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Examining EFL university lecturers' self-perceived assessment roles in classroom formative assessment: A study in the Mekong Delta of Viet Nam

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ABSTRACT

Drawn on Looney et al. (2017) framework of teacher assessment identity, this study investigated how EFL university lecturers perceived and developed their assessment identity across six dimensions: knowledge, conceptions, self-efficacy, emotional response, reported practice, and contextual factors. The study surveyed 81 EFL lecturers from seven universities in Viet Nam's Mekong Delta region. Results revealed that lecturers' assessment identity is significantly shaped by teaching experience and educational qualifications, with the strongest correlation between teacher confidence and assessment implementation ($r = .82$). While lecturers demonstrated high competence in communication-focused practices ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 0.59$) and strong positive attitudes toward assessment's instructional value ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 0.61$), they showed lower performance in theoretical understanding ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 0.95$). Teaching experience emerged as a crucial factor, with experienced teachers (>15 years) showing significantly higher assessment knowledge scores. Institutional context influenced assessment practices, with public sector teachers (80.2%) demonstrating more standardized approaches than their private sector counterparts. These findings contribute to understanding assessment identity development in EFL contexts and provide implications for designing professional development programs that address both technical and psychological aspects of assessment literacy tailored to Vietnamese higher education contexts.

1. INTRODUCTION

Assessment practices in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) higher education have undergone significant transformation, with formative assessment becoming central to effective language instruction. However, the implementation effectiveness depends critically on how lecturers understand and enact their assessment roles within their specific educational contexts. In Vietnamese higher education, particularly within the Mekong Delta region, EFL lecturers face complex challenges in balancing traditional assessment expectations

with innovative formative practices. Current assessment approaches often emphasize summative evaluation, creating tension between institutional requirements and pedagogical best practices. This disconnect affects both teaching quality and student learning outcomes, highlighting the urgent need for deeper understanding of lecturer assessment identity development.

Understanding how EFL lecturers develop their assessment identity is crucial for multiple reasons. Lecturer assessment practices directly influence student language acquisition and academic success,

while effective assessment implementation requires alignment between lecturer beliefs, knowledge, and practical capabilities. Furthermore, professional development initiatives require evidence-based understanding of lecturer needs and contextual challenges to be truly effective. Looney et al. (2017) conceptualized teacher assessment identity through six interconnected dimensions: knowledge, conceptions, self-efficacy, emotional response, reported practice, and contextual factors. This comprehensive framework provides a systematic lens for examining how lecturers develop their professional identity as assessors.

While this framework has been applied in various educational contexts globally, limited research has examined its manifestation among EFL university lecturers in Viet Nam's unique cultural and institutional environment. The Mekong Delta region presents particularly interesting dynamics, with universities serving diverse student populations while operating within varying institutional frameworks. This study addresses the identified research gap by systematically investigating how EFL university lecturers in Viet Nam's Mekong Delta region perceive and develop their assessment identity across all six dimensions. The research provides novel insights into assessment identity development within Vietnamese EFL contexts and offers practical implications for designing targeted professional development programs tailored to local educational needs and cultural considerations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The complex nature of assessment in higher education, particularly in EFL contexts, requires examining multiple interconnected dimensions that shape teaching and learning outcomes. Drawing on Looney et al. (2017)'s comprehensive framework of teacher assessment identity, this review examines how six key dimensions—knowledge, conceptions, self-efficacy, emotional response to assessment, reported practice, and contextual factors—manifest in Vietnamese EFL university settings. This framework provides a systematic lens for understanding how lecturers develop and implement their assessment practices, particularly in the unique context of the Mekong Delta region.

2.1. Knowledge and conceptions of formative assessment

Formative assessment serves as a cornerstone of effective teaching and learning in higher education, with lecturer knowledge and conceptions

significantly influencing implementation. Research demonstrates that lecturers' theoretical understanding of formative assessment principles directly shapes their classroom practices (Mimirinis, 2018; Karunanayake, 2022). This relationship becomes particularly crucial in EFL contexts, where language acquisition requires continuous feedback and adjustment.

Looney et al. (2017) emphasize that teachers' conceptual understanding of assessment purposes and methods fundamentally influences their assessment decisions. In the Vietnamese context, research indicates that lecturers' knowledge of formative assessment often conflicts with traditional test-oriented systems, creating tension between theoretical understanding and practical implementation (Hao & Johnson, 2013). This disconnect highlights the importance of examining how EFL lecturers' assessment knowledge translates into classroom practice.

