innovative teaching especially in the context of curriculum innovation. Teacher competence is a broad concept which is comprised of the affective, cognitive, and behavioral ability of teachers in the process of applying curriculum innovations (Karatzia-Stavlioti & Alahiotis, 2007). Teachers' attitudes towards curriculum innovation cannot be fully explored without analyzing these three dimensions.

Teachers' understandings of the principles of an innovation and their background training play a significant role in the degree of implementation and the value of curriculum innovation. On the other hand, Kennedy and Kennedy (1996) found that while there are some studies on teacher attitudes to and beliefs about the value of intended curricular innovation, little research has been done to evaluate teachers' attitudes towards these changes, to explain the ways teachers think about their involvement in the curriculum innovation process and how teachers implement innovation behind the closed doors of their classrooms (Carless, 2001). The main objective of this study is to examine the attitudes of teachers towards curriculum innovation and identify the major themes that arise from curriculum innovation. The study is conducted in Vietnam, a country which has been deeply influenced by Confucianism for hundreds of years under cultural exchanges with China (Ngo et al., 2017). This study is particularly important in Vietnam which has been undergoing a process of transition from a tightly based centralized socialist economy to a more globalized market economy. The small-scale study outlined in this paper attempts to address, and, to a limited extent, study the attitudes of teachers towards curriculum innovation. We propose that our findings can be used as a starting point for developing more innovative and teacher-focused understandings of the curriculum.

The research seeks to answer the following questions: (1) *What are the attitudes of teachers in Vietnam towards curriculum innovation regarding their affective, behavioral, and cognitive dimensions?*; (2) *Is there any statistically significant difference in Vietnamese teachers' attitudes towards curriculum innovation by gender, age, level of education and years of teaching experience?*; (3) *In the Vietnamese context, what key themes emerge when teachers and educators describe their experiences and attitudes towards curriculum innovation programmes and policies?* The article is organized as follows. The next section presents the theoretical background for this study. The design of our study with a description of the research instruments and data analysis methods is presented in the following section, followed by the presentation of the results. We conclude with a discussion of the findings and the implication of these findings.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Educators acknowledge curriculum innovation is exceedingly intricate and that the knowledge, as well as the attitude of teachers concerning such innovation, is significant in schools and universities. Curriculum innovation is a complex educational approach because of the various factors embedded in the teaching process (Mata, 2012). Since teachers are the actual practitioner of the curriculum (Paudel, 2019), their attitudes towards curriculum innovation have often been used by curriculum planners as the primary indicator (Morris, 1988). Attitude is a hypothetical construct and is often used by researchers to understand and predict the behaviors of humans (Cheung, 2011). An attitude can be described as a predisposition to respond in a positive or negative manner with respect to a given attitude object. In this study, the attitude object is curriculum innovation.

Previous studies (Le & Barnard, 2009; Karavas-Doukas, 1996; Karatzia-Stavlioti & Alahiotis, 2007; Lemay & Moreau, 2020; Li et al., 2021; Morris, 1988; Paudel, 2019) have stressed the central role of the teachers in curriculum innovation and called on policy makers to take teachers attitudes into account (Handal & Herrington, 2003). Attitude can influence one's behaviors and constitute a part of one's identity (Aksoy, 2017). This assumed relationship

between attitudes and behaviors obtains general support from previous studies (Chen & Starosta, 1999; Karavas-Doucas, 1996; Openheim, 2005).

In terms of how an attitude towards curriculum innovation be formed, teacher attitude is a factor. Attitudes are formed and manifested at the level of three fundamental dimensions: affective, cognitive, and behavioral (Wood, 2000). Within the context of curriculum innovation, Karatzia-Stavlioti and Alahiotis (2007) suggested that it is not enough for teachers to act differently, which can be a surface phenomenon with no long term effects; it may also be necessary to alter the ways they think about the issues that are related to curriculum innovation, which could result in a more complex change: one that could affect their attitudes through the affective, cognitive and behavioral dimensions of their personality (Spinthourakis & Karatzia-Stavlioti, 2006).

