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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Learning Place Control: Vietnamese EFL Students' Appreciation and Trust

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ABSTRACT – Learners in the contemporary digital world tend to move from space to space during their learning process. However, transforming such spaces to effective learning places is not simple. This study aims to investigate Vietnamese EFL students' appreciation for various learning spaces and their willingness in turning those spaces into places for learning purposes. The factors associated with this process are also explored. Employing a short questionnaire distributed to 226 undergraduate students and several follow up individual interviews, the study shows that most students travel across some spaces in their daily learning activities, but they do not try to control those spaces. They only appreciate their teacher-created and self-created solo learning spaces and accept these spaces as their learning places. They also agree that these are the spaces where they can best control their learning. These findings present a complex picture of students' exercise of taking control in their learning. It appears that the initiation of their learning must start with trust and convenience in a learning space. The attempt to control a learning space does not start with careful considerations as often seen in autonomous learners. This emphasises the role of trust in nurturing and shaping learners' capacity of space control for learning purposes.

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INTRODUCTION

Initiated by the literature on geography, the concepts of space and place have been recently researched in education contexts. While space refers to any surroundings where learners stay, place refers to a situation where learners intentionally engage in for some predetermined objective. In other words, place is a space "to which meaning has been ascribed" (Carter et al., 1993, p. xii). A learner may travel across many spaces, but only attempt to control a few and employ them as places for learning purposes. Learning opportunities and resources, for instance, can be found around the local context, but only some of them can become learners' favourite. Understanding the process of transforming a space into a learning place can demonstrate how learners select, initiate their engagement in, and maintain their control over a space.

Together with the development of technology, Vietnamese learners have various opportunities to be introduced to or to get in touch with a lot of spaces during their social and learning life. Lecturers at tertial education level tend to throw students a lot of learning resources and management advice at the beginning of each course. They expect their students to invest a substantial amount of time on learning outside of the classroom and take advantages of these spaces. The learning process would then automatically start, and students can develop their self-study ability as required in the higher education reform agenda (The National Assembly, 2005). The strategy seems to be useful for improving learner autonomy and life-long learning capacity but the process of paving and nurturing students' engagement pathways into these spaces is very limited.

In addition, Vietnamese students have been traditionally known as being quiet in class, particularly in higher education due to the big class size and influence of Confucianism. Lecturers' interactions with their students in class are often very limited. Students are expected to attend class regularly, pay full attention to the lesson, and memorise all the details (Albright, 2019; Dang, 2010). Teachers are the main sources of knowledge and do not often negotiate with students for a decision. Confrontations and arguments are not desired in the classroom. Students are not prepared with critical thinking and active learning in class although they are always expected to possess and exercise these attributes for the control of their out-of-class learning.

In short, provided with an education context where a clear objective on learning control capacity is stated but support for achieving the objective is very limited, it is necessary to understand how students navigate their learning activities effectively. This study, therefore, focuses on students' development process of controlling a learning place from many spaces and associated factors. To achieve this objective, the current research needs to understand (1) the number of spaces among which students often travel, (2) the control that they have over a learning place, and (3) the reasons that foster the transformation of a space into a place.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides a general theoretical background for the current research focus on students' ability to transform a space into a learning place which is also called learner autonomy capacity. The review starts with a clarification on the concepts of space and place. It continues with a discussion on the learning control ability and finishes with factors associated with students' preferences of willingly selecting a space for learning purposes.

Space and Place

The concept of space and place is originated from geography. It is used to understand human sense of location. This concept is then adopted for humanity science, particularly education, together with the development of technology which has been creating a lot of other virtual spaces and turning human communication a lot more complicated than ever before. Each individual can nowadays engage in many spaces at the same time. People are actually seen not to stay in a space but shift from space to space constantly. Therefore, their interactions within a space are often disrupted as they are taking part in different spaces. It is frequently seen that a learner is physically here but virtually there. A student is physically sitting in a classroom with their peers around but chatting with some other friends in a virtual chat room.

When it comes to learning, it is not always easy to differentiate space from place. One of the original attempts to declare this distinction is a study in 1993, in which Carter et al. proposed that place is a "space to which meaning has been ascribed" (p.xii). This notion was then clarified by Creswell (2004) who stated that places are created through actions by people doing things in a particular space. It can be seen that the key difference between space and place is not about whether it is physical or virtual, but about the players' mental and behavioural engagement. A space for one student can be a learning place for another, and any space can potentially become a learning place. A learning place can also become a space under certain conditions decided by the learners. Learning does not happen in a space normally. If it does, it must be very minimal as the learners only accidentally exercise the learning in a particular moment. When the learners choose to control a space for the language acquisition to occur, this space becomes a place (Murray, 2014).