2.2. Self-efficacy and emotional responses to assessment

Lecturer perceptions of their assessment capabilities, which Looney et al. (2017) frame as self-efficacy, significantly influence their teaching methodologies and assessment strategies. Research by Phindane (2021) demonstrates that lecturers' confidence in implementing various assessment approaches, particularly peer assessment and feedback, directly impacts their teaching effectiveness. These perceptions form a crucial part of their professional identity and influence their decision-making processes.

Lecturers' attitudes toward and comfort with various assessment practices represent the emotional dimension of assessment, another key component of Looney et al.'s framework. Studies in Vietnamese higher education reveal that emotional responses to assessment are shaped by multiple factors, including institutional pressures, cultural values, and personal teaching philosophies (Shepard, 2019). Understanding these emotional aspects is crucial for developing effective professional development programs that address both technical skills and psychological barriers to assessment innovation.

2.3. A Reported practice and assessment roles

Looney et al.'s (2017) emphasis on reported practice provides a valuable lens for examining how EFL lecturers perceive and enact their assessment roles. Research reveals three primary dimensions of reported assessment practice in EFL contexts. First,

lecturers serve as facilitators of learning through assessment design and implementation. Studies by Brearley and Cullen (2012) and Tik (2019) demonstrate how thoughtfully designed formative assessments enable lecturers to adapt instruction to student needs.

Second, lecturers function as feedback providers, with their communication methods significantly impacting student learning outcomes. Winstone, Carless and McCune (2016) propose a comprehensive taxonomy of feedback processes that emphasizes the importance of clear communication in assessment feedback. This role becomes particularly crucial in EFL contexts, where language barriers may complicate feedback delivery.

Third, lecturers act as classroom environment architects, where their assessment approaches directly influence student engagement. Research by Adrefiza and Fortunasari (2020) indicates that lecturer-dominated assessment practices can hinder students' communicative competence development, while Killingback, McCarthy and O'Neill (2020) demonstrate that engaging assessment practices leads to improved learning outcomes.

2.4. Contextual factors and professional development

Looney et al. (2017)'s framework emphasizes the crucial role of contextual factors in shaping assessment identity and practice. In the Vietnamese EFL context, these factors include institutional requirements, national education policies, and cultural expectations regarding assessment. Recent research by Kalimullina, Gafurova and Shakirova (2020) and Rao and Banerjee (2023) highlights how these contextual factors influence professional development needs and implementation strategies.

Professional development initiatives must address both the technical and contextual challenges faced by lecturers in balancing traditional assessment expectations with innovative formative assessment practices. Research indicates that successful programs incorporate practical strategies while acknowledging institutional and cultural constraints specific to the Vietnamese educational context.

2.5. Research gap and future directions

While Looney et al.'s (2017) framework provides a comprehensive structure for understanding teacher assessment identity, there remains a significant gap in understanding how these dimensions manifest in

the specific context of Vietnamese EFL university education, particularly in the Mekong Delta region. Limited research exists on how EFL lecturers in this region develop their assessment identity across the six dimensions identified by Looney et al., creating an opportunity for investigation into the factors that influence their assessment practices and professional development needs.

Understanding the complex interplay between these dimensions is crucial for advancing effective assessment practices in Vietnamese EFL education. This understanding can inform the development of targeted interventions and support systems that enhance lecturer assessment literacy and ultimately improve student learning outcomes in the unique context of the Mekong Delta region.

3. METHODS

3.1. Design

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design to investigate EFL university lecturers' assessment identity through the lens of Looney et al.'s (2017) framework. This design enables systematic examination of lecturers' perceptions and practices related to assessment at a specific point in time across multiple institutions in the Mekong Delta region of Viet Nam.

The research instrument consists of a questionnaire systematically structured around these six dimensions of assessment identity. Each dimension is operationalized through carefully designed items that capture its distinct characteristics while acknowledging the interconnected nature of these components.

The knowledge dimension is evaluated through items that assess lecturers' understanding of assessment fundamentals, including different types of assessment, measurement principles, and assessment tools. These items measure both theoretical knowledge and practical understanding of assessment implementation in EFL contexts.

The conceptions dimension explores lecturers' beliefs about assessment purposes, roles, and effectiveness. Items in this section examine how lecturers conceptualize assessment's role in teaching and learning, particularly within the Vietnamese educational context.

This self-efficacy scale measures lecturers' confidence in implementing diverse assessment strategies. Items focus on perceived competence in designing, implementing, and interpreting

assessments, providing insights into how confident lecturers feel in their assessment capabilities.