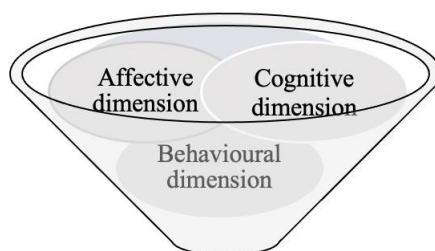


Figure 1. Teacher's Attitude Towards Curriculum Innovation

For curriculum innovation to be successful, it is essential that they understand the three dimensions shown above. Historically, the three-dimensional model based on the three theoretical approaches of humanism, behaviorism, and cognitivism respectively (Abidin et al., 2012) prevailed in describing how attitudes can be divided into affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions. Triandis (1971) argued that attitudes can be altered in a number of ways. He explained that the cognitive dimension can be changed by the acquisition of new information, the affective dimension by unpleasant experience involving the attitude object and the behavioral dimension by changes in norms or laws that force a behavioral change.

It can be postulated that innovation in the curriculum as a national policy in Vietnam has triggered the teacher's affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions of attitudes. Together or separately, they can form an attitude towards curriculum innovation. Because attitude is a latent variable, the existence of an attitude can only be inferred from some observable attitudinal responses. There are generally three classes of observable attitudinal responses: affective, cognitive, and behavioral. The affective attitudinal responses are the teachers' emotions and feelings towards curriculum innovation. The cognitive attitudinal responses refer to the evaluative beliefs of the teachers, and the behavioral attitudinal responses refer to the teachers' ability to implement the curriculum innovation.

### 3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A variety of methods have been employed in educational research for the study of teachers' attitudes and beliefs (Karavas-Doukas, 1996). In this study, to understand the attitude of teachers towards curriculum innovation, a mixed-method explanatory sequential design approach is used. This means that results of one approach were necessary for planning the next (Johnson et al., 2007). In this approach, the researcher collects quantitative data, analyses the results, then designs a qualitative open-ended plan to build upon the quantitative research (Creswell, 2014). Thus, the mixed methods combines the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to answer the three research questions. The quantitative stage is conducted in the first phase followed by the second phase which involves selecting the participants and qualitative analysis using a Thematic Analysis method.

#### 3.1. First phase: Quantitative method (using questionnaire survey)

A convenience sample of about 117 full-time teachers and educators was drawn from a population of 300 respondents. An attitude scale was developed to identify the attitudes of teachers towards curriculum innovation in Vietnam. The scale had three dimensions and fifteen statements in total. The first dimension was affective which contained five statements. The second and third dimension were cognitive and behavioural with five statements each. The questionnaire was translated into Vietnamese by one of the researchers and then approval was obtained by the research committee. Respondents were required to answer all the items in the questionnaire on their attitudes towards curriculum innovation regarding the affective, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions of attitude.

The first dimension is affective and has five statements representing the emotional sensitivity of which the teachers towards curriculum innovation. The second and third dimensions are cognitive and behavioural, each contains five statements. The cognitive dimension represents the concept of curriculum innovation and refers to the understanding of such innovation while the behavioural dimension represents the ability of the teachers to get the job done and implement it. Consequently, the study attempts to examine one of the research questions - whether there is a relationship between teachers' characteristics (gender, age, level of education, years of teaching experience, training) and the attitudes they have towards curriculum innovation. This then led to the qualitative phase of the study, in which affective, cognitive, and behavioural components of attitude towards curriculum innovation were identified, given that teacher competencies are a significant factor in forming teachers' attitudes towards innovation projects.

### 3.2. Second phase: Qualitative method (selecting the participants for qualitative analysis)

During the second phase, qualitative interview data were collected from several English language teachers and educators to identify the main themes related to teacher competencies. Through convenience sampling, six teachers were selected for extended semi-structured interviews. The interviews took place and were recorded with both audio and video on an online platform due to social distancing concerns.

Data was transcribed for content, and non-verbal communication was not included in the transcription. Although Bailey (2008) highlighted the importance in some contexts of including non-verbal communication in transcription, particularly in medical fields, methodological decisions still must be taken to reduce transcription density, and thus a decision was made given the nature of the interviews to include only verbal content. Data was transcribed in the standard UK written English and stored in plain text. Coding and analysis took place through NVivo software.