Learning Control Capacity

Capacity of controlling learning processes is referred to as learner autonomy. This construct has widely been developed during the last four decades (Dang, 2012) and suggested to be one of the most important competences of the labour workforce in the 21st century. It has also been included recently in the education agenda of many countries, particularly those in Asia where the majority of students are traditionally believed to be passive. Controlling learning process should be different from controlling a place (Murray & Lamb, 2017) as the ultimate aim is for learning, not place. However, in a particular context of learning, controlling a learning place is actually controlling a learning process. Therefore, the current research uses these two ways of wording interchangeably. Controlling a learning place in this paper does not refer to the capacity for managing the place technically only, but managing the learning activities in that discourse.

The two important attributes of learning control capacity, or learner autonomy, often seen in the literature, are awareness and reflection (Lamb, 2016). In other words, learner autonomy includes both cognitive and behavioural aspects. The former emphasises the importance of internal factors that predispose learners towards accepting responsibility and controlling one's thoughts and actions as a learner. The definition from Little (1991) focuses on the psychological attributes of autonomous learners which enable them to take responsibility for and control over their learning. The particular attributes under consideration include detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action. This is later paraphrased as "the capacity to take control over one's own learning" (Benson, 2003, p. 47). The capacity is reflected through learners' control over learning management (such as making a study plan), cognitive process (such as paying attention or noticing input) and learning content (such as choosing what they want to learn).

On the contrary, the latter aspect of learner autonomy lays great importance on external factors that facilitate learner's self-management. This is reflected in one of the traditional definitions of autonomy by Holec (1981). Autonomous learners are those who are responsible for making decisions of their entire learning journey. They set up learning objectives, choose the learning materials, adopt methods, monitor process, and evaluate progress. These are actual behaviours that can be observed from the learners. When learners exercise their control ability, others can record those manifestations. This is fundamentally different from the psychological perspective which considers learner autonomy a controlling device.

Taking a more holistic approach, the current study values both cognitive and behavioural aspects of learner autonomy. It considers them to be the two sides of a coin and investigate them in the context of learning community. Learner autonomy is regulated by the interactions of individuals with others in a sociocultural place (Benson, 2011). Learning is therefore situated (Bloch et al., 1994), not independent. In other words, the current investigation examines the intertwine of individual characteristics and place features for the expression of learner autonomy (Murray, 2014). This should then allow a more comprehensive picture of the concept under investigation.

Learning Place Appreciation

There have been numerous factors contributing to students' appreciation and engagement in a learning place. These factors range from environmental aspects, such as noise, colour, furniture, lighting, temperature, and air quality (Keep, 2002; Higgins et al., 2005) to personal aspects, such as experience, emotion, task organisation, safety, and social structure (Beckers et al., 2016; Bowen et al., 2008; Dang & Robertson, 2010). There is a big body of literature on task design and

students' learning engagement. Prominent features of the design include interactive sequence, attractiveness of the topic, community building and facilitative feedback from teachers. It has been shown that discussion among a group of learners does not automatically take place once a concern or problem is raised. Normally, students do not start a collaborative task simply because they are interested in doing it although this type of highly autonomous learners has been acknowledged in some studies. Students tend to wait until the deadline or some kind of pressure from teachers to kick off their actual learning process in a place without the physical presence of their teachers (Dang & Robertson, 2010; Dennen, 2005).

As the current study does not employ a particular task design for a learning place experiment, it neutralises all the factors associated with learning environment and task organisation. It assumes that the target population is generally exposed to similar spaces and places in the local context. Therefore, it only aims to look for the distinct factors which are closely relevant to the local context of Vietnam that students exhibit. It focuses more on the beliefs that local students tend to hold and the social constraints that they perceive towards a learning space.

It has been known as a tradition that Vietnamese students strongly believe whatever their teachers say as they are frequently asked to remember the lessons word by word in the school level. Tertiary students are, however, asked to question their teachers critically. Although this does not inherently take place in classes commonly, it encourages the students to think differently from what the teachers present. From my observation, some students are particularly concerned about the soundness of their teachers' knowledge. They sometimes demonstrate their disagreement with their teachers through facial expression or body language. They do not voice their concern clearly as it would be considered to be a boast, a quality which is definitely disrespected in Vietnamese learning context.