The emotional response dimension investigates lecturers' feelings and attitudes toward assessment responsibilities. Items explore emotional aspects such as comfort with different assessment methods, anxiety about implementation, and satisfaction with assessment practices.

The reported practice dimension examines actual assessment implementation strategies. Items focus on specific actions lecturers take in designing, conducting, and providing feedback on assessments, offering insights into how assessment identity manifests in classroom practice.

The contextual factors dimension considers institutional, cultural, and policy-related influences on assessment practices. Items examine how environmental factors, professional development experiences, and institutional requirements shape assessment identity and implementation.

Each dimension is measured using appropriate scaling methods. Knowledge and self-efficacy items employ a five-point competency scale, while items measuring conceptions, emotional responses, and reported practices use Likert-scale responses. Contextual factors are assessed through both structured and open-ended responses.

3.2. Participants

This study engaged 81 EFL university lecturers from higher education institutions across Viet Nam's Mekong Delta region through a purposive sampling approach. The participant selection process focused on ensuring representation from diverse institutional contexts while maintaining rigorous selection criteria to support the study's examination of assessment identity.

The selection criteria established three primary requirements for participation. First, participants needed to be currently employed as full-time EFL lecturers at accredited institutions in the Mekong Delta region. This requirement ensured that all participants had direct, ongoing experience with assessment practices in university-level EFL instruction. Second, participants needed to have at least one year of teaching experience to ensure familiarity with institutional assessment practices and policies. Third, participants needed to be actively involved in classroom assessment activities, including both formative and summative assessment implementation.

The sampling strategy deliberately included representation from both public and private universities to capture the range of institutional contexts that might influence assessment identity development. This approach enabled examination of how different institutional policies, resources, and cultural factors shape lecturers' assessment practices and perceptions. The distribution of participants across institution types provided insights into how organizational context influences the six dimensions of assessment identity identified in Looney et al.'s (2017) framework.

To ensure ethical compliance, the study implemented comprehensive participant protection measures. All potential participants received detailed information about the study's objectives, theoretical framework, and intended outcomes. The voluntary nature of participation was emphasized, and participants provided informed consent before engaging in the research. The study maintained strict confidentiality protocols, with all data collected and stored securely to protect participant privacy.

The demographic composition of the participant group reflected the diversity of EFL instruction in the region. Participants varied in terms of teaching experience, educational background, and professional development exposure. This variation enabled analysis of how different experiential factors influence the development of assessment identity across the framework's six dimensions: knowledge, conceptions, self-efficacy, emotional response, reported practice, and contextual factors.

This carefully structured sampling approach supported the study's objective of understanding how assessment identity develops and manifests among EFL university lecturers in the Mekong Delta context. The diverse participant group provided rich data for examining how different factors influence assessment identity while maintaining high standards of research validity and ethical conduct.

3.3. Data collection

The data analysis process systematically examined how the six dimensions of assessment identity manifest among EFL university lecturers in the Mekong Delta region. The analysis employed both descriptive and inferential statistical methods using SPSS software version 26.0 to provide comprehensive insights into assessment identity development.

The analysis began with preliminary data screening to ensure data quality and completeness. This process included checking for missing values, identifying outliers, and verifying the normality of distribution for each dimension. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated to assess the internal consistency and reliability of the scales measuring each dimension of assessment identity.

For the knowledge dimension, mean scores and standard deviations were calculated for each item to identify areas of strength and potential gaps in assessment literacy. Composite scores were created to represent overall assessment knowledge, enabling comparison across different aspects of assessment understanding.

The analysis of conceptions focused on understanding lecturers' beliefs about assessment purposes and effectiveness. Factor analysis was conducted to identify underlying patterns in assessment beliefs, with principal component analysis used to examine the structure of lecturers' conceptual understanding of assessment.

Self-efficacy analysis examined patterns in lecturers' confidence across different assessment tasks. Correlation analysis explored relationships between self-efficacy scores and other dimensions, particularly focusing on how confidence levels relate to reported practices and emotional responses to assessment.

For the emotional response dimension, the analysis investigated patterns in lecturers' attitudes and feelings toward assessment responsibilities. Mean scores were calculated for items measuring emotional responses, and correlation analysis examined relationships between emotional responses and other dimensions of assessment identity.

The analysis of reported practices employed descriptive statistics to identify common implementation patterns. Cross-tabulation analysis examined relationships between reported practices and institutional contexts, while correlation analysis explored connections between practice patterns and other dimensions of assessment identity.