Table 1. Overview of Teacher participants

Teachers	Gender	Educational level	School	Years of teaching
Binh	Male	Master's	High School-Province	16
Trang	Female	Master's	Private School - Hanoi	6 years of Management experience
Dao	Female	Master's	High School	8
Nam	Male	PhD	High School	10; 24 years of Management experience
Nguyen	Male	Master's	High School	15
Mung	Female	Master's	High School	6

The qualitative data obtained from the interviews were analysed using Thematic Analysis (hereafter: TA) to identify themes that recurred regarding curriculum innovation among English teachers in Vietnam. The themes are specifically categorized according to teaching competencies. TA was selected as the most suitable method of analysis to identify these competencies, given that it is a flexible and accessible method of investigating qualitative data which has been applied effectively to educational research (Xu & Zammit, 2020).

The aim of TA is to find patterns that are repeated throughout datasets, thus giving insight into the data, and capturing the qualitative richness (Boyatzis, 1998) of the concepts expressed in the data. The TA used inductive coding, in which the codes are found within the data itself.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Results

The results from the quantitative analysis are presented first. To identify teachers' attitudes towards curriculum innovation in Vietnam, we calculated an average of the participants' responses for each of the three dimensions of attitude (affective, cognitive, and behavioural), which is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The average value of the attitude dimensions towards curriculum innovation

	N	Mean	Standard deviation
Affective	117	14.42	5.73
Cognitive	117	18.31	4.52
Behavioural	117	20.15	4.36

The attitude scale was given to 117 Vietnamese school teachers. The highest possible score that can be obtained in this scale and the one that is indicative of the most favourable attitude towards curriculum innovation is 75 (by scoring 5 - the highest mark on all 15 statements, while the least favourable attitude towards curriculum innovation is 15. Respondents' scores fell within a continuum of 15 to 75. Six of the respondents were interviewed. The results presented below shows the six teachers' scores which were analysed in depth. Table 3 shows their scores on the attitude scale.

*Table 3. Teachers' scores on the attitude scale*

Teacher	Score
1	75
2	63
3	44
4	75
5	52
6	62

*Gender:* Overall scores of all female teachers were compared to the overall scores of male teachers. Around 76% of the respondents were female while the remaining (24%) were males.

*Age:* The overall scores of senior teachers and educators (i.e. 45 years and above) were compared to the overall score of junior teachers and educators (i.e. 44 years and below). Around 55% of teachers and educators were identified as junior teachers because they were below 44 years. The remaining 45% were above 44 years of age.

*Level of education:* The overall scores of teachers and educators with higher level degrees (i.e. PhD and Masters) were compared to the overall scores of teachers and educators with lower-level degrees (i.e. Bachelor degrees). Around 49.6% have higher level degrees while 50.4% have lower-level degrees.

*Years of teaching experience:* The overall scores of teachers with more than 10 years of teaching were compared with ones with fewer years of teaching experience. Almost 59% of the teachers had over 10 years of teaching experience.

*Training in curriculum innovation:* The overall scores of teachers and educators who were trained in curriculum innovation were compared with those who were not trained. Almost 61% of the teachers and educators were trained in curriculum innovation.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is performed to examine the statistical significance of the differences in the means of the attitude scale scores that are given by the independent variables used to describe the various participant subgroups. Table 3 shows the sources of variation in five variables and summarizes the extent to which these variables contribute, as main effects to variation in the attitude scale scores.

Table 4 shows that training in curriculum innovation and years of teaching experience contributes to the larger main effect of these independent variables. The independent variable of gender also contributes significantly to the attitude score scales. To establish correlations between the three main dimensions of attitude towards curriculum innovation, a Pearson correlation test was performed.

*Table 4. Sources of Variation in the Attitude Scale Scores (ASS) (ANOVA N=117)*

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
Gender	107.812	117	4.111	5.679	0.001
Age	48.308	117	1.874	5.143	0.004
Level of education	55.248	117	1.464	3.655	0.006
Years of teaching experience	155.248	117	4.771	6.678	0.000
Training in curriculum innovation	167.966	117	4.884	3.655	0.000

Table 5 shows the correlations established between the three dimensions. The correlation established between the affective and cognitive dimensions shows that there exists a significant positive correlation ( $r=0,628$ ,  $df=117$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Therefore, the higher the positive value of affective dimensions, the higher the positive value of the cognitive dimension and vice versa. On the other hand, the correlation between the cognitive and behavioural dimension is not



significant ( $r=0.095$ ,  $df=117$ ,  $p>0.001$ ). The data shows that the value of the cognitive dimension does not affect in any way the behavioural dimension. Also, the correlation between the behavioural and affective dimensions shows that there is no significant correlation ( $r=0.144$ ,  $df=117$ ,  $p>0.01$ ).