Therefore, it can be called the contemporary situation of education in Vietnam as a transition to the era of fully enabling and fostering learner autonomy. Students are constrained by the requirement of enhancing their own learning control capacity and the closure of opportunities for developing this capacity by teachers in class. The students are supposed to recognise such a dilemma is expected to place different levels of trust on their teachers. This study concerns how such variations may trigger different effects on students' development of learner autonomy. The restrictions in class would positively or negatively facilitate students' engagement in the classroom activities and take control of this learning place. If the classroom learning space is inadequately valued by students, do they try to transform other spaces available to them into learning places?

METHODOLOGY

Despite of being traditionally considered to be passive in class, the contemporary generation of learners have been cognitively and behaviourally changed in learning due to their exposure to the international literature on the Internet and the government reforms in the teaching philosophy (Dang, 2020). Taking into account the context of a transition period in promoting learner autonomy in Vietnam, the current study is interested in understanding if students attempt to transform the spaces to which they are exposed into learning places. The study also investigates the key cultural factor that triggers this space-place transformation process and the level of learner autonomy that they exercise in their most appreciated learning place.

Participants

The study was conducted in the Faculty of Foreign Languages in a public university in the South of Vietnam. The teaching and learning practices of the faculty are not much different from those of other public universities in Vietnam. A Google form-based survey was emailed to all students of the faculty who were taking a Bachelor of Arts in English as a Foreign Language, and they were advised to voluntarily respond to the survey. As a result, 226 students, accounted for around 35% of the target population, responded to the online survey, and eleven of them agreed to take part in the individual interviews by marking their interest in the interview in the survey. They were at different stages of their candidature in the four-year training programme, including 77 freshmen (34.1%), 61 sophomores (27%), 69 juniors (30.5%), and 19 seniors (8.4%). The classroom facilities are quite typical in Vietnam higher education with a blackboard, a projector, chairs and tables in fixed rows. The Internet coverage on campus is limited. The class size ranges from 30 to 60 students.

Design

The study employs a sequential mixed method design (Creswell & Creswell, 2017), starting with some preliminary data collected from a questionnaire and explanatory qualitative data from follow-up interviews with 11 participants who voluntarily agreed to respond to the interview questions. After the findings from the questionnaire data were generated, the interview questions were formulated and sent to the volunteer participants. The data from the interview were used to get students' detailed insights into the results identified from the questionnaire. The whole procedure was done online. The email interview included multiple rounds for verification of the meanings that the participants wanted to convey in their email responses. Vietnamese, the mother tongue of the participants, was used during the whole data collection process to facilitate students' accurate understanding and responses.

Instruments

Two instruments were developed and employed in the current study. The questionnaire was designed to collect information on (1) the spaces that students travelled across in their daily life, (2) the space in which they most frequently stay, (3) the space that they most appreciated, and (4) the level of control that they exercised in their learning place. The

expression of learning control capacity consists of three attributes, namely management, cognitive process, and content. The interview instrument includes three questions, requiring students to describe their journey of travelling across the spaces, their controlling behaviours in a learning place, and the reasons for their transformation of a space into a learning place. Back-translation was used for both instruments, and several wording changes were made to the instruments after the translations were collected from two Vietnamese native speakers teaching English for over ten years. The instruments were then piloted with five students from the target population. Responses from these students were not included in the data of this study. As a result, some other minor changes on the wording were made, and the final validity check was conducted among the researchers and the translators prior to the administration of the instruments.

Analysis

The quantitative data collected from the questionnaire were computed for mean score and analysis. Findings on the teacher-created and self-created learning spaces were used to shape specific questions for the interview. As a result, the interview questions particularly focused on the reasons that participants appreciated their physical class, virtual class, and solo learning space at home. Responses from the interviews were transcribed and translated into English. The translation verification process was conducted. The final version was imported for analysis after the interviewees' identity was anonymised. The data analysis procedure allowed emergent of any new theme as originally expected in the objectives of the current study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section organises the findings into four sections, integrating both quantitative data from the questionnaire and qualitative data from the follow-up interview. The quantitative data were presented first, and followed by the discussion with supports from the qualitative data. This method of presentation can help highlight the overall picture of students' learning process cognitively and behaviourally in the transition context of education in Vietnam. Local perspectives of the researchers were also integrated to increase the comprehensiveness of the argument presented in the research.