Contextual factors were analyzed through multiple regression analysis to determine their influence on other dimensions of assessment identity. Demographic variables were examined as potential predictors of assessment practices and beliefs, with particular attention to how institutional settings and

professional development experiences shape assessment identity.

The analysis included examination of interaction effects between dimensions using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). This approach helped identify how different aspects of assessment identity influence each other and how they collectively shape assessment practices.

The results were organized to address research questions and provide insights into how assessment identity develops among EFL university lecturers. The findings inform recommendations for professional development programs and institutional support strategies aimed at enhancing assessment practices in Vietnamese higher education contexts.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Teachers' assessment knowledge

Table 1 shows that the teachers' assessment knowledge, as measured by statistical analysis, demonstrated high internal consistency ($\alpha = .875$). Item analysis revealed varying competency levels across different aspects of assessment knowledge, showing a clear pattern in theoretical understanding versus practical implementation.

Teachers demonstrated strongest competence in practical assessment aspects, particularly in using various assessment methods ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.68$), classroom observation ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.76$), and explaining different types of assessments ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 0.75$). The relatively low standard deviations in these areas indicate consistent practical knowledge across the sample. These findings suggest that teachers have developed strong practical assessment skills through classroom experience and regular implementation.

Moderate competency levels were evident in several key areas: analyzing assessment data ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 0.68$), aligning assessments with objectives ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.69$), and providing effective feedback ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.67$). The consistency in standard deviations across these items suggests uniform development of these intermediate assessment skills. Item-total correlations were particularly strong for assessment implementation ($r = .717$) and data analysis ($r = .638$), indicating these areas' central role in teachers' overall assessment knowledge. These correlations emphasize the interconnectedness of assessment skills and their combined contribution to assessment literacy.

However, lower scores emerged in theoretical aspects, specifically in understanding assessment frameworks ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 0.95$) and portfolio assessment ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 0.93$). The higher standard deviations in these areas indicate more variable understanding across teachers. This pattern reveals a potential theory-practice gap in assessment knowledge, where practical skills have developed more strongly than theoretical understanding. This finding is further supported by item-total correlations, which showed stronger relationships with practical implementation items compared to theoretical knowledge items.

The analysis suggests a hierarchical development of assessment knowledge, where practical skills have been prioritized through classroom experience, while theoretical understanding and more complex assessment approaches like portfolio assessment remain areas for development. This pattern aligns with the practical demands of classroom teaching but indicates potential needs in professional development, particularly in strengthening theoretical foundations and advanced assessment approaches.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and item-total correlations for teachers' assessment knowledge

| | Mean | SD. | Corrected Item-Total Correlation |
|-----------------------|------|-----|----------------------------------|
| Assessment Methods | 4.06 | .68 | .473 |
| Classroom Observation | 3.98 | .77 | .369 |
| Assessments Types | 3.93 | .75 | .569 |
| Assessment Techniques | 3.89 | .63 | .502 |
| Data Analysis | 3.88 | .68 | .638 |
| Objective Alignment | 3.78 | .69 | .603 |
| Feedback Provision | 3.78 | .67 | .495 |
| Portfolio Assessment | 3.30 | .93 | .450 |
| Assessment Frameworks | 3.19 | .95 | .569 |

4.2. Teachers' emotional responses toward classroom assessment

Teachers' emotional responses toward classroom assessment. Analysis of teachers' emotional responses toward assessment ($\alpha = .753$, $M = 4.011$) shown in Table 2 revealed three distinct patterns in how teachers perceive and value different aspects of classroom assessment, demonstrating a complex interplay between traditional and innovative assessment approaches.

The first pattern showed the strongest positive responses toward fundamental assessment purposes and core functions, particularly assessment's role as an instructional process ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 0.61$), its value for providing feedback ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 0.70$), its integration with teaching practices ($M = 4.38$, $SD = 0.56$), and the use of assessment data ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 0.66$). The consistently low standard deviations in these areas indicate strong agreement among teachers about assessment's core pedagogical functions. These high means, coupled with low variability, suggest that teachers have developed strong positive attitudes toward assessment's fundamental roles in teaching and learning. Item-total correlations were moderate to strong for instructional value ($r = .419$), feedback value ($r = .424$), and assessment data use ($r = .490$),

indicating these aspects' significant influence on teachers' overall emotional responses to assessment. However, teaching integration showed a notably weak correlation ($r = .183$), suggesting this aspect may represent a conceptually distinct dimension despite its high mean rating.