Table 5. The correlations established between the dimensions of attitudes towards curriculum innovation

Attitude dimension		Affective	Cognitive	Behavioural
Affective	Pearson correlation	1	0.628	0.144
	Sig (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.269
	N	117	117	117
Cognitive	Pearson correlation	0.628	1	0.095
	Sig (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.392
	N	117	117	117
Behavioural	Pearson correlation	0.144	0.095	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	-.269	0.392	0.000
	N	117	117	117

**\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)**

After presenting the quantitative results, we now move to the qualitative data analysis. As explained earlier, this involved conducting interviews with six Vietnamese teachers and educators. Crucially, the transcription was obtained by the interviewer, aiming to a high level of initial familiarity with the data. The transcription process contributed to close, repeated reading or immersion in the compiled responses which allowed further familiarization with the data. The framework for initial code development was adapted from Xu and Zammit (2020) and used to complete the second stage of the TA, based on deductive analysis of, affective, cognitive, and behavioural competencies. This phase involved identifying the interesting features of the data and organising them into meaningful groups. Over the six interviews, several broad groups were identified, and then iteratively refined in a cyclical manner.

After preparing the code book, the next step was to develop a set of candidate themes and an understanding on behalf of the analyst of the themes' relationships. Braun and Clarke (2014) identified that the researcher needs to check if these themes effectively capture the meaning of the data and whether they are present throughout the dataset. As re-reading and comparison of themes are required, this was undertaken several times to ensure that the themes were truly representative of the data collected and offered insight into the competencies regarding curriculum innovation among the respondents. Both levels of re-reading for the coherence of themes, and consideration of the accuracy of the thematic map were undertaken. In all, the findings met Patton's (1990) criteria, meaning that the themes were generally coherent with one another and equally meaningfully distinct.

Overall, analysis of the six interview transcripts led to the identification of three overarching themes relating to teacher competencies. These three themes were selected based on similar criteria of Xu and Zammit (2020), in that they were seen as prevalent throughout the transcripts, and particularly representative of many voices in the interviews. The overall analysis of the themes is summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. Coding table showing correspondence between themes, dimensions, and interviewee responses

Themes	Dimension	Codes	Responses
Senior and younger teachers	Affective and behavioural	"Older teachers do not want to take risk" (Affective)	"Teachers do not take risk"- Interviewee 5
		"Younger teachers are ready to accept change" (Behavioural)	"Teachers are ready to participate in curriculum innovation" - Interviewee 4
Central role of assessment	Cognitive and behavioural	"Teachers often do not respond to curriculum innovation" (Cognitive)	"Some teachers have been in the teaching profession for many years, and they find results of the student are good."

		<i>“Teachers focus on grammar” (Behavioural)</i>	<i>As a result, they are conservative and revert to old and traditional ways of assessment” - Interviewee 2</i>
Practice of pedagogy	Cognitive and behavioural	<i>“Teachers practice of teaching is based on their practical knowledge” (Cognitive) “Teachers modulate curriculum materials for classroom practice” (Behavioural)</i>	<i>“Some of the teachers teaching was heavily dependent on the rules of pedagogy that have been learned by them from their formal training” - Interviewees 2 and 6</i>
Cost-benefit Analysis	Affective, behavioural and cognitive	<i>“Teachers view curriculum Innovation positively” (Affective)</i>	<i>“Older teachers do not understand curriculum innovation nor care” - Interviewee 1</i>
		<i>“Teachers view curriculum as a necessity” (Affective)</i>	<i>“Junior and younger teachers accept innovation in curriculum” - Interviewee 1</i>
		<i>“Teachers are not often aware of curriculum innovation and do not implement such innovation properly resulting in an increase in cost. (Cognitive) “Teachers do not implement curriculum innovation” “Often teachers are responsible and accept curriculum innovation” (Behavioural)</i>	<i>“Teachers believe it is a waste of effort”- Interviewee 6 “Teacher often do not accept responsibility for such innovation” - Interviewee 3</i>