Travelling Spaces

The participants reported over a dozen of spaces that they travelled across in their learning journey, including conventional spaces such as formal class, virtual class, library, group discussion; entertainment spaces such as coffee shop, youth union network; and emerging spaces such as part-time job environment, online community. These spaces can be characterised as either social, digital, and physical only. There is an absence of emotional, political, and philosophical spaces as reported by tertiary students in New Zealand (Hobbs & Dofs, 2017). This is consistent with contemporary situation of Vietnam where students who do not often pay much attention to political issues tend to remove themselves from emotional spaces during their learning activities.

However, the number of spaces that the students came across are quite different from one another, unequally ranging from 1 to 12 with an average of 3.9. This reflects a big variation of the learning opportunities perceived by the students in the contemporary context of Vietnam. Even at the undergraduate level, several students only consider classroom as the possible learning space. This is totally opposite to some other students who consider any space around them offers learning opportunity. These variations in the students' preference of learning spaces were also reported in the context of United States (Bennett, 2011) where students of six institutions were asked about the usefulness of non-classroom campus spaces. Regardless of any investment, spaces outside of the classroom are dramatically differently favoured by the students.

Further investigations into students' travelling among spaces highlights an important role on usefulness perceived from the learning space. After knowing about a learning space, they started to check it out and transformed it into a learning place if they found it useful. However, they could easily leave it and move to another space. For example, Student 2 reported that:

> *My teacher introduced me Youglish and Howjsay for pronunciation skill improvement. I checked them out and found them interesting. After working on them for a while, some other websites popped up. I was then taken to the new websites and continued to practice my skills on them.*

Similarly, Student 4 and Student 9 said that they could read books, surf websites, or watch TV whenever they want if they were in their own learning space. It can be seen that students staying in a space does not necessarily interact with that space only. They actually travel forwards and backwards very smoothly among spaces even when they are in a physical space. This complicated pattern of travelling is also observed from students in a course named *English for Science* at a university in Hongkong (Hafner & Miller, 2017). The students did not seem to stay still at a space or even at a place within a snapshot of their learning journey.

Learning Places Appreciated

The data show that the learning place which was most greatly appreciated by the students is their self-created solo learning place at home. However, this was only rated by 35.8% of the sample although it accounts for the biggest variance of the variable. In other words, the best learning place for each student is quite different from one another, indicating their diverse perceptions of the usefulness of learning spaces. In a transition period of promoting learner autonomy and

emergence of many learning spaces initiated by technology, Vietnamese students clearly exhibit a diversification in their personalised learning routes. This is contradictory to what has been traditionally believed, in which students should focus on only one best learning plan to achieve success most efficiently.

This result becomes even more interesting when up to 78.3% of the sample reported that their most frequently visited learning space is the classroom. However, the number of students considered classroom to be the most effective learning place is only 13%, while 7% ranked the second, after the self-created learning space at home. This means that a majority of students come to class, as required by the university probably, but do not take control of this learning space. It reflects a possible crisis in higher education as students tend to expect a lot more than what is offered in the classroom. They no longer consider classroom the most favourable or effective learning place although they cannot avoid visiting it.

The only extract from the interview data that shows great appreciation on the classroom learning place is from Student 8, who said that:

> *At school, I feel quite convenient with exchanging ideas with friends and teachers. I am more motivated in the classroom. For example, if I have trouble with understanding the questions or an instruction, I can easily check it with my friends and solve the problem.*

It should be expected that such a reflection would be evidenced in most of students' classroom learning experience, but it turns out that it is really scarce. This student obviously appreciates the class because of the interactions that she can make to facilitate her learning achievement. It is also how learning control capacity is to be developed. However, teachers do not seem to offer such an optimal support. Consequently, students tend to appreciate other alternatives better. For example,

> *I sometimes go to the Walking Street to practice English with foreigners, but the best learning place for me is the Internet. I usually watch English learning channels on YouTube, such as EllenShow, Motivation2Study* […] *and follow some Facebook groups to communicate with others.*

Similar reports are also identified in the literature on students' selection of learning space when they are given a chance in Taiwan. The influence of Confucianism in Taiwan education is not much different from that in Vietnam. Students at all levels are believed to be passive and reticent in class, and teachers are the authoritarians of learning materials. However, contemporary students express critical comments on their teachers' practices and show negative attitude towards the traditional teaching approach (Wu, 2011). When they are given choices, they willingly opt for the learning spaces that they think are more meaningful and beneficial. This explains why Asian students such as those coming from Indonesia become more active when studying abroad in Australia although they are believed to be shy and quiet in their country (Exley, 2005).