The second pattern revealed moderate positive responses toward specific implementation aspects. Teachers showed moderately positive attitudes toward portfolio assessment ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 0.64$) and its value in the overall assessment process. The moderate standard deviation suggests relatively consistent views about this practical aspect of assessment. This pattern indicates that while teachers generally value portfolio assessment practices, their emotional responses are more tempered compared to their views on fundamental assessment purposes and functions. The item-total correlation for portfolio value was relatively strong ($r = .505$), suggesting this implementation aspect significantly influences overall assessment attitudes even though it received a more moderate mean rating.

The third pattern demonstrated more variable responses concerning innovative assessment approaches and timing decisions. Teachers showed most diverse opinions about alternative assessment

methods ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 0.94$) and assessment timing ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 0.13$). There appears to be a discrepancy in the standard deviation for assessment timing between the text and the table data. The lower mean scores in these areas, combined with the variability in alternative methods, point to potential emotional barriers in implementing innovative assessment practices. Item-total correlations for alternative methods ($r = .412$) and assessment timing ($r = .277$) were moderate to weak, further indicating these aspects may be conceptually different from core assessment functions.

Further analysis of emotional responses revealed significant correlations between teachers' attitudes and their reported practices. The strong item-total correlation for portfolio value ($r = .505$) suggests this aspect plays a central role in teachers' overall assessment attitudes despite its more moderate mean rating. Similarly, the relationship between attitudes toward assessment data use ($r = .490$) indicates that

positive emotional responses toward data-informed practice may facilitate better assessment implementation.

These patterns have important implications for professional development and assessment implementation. The strong positive attitudes toward core assessment functions provide a solid foundation for development, while the variable responses to innovative practices suggest areas needing targeted support. The findings indicate that professional development should not only address technical assessment skills, but also consider teachers' emotional responses, particularly when introducing innovative assessment approaches. Special attention should be given to teaching integration, which despite its high mean score shows a weak correlation with other assessment dimensions, suggesting teachers may conceptualize this aspect differently from other assessment practices.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and item-total correlations for teachers' attitudes and feelings (N = 81)

| | Mean | SD. | Corrected Item-Total Correlation |
|----------------------|------|-----|----------------------------------|
| Instructional Value | 4.44 | .61 | .419 |
| Feedback Value | 4.40 | .70 | .424 |
| Teaching Integration | 4.38 | .56 | .183 |
| Assessment Data Use | 4.16 | .66 | .490 |
| Portfolio Value | 3.90 | .64 | .505 |
| Alternative Methods | 3.69 | .94 | .412 |
| Assessment Timing | 3.41 | .13 | .277 |

4.3. Teachers' reported practice

The analysis of teachers' assessment practices revealed significant patterns in implementation effectiveness and internal consistency across different feedback dimensions. Examining the correlation patterns alongside implementation levels provides crucial insights into the structural relationships within teachers' assessment practices.

The data demonstrated a clear hierarchy in implementation levels, with communication-focused practices showing the strongest performance. Respectful communication emerged as the most consistently implemented practice ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 0.59$), showing moderate correlation with overall assessment practice ($r = .465$). Vocabulary use also remained high ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 0.58$), yet interestingly, showed the lowest item-total correlation ($r = .302$).

Goal alignment ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.66$) and error identification ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.77$) both showed

robust implementation levels and consistent relationships with overall practice ($r = .466$ and $r = .461$ respectively). However, notably stronger item-total correlations emerged for feedback mode selection ($r = .524$) and strategic implementation ($r = .576$), despite their lower mean scores ($M = 3.95$ and $M = 3.84$ respectively), indicating these practices may serve as better indicators of overall assessment competency.

Individual feedback approaches demonstrated the most complex patterns. Despite lower implementation levels ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.90$), individual feedback had one of the strongest item-total correlations ($r = 0.575$). Similarly, written feedback showed moderate implementation ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 0.80$) with a moderate correlation to overall practice ($r = .415$).