#### 4.2. Discussion

The main aim of this study was to identify and analyse the attitudes of teachers towards curriculum innovation in Vietnam. The discussion is presented in two parts: (1) a quantitative study investing the attitude of teachers towards curriculum innovation in Vietnam and (2) a qualitative study to identify the main themes related to teacher attitudes in the context of such innovation. We begin the discussion by first examining the attitudes and responses of teachers and educators towards curriculum innovation and then identifying the main themes and issues, especially in the Vietnamese context.

Our research findings show that overall attitude of teachers and educators towards curriculum innovation in Vietnam is favourable since the analysis indicated that almost 84% of the teachers and educators have a positive attitude towards curriculum innovation. However, both the qualitative and quantitative analysis showed that there are certain challenges regarding curriculum innovation.

Given the average values of the attitude dimensions towards curriculum innovation, our data show that behavioural dimension has the highest mean (20.15) followed by cognitive (18.31) and affective (14.42) dimensions revealing that teachers look at curriculum innovation positively and they are ready to bring about changes.

An analysis of the results of ANOVA in Table 3 shows that the years of teaching experience and training in curriculum innovation are positive indicators in teachers' attitudes towards the realization of the curriculum. The independent variable of gender also contributes significantly towards curriculum innovation with female teachers scoring higher.

The result of the correlations provided in Table 4 reveals that the dimension level between the cognitive attitude and affective attitude has a significant positive correlation ( $r= 0.628$ ,  $df =117$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Therefore, it can be said that the understanding and awareness of teachers towards curriculum innovation significantly affect their emotional experience. The results further demonstrate that there is no significant correlation between the cognitive and behavioural dimension ( $r= 0.095$ ,  $df =117$ ,  $p > 0.001$ ) as well as between behavioural and affective dimension ( $r=0.144$ ,  $df =117$ ,  $p > 0.001$ ).

No teacher had a broad view of curriculum innovation which emphasised the three possible main dimensions of teachers' attitudes including, affective, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions and awareness of the interrelationship between these dimensions and the implementation of the curriculum although aspects of each dimension were mentioned by individual teachers. The data gathered from the open-ended questions through interviews were analysed using thematic analysis.

In addressing the research question, key themes were identified after interviewing teachers in Vietnam.

The first theme shows that curriculum innovation creates disunity as groups of resisters are formed (Fullan, 1993). There is a divide based on seniority of teachers in terms of how they implemented and responded to curriculum innovation, and several participants expressed a feeling that younger teachers, who tended to be more junior in their positions and more occupied with their academic career, were more likely to hold optimistic affective beliefs about innovation and did not regard it as labor intensive but modified their behaviour in line with this belief, by taking more concrete actions to implement innovations successfully.

At the same time, interviewees expressed the understanding that older teachers responded negatively to curriculum innovation as they held negative beliefs in the affective domain, fearing the risk to students' grades that could occur due to new teaching methods. Contrary to the general belief that teachers would want more autonomy to customize their curriculum to meet students' needs, the older teachers did not welcome the enhanced curricular autonomy, nor did they believe it would diversify the school. This could be in part due to misconceived beliefs about the innovation, such as that innovation will always lead to lower student academic results. Knowledge and experience are therefore vital factors for the success of curriculum innovation.

The more experienced teachers have with a traditional curriculum, the greater the chance that innovations will fail would be because teachers will lean on the certainties from the traditional curriculum. The main reason for the declining enthusiasm of the teachers is the possibility to escape from innovational experiences. Teachers adopt a curriculum in ways they think are the most appropriate for each specific teaching situation (Li et al., 2021). Such beliefs and behaviour would come under the affective and behavioural components of attitudes.

The next related theme that arose from the analysis of the interviews was the central role of assessment and assessment results in determining teaching practice, and subsequently the behaviour of teachers in the classroom. The interviewees commonly discussed the emotional sensitivity aspects of assessment, in that great importance was placed on gaining as good academic performance as possible. This led to, in the interviewees opinion, resistance to new methods or curriculum innovation, a lower interest in developing understanding of the innovation (cognitive), and a reluctance to alter classroom behaviours and pedagogical methods (behavioural). To understand the skills of teaching, it is useful to gain some insights into the practical knowledge that informs the decision-making process of teachers (Shulman, 1987) as well as how to manage a curriculum innovation process (Lemay & Moreau, 2020).