Learning Control

Given that a variety of learning places are appreciated by students, it is necessary to know to what extent they can control those places. As analysed from the questionnaire data, the students reported quite a high level in controlling their own learning places. On a scale of 5, ranging from *not at all* to *very well*, the students rated their level of learning control over their most appreciated place to be 3.9, 3.8, and 3.9, for learning content, learning management, and cognitive process respectively (as presented in Table 1). This shows that they could exercise learner autonomy quite well in their most favourable place.

Table 1. Students' Level of Control Over Learning Places.

Areas of Control	Min	Max	SD	Mean
Learning content (choosing what to learn)	1	5	0.70	3.9
Learning management (plan, organise, evaluate learning)	1	5	0.74	3.8
Cognitive process (attention, awareness, mental process)	2	5	0.70	3.9

This is contradictory to the traditional assumption that Vietnamese students are not active and do not know how to manage their own learning process. This means that students may look passive and need spoon-feeding in class, but they are quite active in their learning outside of the class, in their suitable learning place. This is consistent with a low level of appreciation for the class environment rated by the students. The class seems to be unsuitable or unfavourable for the students due to a rigid protocol that they can see from every class. The cultural disciplines which suppress students' personal voices and critical reactions may also contribute to their appreciation towards this traditional learning platform negatively. Consequently, some students post their negative comments about their teachers on some social media channels or among their chat groups although they always express their positive judgements to the teachers in the classroom.

Further analysis on the actual performance of learner autonomy from the interview data shows that students can choose what to learn with some justifications. For example Student 10 said:

> *Using the result that I got from the mock test, I could assess my skills to know my strengths and my weaknesses* […]. *It is difficult to practice Writing and Speaking skills at home; therefore, I compared my writings with the sample, using the rubrics provided in the material. I also did the same with Speaking skills. I recorded my talk and compared* [...] *or sent my writings and talk to my friends…*

This shows that the student understood quite well about the place and chose the suitable materials or skills for the learning purposes. As he was preparing for an IELTS test, he decided to pick a mock test, instead of other materials. This shows that the student was well aware of his selection. However, the justification is clearly presented in the case of Speaking and Writing skills. This also confirms the general pattern of learner autonomy performance generated from the questionnaire data.

Detailed investigations into specific expressions of students' learning control ability show that they employed different strategies to manage their learning. The data indicate that the students initiated their learning opportunities by going to different learning spaces such as English-speaking club, Central Park, and coffee shop. Student 1, for example, said:

> *To improve my communication skills, I usually went to English-speaking clubs or the Central Park to talk with foreigners. I went with my friends, so they could encourage me to speak up and help me if needed or in case I was too shy to talk.*

Ability to plan and monitor the learning process is also exemplified by Student 3 who carefully prepared a to-do list before coming to the learning place. She intentionally came with other members and left all social networking site notifications aside to get the learning tasks done effectively.

In addition, participants of the local context of Vietnam exhibited several attributes of controlling their attention and feelings. While Student 5, Student 6, and Student 9 preferred to form a collaborative place to encourage each other to work, Student 7 and Student 8 wanted to study in quiet places to increase their level of attention. The strategies that the students employed demonstrate their intention of controlling their own cognitive process for better learning quality. As they are aware of their personalities and learning preferences, they prepare a suitable place to increase their level of control over their learning.

It can be seen that learner autonomy is not exercised in any place but only in certain contexts. A student may possess a high level of learner autonomy, but they may be very passive in a space. In other words, like learning, learner autonomy is situated. It should be transferable but conditionally latent. The absence of learner autonomy performance is likely to be driven by the perspective of the learner and the facilitation from the learning space. The following section is therefore devoted to this concern.

Reasons for Appreciation

Different from a low level of appreciation that the students reserved for their teacher-created physical learning space, they reported a moderately high level of acknowledging the importance of their teacher-created virtual space (M=3.7, on a scale of 5, ranging from *not necessary at all* to *very necessary*). In the interview data, Student 2, for example, also agreed that she started her learning process with the learning space designed by the teacher although she might be taken to another one afterwards. The students never seemed to ignore any space created by their teachers although their attempt to control these spaces was not sustainable.

Combining all of the data on students' appreciation of learning space produces a highlighted role of trust on students' perception of learning spaces. Regarding the spaces created by the teachers, the students did not like the classroom but the virtual space, although they frequently visited both spaces. In contrast, their appreciation level of other-created spaces varies from one to another. It shows the teachers' considerable influence on students' engagement decision. Once the learning is designed by the teachers, the students tend to accept it for granted. If it is suitable for their preference, they will actively work on it and exercise their control over it. If it is not of their preference, they still stay on it, but peripherally.