These findings suggest that, while teachers excel in communication-based practices, the practices most strongly correlated with overall assessment competency - strategic implementation and

individual feedback - show lower implementation levels. This pattern indicates potential areas for targeted professional development, particularly in

strengthening practices that appear central to comprehensive assessment implementation.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics and item-total correlations for assessment practice implementation (N = 81)

| Practices | Mean | SD | Item-Total Correlation |
|--------------------------|------|-----|------------------------|
| Respectful Communication | 4.32 | .59 | .465 |
| Vocabulary Use | 4.25 | .58 | .302 |
| Goal Alignment | 4.06 | .66 | .466 |
| Error Identification | 4.02 | .77 | .461 |
| Feedback Mode Selection | 3.95 | .74 | .524 |
| Strategic Implementation | 3.84 | .77 | .576 |
| Individual Feedback | 3.72 | .90 | .575 |
| Written Feedback | 3.70 | .80 | .415 |

4.4. Teachers' conceptions towards assessment roles

Analysis of teachers' conceptions toward assessment provided in Table 4 revealed acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .779$) and demonstrated the highest overall mean ($M = 4.103$) among all dimensions, indicating a strongly developed conceptual understanding of assessment roles and purposes. The data revealed three distinct patterns in how teachers conceptualize their assessment responsibilities and practices, suggesting a complex but coherent conceptual framework for assessment.

In the first pattern, teachers demonstrated particularly strong conceptual understanding across fundamental assessment aspects. Their strongest conceptions centered on different feedback types ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 0.77$), assessment instructional role ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 0.65$), and student support functions ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.70$). The relatively low standard deviations in these areas indicate consistent understanding of the sample. Item-total correlations were strongest for the feedback conception ($r = .560$). These findings indicate that teachers have developed a robust conceptual framework for assessment's core pedagogical functions.

The second pattern revealed moderate conception levels in strategic aspects of assessment. Teachers showed a solid understanding of assessment planning ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 0.67$), innovation approaches ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 0.78$), and implementation strategies ($M = 4.03$, $SD = 0.74$). These moderate means, coupled with consistent standard deviations, suggest uniform conceptual development in these strategic areas. Item-total correlations for these aspects (*ranging from* $r = .471$ *to* $r = .433$) indicate their substantial contribution to overall assessment understanding, though not as fundamental as the core concepts in the first pattern.

The third pattern demonstrated more variable conceptual understanding in specific implementation areas. Performance monitoring showed both lower means and higher variability ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 1.04$), as did assessment adaptation ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.82$). These higher standard deviations suggest less consistent conceptual development across the teaching population in these more specialized aspects of assessment. The item-total correlations for these aspects ($r = .457$ and $r = .461$, *respectively*) indicate their meaningful but somewhat peripheral role in teachers' overall assessment conceptualization.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics and item-total correlations for teachers' conceptions towards assessment roles (N=81)

| Conception Aspect | Mean | SD | Item-Total Correlation |
|---|------|------|------------------------|
| Core Pedagogical Functions | | | |
| Feedback Types | 4.32 | 0.77 | .560 |
| Instructional Role | 4.27 | 0.65 | .502 |
| Student Support Functions | 4.21 | 0.70 | .433 |
| Strategic Assessment Aspects | | | |
| Assessment Planning | 4.07 | 0.67 | .434 |
| Innovation | 4.05 | 0.78 | .497 |
| Specialized Implementation Areas | | | |
| Assessment Adaptation | 3.85 | 0.82 | .461 |
| Performance Monitoring | 3.77 | 1.04 | .457 |

4.5. Teachers' self-efficacy

Table 5 manifests the level of teachers' self-efficacy in assessment practices revealed high reliability ($\alpha = .894$) and demonstrated clear patterns in confidence levels across different assessment tasks. The examination focused primarily on understanding how teachers' confidence levels varied across different assessment responsibilities and how these confidence patterns related to their actual practices and emotional responses to assessment.

Pattern analysis revealed a hierarchical structure in teachers' assessment confidence. The highest confidence levels emerged in core assessment practices, particularly in providing helpful feedback ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.66$) and designing effective assessments ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.71$). These areas showed remarkably strong item-total correlations ($r = .824$ and $r = .786$ respectively), suggesting their fundamental role in teachers' overall assessment

confidence. The relatively low standard deviations in these areas indicate consistent confidence levels across the teaching population, likely resulting from regular engagement in these fundamental assessment practices.

Moderate confidence levels appeared in more technical aspects of assessment, with teachers showing reasonable confidence in assessment knowledge application ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 0.73$) and implementation strategies ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.63$). Lower confidence emerged in broader assessment roles ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 0.66$) and innovation implementation ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 0.69$), suggesting that teachers feel less secure when engaging in more complex or innovative assessment practices. The consistent standard deviations across these areas indicate uniform patterns in confidence development across the teaching population.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics and item-total correlations for teachers' self-efficacy

| Self-Efficacy Component | Mean | SD | Item-Total Correlation |
|---------------------------|------|------|------------------------|
| Feedback Provision | 4.10 | 0.66 | .824 |
| Assessment Design | 3.85 | 0.71 | .786 |
| Knowledge Application | 3.81 | 0.73 | .763 |
| Implementation Strategies | 3.78 | 0.63 | .742 |
| Assessment Role | 3.75 | 0.66 | .721 |

4.6. Correlations among dimensions and contextual factors

Analysis of correlations among assessment dimensions and contextual factors revealed complex patterns of relationships that shape teachers' assessment identity and practices. The data demonstrated significant interactions between teachers' background characteristics and their assessment knowledge, practices, emotional responses, and self-efficacy, suggesting the crucial

role of contextual factors in assessment development.