When teachers contemplate the adaptation of a new curriculum, they give high priority to the issue of student evaluation (Duffee & Aikenhead, 1992). As a result, those with such beliefs would 'fall back to the old methods' as one interviewee phrased it. This also included the other components of the teachers' experience which include feeling, judging, willing, and acting. Teachers' rules of practice were based on their rules of pedagogy learnt during their formal training and they modified it to their classroom experiences. The teacher's practical knowledge was heavily dependent upon a teacher's experience and the current teaching situation.

Another theme that recurred throughout the interview data can be described as a positive feeling in the emotional sensitivity component in which interviewees viewed curriculum innovation positively, and in some cases, as a necessity. Some teachers were motivated and ready to execute the changes. As they did not find them unfriendly, they looked forward to curriculum innovation with a more stable and consistent approach to be better accepted by all teachers.

However, the interviewees reckoned that many teachers feel that the significant effort required to alter teaching behaviour and classroom methodology, as well as institute new pedagogy could not outweigh the perceived rewards. Teachers lack the flexibility necessary for modifying their curriculum to meet students' needs and the changing social environment. In a sense, the effort used to alter and form new behaviours would in turn detract from the teachers' ability to achieve their primary goal of ensuring good educational outcomes through student assessment.

The next theme visualised was the practice of pedagogy which included the teachers judging, feeling, and acting in the context of curriculum innovation towards their classroom experiences. The teachers' practical knowledge was



heavily dependent on their past experiences, as mentioned by interviewees 2 and 6. Some teachers responded to the teaching situations by drawing from their past experiences upon which they formulated decisions for action to use this curriculum innovation into one which better suits their own values, beliefs, and visions of what the teaching situation would be. Rules of pedagogy that were learnt by the teachers in their formal training (cognitive) were applied and they modified the classroom experience (behavioural).

Finally, the value that the teachers put on implementing the curriculum depended on the extent to which the goals of the changed curriculum were congruent with those of their own teaching, and on the problems they could foresee arising from the varied constraints under which they habitually worked. The cost that the policy makers put on curriculum innovation may not reflect the teacher's day to day issues but the need for change demanded by the society or the patterns of teaching advocated by educational theorists. Thus, a cost-benefit analysis proved to be necessary because curriculum innovation relates to issues other than those of primary concern to the teachers.

Policy makers pay too little attention to the investment of energy, time and emotion demanded from teachers and the rewards promised to them. Instead, they focus more on the statement of principle and the desirable outcomes, resulting in neglecting the cost of the implementation. Teachers are hesitant and are not aware of curriculum innovation; consequently, they reject some aspects of the innovation, which may lead to higher costs.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The first conclusion which can be drawn is that the overall attitudes of teachers and educators towards curriculum innovation is positive. However, it is a challenge for most senior teachers as they are unwilling to adapt to curriculum innovation. As evidenced by the interviewee's responses, no teacher had a broad view of curriculum innovation which emphasised the three possible main themes of teachers' attitudes although each dimension was mentioned by individual teachers.

Another significant conclusion is that teachers revert to their traditional ways as assessments and "focus on grammar" or "take precedence over changes" in curriculum. The final finding is that although curriculum innovation in Vietnam is not a recent policy, some teachers are not aware of and not ready to accept the curriculum innovation, resulting in higher costs.

This study has some limitations as it was conducted during the COVID-19 when social restrictions were enforced, and our participants were only English language teachers. Further, it is based on interview data from a limited number of teachers in a selected area. The major findings of this study, therefore, cannot be generalized to all Vietnamese teachers (or to teachers outside Vietnam) but, rather, should be considered as exploratory and suggestive.

This study suggests that policymakers propose curricular reforms that considers the preconditions for the reform. It is evident from this study that curricular reform has been officially proposed, but the national authorities concerns themselves little with implementation. Curricular reform tends to unfold in a piecemeal way without addressing issues of teacher motivation, commitment, and contextual and cultural constraints.

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