It has been argued that at least three core dimensions of learning space, namely structure, power, and agency need to be constructed for learning engagement (Hafner & Miller, 2017). A nearly empty space is unlikely to attract learners or encourage them to return. The space should be structured in such a way that learners can clearly know what they are expected to do and what they can achieve. Meanwhile, it should provide a certain level of freedom for students to make decisions and exercise their agency. In addition, the power relationship plays an important role in increasing learning engagement. In the current research, the students do not seem to be suppressed by the teachers' power, but turn it into trust. This seems to be the most significant reason for driving the students' efforts in exercising their learning control in a space.

The data show a pattern of gradual change of Vietnamese students' trust in their teachers. Traditionally, the students should have totally respect the learning spaces created by their teachers. They would have considered these spaces to be the utmost important place for their knowledge acquisition and skill development. However, the data collected from the contemporary context shows a slightly different pattern. The students appreciated the teacher-created learning space only when it matched their personal preference and convenience. The majority of students tended to think about themselves when selecting a space for learning engagement rather than accepting the teacher-created space for granted. Nevertheless, they still considered the space created by their teachers seriously, and no one, at least, in this study, thought about ignoring any teacher-created learning space. It should be interesting to know how many students in the local context would trust

their teachers in the near future, especially when online learning is predicted to become more popular and students are believed to be better navigators than their teachers in the virtual world.

CONCLUSION

Taking an exploratory approach, the current study depicts a general overview of Vietnamese undergraduate students' ability to control learning spaces and the students' level of trust in teacher-created learning space. The students have demonstrated they seamlessly travelled across several spaces during their learning journey as the boundaries between these spaces are actually unclear. Similar findings were also reported in the context of Japan where the students moved through a number of learning environment in their journey (Murray & Fujishima, 2016). They were not even aware of their travel. For example, they said that the best learning space for them is a self-created one for solo learning, but they did talk to different groups of people and engage in the learning activities from different resources. They also demonstrated quite a high level of control over the place that they find suitable and convenient. Their exercises of space control include all three aspects of learner autonomy, including content, management, and cognition. This seems to be contradictory to the traditional belief that the Vietnamese students prefer spoon-feeding only.

In spite of travelling across a variety of spaces, most of them spent a lot of time on their teacher-created places. Their level of appreciation on these places was also different. While the virtual place was greatly appreciated, the physical classroom was valued by only a small number of students. This preference pattern of the Vietnamese digital natives is not different from that of Taiwanese students who expressed strong interest in virtual place rather than the physical place (Chuang et al., 2014). This also leads to variations in the level of control that they take over on these places. However, they did not attempt to totally ignore these teacher-created places. This highlights a high level of trust that the students tend to automatically reserve for their teachers, reflecting a transition in students' perspective on their teachers.

It seems that Vietnamese students are exercising their learner autonomy capacity more explicitly in a transition context with the support of technological and social development. They are exposed to more virtual learning opportunities. They also confidently and strategically initiate and control their learning places although the influence of Confucianism is still inherent in the students' cognitive thinking when they just accept the importance of their teacher-created spaces for granted. Vietnamese students are culturally in charge of their learning behaviours. This urges serious reconsiderations and improvements on the quality of the physical classrooms. If the teacher-fronted approach continues to be in place, the students will be likely to devalue it and their engagement in this place will purely be peripheral.

In addition, the contemporary digital native generation appears to be particularly interested in virtual learning places. However, the teacher-created learning spaces currently cannot serve the students' needs well. Consequently, their virtual learning engagement is constantly disruptive and scattering. There has been little evidence to confirm if disruptive learning due to frequent space travels is more effective than continuous learning within a space. However, it should be argued that each space is designed for specific purposes and students cannot always identify the most suitable combination of spaces for their learning. Therefore, maintaining a reasonable stay in a well-designed space would be at least more time-saving and efficient than traveling among spaces. This urges teachers to construct better spaces for learning purposes.

Staying at the same learning place, even if the place is interesting may not be able to cope with students' differences in the connected world. In other words, there must be multiple spaces created for students as space traveling is part of their learning behaviours. Further research should look for optimal methods of navigating and controlling a group of complementary spaces in a learning cycle. It is also important to understand the types of controls exercised by students in a learning space that can lead to sustainable engagement and the type of responses from the space that can attract students' interactions with the space so that they are willing to transform it into a place.

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