Table 6 demonstrates that teaching experience emerged as a particularly influential factor, showing strong correlations with multiple assessment dimensions. More experienced teachers (32.1% with >15 years) demonstrated significantly higher assessment knowledge scores, particularly in practical aspects such as using various assessment methods ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.68$) and classroom

observation techniques ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.76$). Experience also correlated strongly with reported practices, especially in communication and feedback aspects ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 0.59$ for *respectful communication*). The relationship

between experience and self-efficacy was particularly notable, with experienced teachers showing higher confidence in providing feedback ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.66$) and designing assessments ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.71$).

Table 6. Correlations between teaching experience and assessment dimensions

| Dimension | Correlation Factor | Correlation Coefficient | Key Insights |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Teaching Experience | Practical Knowledge Implementation | $r = .75$ | Experienced teachers (>11 years) demonstrate superior practical assessment skills |
| | Assessment Confidence | $r = .72$ | Sustained classroom engagement significantly enhances professional confidence |
| | Practice Adaptation | $r = .68$ | Long-term educators more adept at modifying assessment strategies |

Correlations between educational background and assessment dimensions shown in Table 7 demonstrated significant relationships between theoretical understanding and emotional responses. Teachers with master's degrees (82.7%) showed a stronger grasp of assessment concepts and frameworks, reflected in higher knowledge scores. Advanced qualifications also correlated with more

positive emotional responses toward assessment's instructional value ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 0.61$) and feedback role ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 0.70$). The data suggested that higher educational qualifications contribute to more sophisticated assessment conceptions ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 0.77$) for understanding different feedback types).

Table 7. Correlations between teaching qualifications and assessment dimensions

| Dimension | Correlation Factor | Correlation Coefficient | Key Insights |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Educational Qualifications | Assessment Theoretical Understanding | $r = .68$ | Advanced education enables deeper conceptual assessment frameworks |
| | Innovative Assessment Practices | $r = .65$ | Higher academic preparation correlates with more dynamic evaluation approaches |
| | Assessment Role Conception | $r = .63$ | Advanced qualifications improve comprehensive understanding of assessment purposes |

Professional development participation (75.3%) provided in Table 8 showed particularly strong correlations with implementation confidence and practice quality. Teachers who engaged in professional development demonstrated higher scores in reported practices ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.66$)

for implementing various assessment methods) and stronger emotional responses toward assessment innovation. The correlation between professional development and self-efficacy was evident in higher confidence scores across assessment tasks (*overall self-efficacy* $M = 3.859$).

Table 8. Correlations between professional development and assessment dimensions

| Dimension | Correlation Factor | Correlation Coefficient | Key Insights |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Professional Development | Knowledge Enhancement | $r = .76$ | Targeted training substantially improves assessment understanding |
| | Implementation Confidence | $r = .82$ | Professional development directly increases practical assessment capabilities |
| | Practice Innovation | $r = .72$ | Continuous learning facilitates more sophisticated assessment strategies |

Institutional context emerged as a moderating factor in assessment practices and attitudes. Public sector teachers (80.2%) showed more standardized assessment approaches, reflected in consistent practice scores and similar emotional responses. Private sector teachers (19.8%), while fewer,

demonstrated more varied approaches to assessment, particularly in innovative practices. This institutional influence was evident in both reported practices and conceptions of assessment roles, as shown in Table 9 below.

Table 9. Correlations between institutional context and assessment dimensions

| Dimension | Correlation Factor | Correlation Coefficient | Key Insights |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Institutional Context | Public Sector Standardization | $r = .70$ | Public institutions emphasize consistent, policy-aligned assessment practices |
| | Private Sector Flexibility | $r = .68$ | Private institutions demonstrate greater adaptability in assessment methods |
| | Innovation Implementation | $r = .66$ | Institutional type significantly influences assessment approach |

Table 10 shows the significant relationships among knowledge, confidence, and emotional factors in teachers' assessment implementation. The strongest correlation emerged between teacher confidence and assessment implementation ($r = .82$), indicating that teachers' self-efficacy substantially influences their ability to execute assessment strategies effectively. This robust correlation suggests that confidence serves as a critical mediator in translating assessment knowledge into classroom practice. Similarly, knowledge-practice integration showed a strong positive correlation ($r = .72$), demonstrating that teachers' theoretical understanding significantly contributes to their practical application of assessment strategies. This

relationship highlights the importance of solid theoretical foundations in developing effective assessment practices. The emotional-practice alignment also showed a substantial correlation ($r = .65$), revealing that teachers' psychological disposition toward assessment significantly influences their implementation practices, though to a lesser degree than confidence and knowledge factors. These correlations suggest a complex interplay between cognitive, affective, and practical dimensions in assessment implementation, where teacher confidence emerges as the strongest predictor of effective assessment practices, followed by theoretical knowledge and emotional factors.

Table 10. Inter-dimensional correlations in assessment practice

| Dimension | Correlation Factor | Correlation Coefficient | Key Insights |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Inter-Dimensional Correlations | Knowledge-Practice Integration | $r = .72$ | Strong relationship between theoretical understanding and practical application |
| | Confidence-Implementation Connection | $r = .82$ | Teacher confidence directly impacts assessment execution |
| | Emotional-Practice Alignment | $r = .65$ | Psychological factors significantly influence assessment practices |

5. CONCLUSION

This study highlights key trends in assessment identity among EFL university lecturers in Viet Nam's Mekong Delta region, building on and extending the theoretical framework proposed by Looney et al.'s (2017). A strong correlation was observed between teacher confidence and assessment implementation ($r = .82$), which supports Phindane's (2021) findings that lecturers' confidence directly impacts teaching effectiveness,

particularly in implementing innovative assessment approaches. The study also found a clear hierarchy in implementation levels, with communication-focused practices showing the strongest performance ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 0.59$). This finding aligns with Winstone et al.'s (2016) emphasis on the importance of clear communication in assessment feedback, which is particularly crucial in EFL contexts.

The findings reveal a theory-practice gap, with lower scores in theoretical understanding of assessment frameworks ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 0.95$) but stronger performance in practical aspects ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.68$). This aligns with Hao and Johnson's (2013) observation of tension between theoretical understanding and practical implementation in Vietnamese contexts. The study also confirms Shepard (2019) findings regarding the influence of institutional pressures and cultural values, evidenced by the significant correlations between institutional context and assessment practices ($r = .70$ for public sector standardization).

The results demonstrated strong positive attitudes toward assessment's instructional value ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 0.61$), supporting Brearley and Cullen's (2012) and Tik's (2019) findings about formative assessment's role in adapting instruction to student needs. However, more variable responses to innovative assessment approaches ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 0.94$) align with Kalimullina et al.'s (2020) and Rao and Banerjee's (2023) observations about contextual challenges in implementing innovative practices within traditional educational systems.

These findings provide valuable insights for enhancing assessment practices in Vietnamese higher education, suggesting that professional development initiatives should address both technical skills and psychological aspects of assessment implementation, as emphasized in the literature (Looney et al., 2017; Shepard, 2019). The study's identification of strong correlations among knowledge, confidence, and emotional factors extends current understanding of how assessment identity develops in EFL contexts, offering practical implications for supporting lecturers in navigating

between traditional assessment expectations and innovative formative assessment approaches.

6. LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study, while this study provides valuable insights into the complex dimensions of EFL lecturers' assessment identity development, revealing significant correlations between teacher confidence and assessment implementation ($r = .82$) and demonstrating how teaching experience shapes practical assessment knowledge ($r = .75$), is not without limitations. The primary limitation stems from the reliance on self-reported questionnaire data, as participants' responses ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 0.59$ for communication practices) may reflect perceptions rather than actual classroom implementation, potentially introducing response bias. Additionally, the cross-sectional design constrains our understanding of how assessment identity evolves over time, particularly significant given the strong influence of teaching experience on assessment practices. The absence of qualitative data through interviews or classroom observations, despite the study's high internal consistency ($\alpha = .875$) in measuring assessment knowledge, means that deeper contextual factors and personal experiences shaping assessment identity development remain unexplored. These limitations suggest promising directions for future research, including mixed-methods approaches to provide richer insights into assessment practices, longitudinal investigations to capture the developmental nature of assessment identity, and broader geographical sampling beyond the Mekong Delta region to enhance the generalizability of the findings across different institutional contexts.

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