



EVALUATING THE LEVEL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING INVESTMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT BASED ON DARVIN AND NORTON'S INVESTMENT MODEL IN A VIETNAMESE UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: The level of investment in foreign language learning plays a decisive role in the success of the foreign language learning process and contributes significantly to promoting professional development. This study explores the basic concepts of investment in foreign language learning based on the investment model of Darwin and Norton (2015) and professional development activities in the context of a university in Vietnam. Based on the investment model of Darwin and Norton (2015), the study delves into three factors including identity, capital, and ideology that affect the level of investment in foreign language learning for professional development. Utilizing methods including interviews, observation, and document analysis, the study's findings reveal the complex interaction among identity, capital, and ideology in shaping learners' investment orientation toward professional growth, concurrently illustrating the extent of the research subjects' foreign language learning investment for professional development. Based on this in-depth perspective on learner investment in language learning within the Vietnamese university context, these findings offer valuable theoretical and practical insights into language education. The research specifically concerns the factors affecting learner investment in foreign language study for professional development based on the three core components consisting of identity, capital, and ideology. The study simultaneously evaluates the level of foreign language learning investment in a university setting in Vietnam.

Keywords: evaluating, investment, learning foreign language, investment model, professional development

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ĐÁNH GIÁ MỨC ĐỘ ĐẦU TƯ HỌC NGOẠI NGỮ ĐỂ PHÁT TRIỂN CHUYÊN MÔN DỰA TRÊN MÔ HÌNH ĐẦU TƯ CỦA DARVIN VÀ NORTON TẠI MỘT TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC Ở VIỆT NAM

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Tóm tắt: Mức độ đầu tư học ngoại ngữ đóng vai trò quyết định đến sự thành công của quá trình học ngoại ngữ đồng thời góp phần quan trọng thúc đẩy phát triển chuyên môn. Nghiên cứu này khám phá những khái niệm cơ bản về đầu tư học ngoại ngữ dựa trên mô hình đầu tư của Darwin và Norton (2015) và hoạt động phát triển chuyên môn trong bối cảnh tại một trường đại học ở Việt Nam. Dựa trên mô hình đầu tư của Darwin và Norton (2015), nghiên cứu đi sâu vào ba yếu tố: danh tính, vốn, và tư tưởng tác động đến mức độ đầu tư vào quá trình học ngoại ngữ nhằm phát triển chuyên môn. Sử dụng các công cụ bao gồm: phỏng vấn, quan sát và phân tích tài liệu, kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy sự tương tác phức tạp giữa danh tính, vốn và tư tưởng trong việc hình thành định hướng đầu tư của người học để phát triển chuyên môn, đồng thời thể hiện mức độ đầu tư học ngoại ngữ để phát triển chuyên môn của khách thể nghiên cứu. Dựa trên cách nhìn sâu sắc về sự đầu tư của người học vào việc học ngoại ngữ trong bối cảnh đại học Việt Nam, những phát hiện này đóng góp những hiểu biết có giá trị về mặt lý thuyết và thực tiễn vào giáo dục ngôn ngữ. Cụ thể, nghiên cứu tìm hiểu các yếu tố ảnh hưởng đến việc đầu tư của người học vào quá trình học ngoại ngữ để phát triển nghề nghiệp dựa trên ba thành phần cốt lõi bao gồm: danh tính, vốn và tư tưởng. Nghiên cứu đồng thời đánh giá mức độ đầu tư học ngoại ngữ trong môi trường đại học tại Việt Nam.

Từ khóa: đánh giá, đầu tư, học ngoại ngữ, mô hình đầu tư, phát triển chuyên môn

1. Introduction

In the current global trend, foreign languages are regarded as necessary instruments for connecting individuals with the wider world. Currently, more and more people attempt to concentrate on language learning investment as requiring foreign language proficiency. That is the reason why investigating the factors that influence the decision to invest in language study has become increasingly essential.

The investment model developed by Darwin and Norton (2015) demonstrates the interplay of identity, capital, and ideology to clarify how and why foreign language learners engage in language acquisition. Drawing on the idea of capital as mentioned in Bourdieu's (1986) capital theory, together with Norton's (2013) prominent study on identity and language learning, Darwin and Norton (2015) develop the investment model, which provides a solid framework for analyzing the complex nature of investment in language learning around aspects of identity, capital and ideology. Understanding these dimensions of investment in learning foreign languages is particularly relevant in the context of Vietnamese universities, where foreign languages are regarded as the key to academic and career opportunities. This study uses Darwin and Norton's (2015) Investment Model to examine the investment for professional development made by foreign language learners at a Vietnamese university. By concentrating

on significant areas including identity, capital, and ideology, this study seeks to explore the motivations, challenges and contextual factors to shape students' commitment to foreign language learning and evaluate the level of language learning investment within the context of a university in Vietnam. These findings are expected to provide educators, policy makers, and language practitioners with valuable insights to improve foreign language education in Vietnam and relevant contexts. This study focuses on 2 following research questions:

1. *What are the social, cultural, and economic factors that influence individuals' investment in foreign language learning for professional development, according to the Darwin and Norton investment model?*

2. *What is the level of investment in foreign language learning based on the Darwin and Norton model of lecturers at a Vietnamese university?*

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Concept of Foreign Language Learning Investment

With in-depth studies on investment models conducted over many years, Darwin and Norton (2015, 2016, 2017) argue that foreign language learning investment is related to the commitment and resources that learners are willing to allocate to the process of acquiring a new foreign language. This concept emphasizes the interaction between identity, ideology, and capital in foreign language learning. Foreign language learning investment is not simply a learning activity but is also considered a process of investing personal resources, including time, effort, and finance, to achieve social, cultural, economic, and professional values.

Meanwhile, Kramsch (2013) mentions that investment is a structure considered to be the foundation in language education.

Soltanian et al. (2019) provide the highlight on the concept of learner investment in language acquisition. Based on Norton's discussion and Kramsch's citation, readers quite comprehend that it is necessary for language learners to acquire material and symbolic resources to increase their cultural capital and social influence. The learners spend dedication to their identity and the social role through language proficiency reflected in this investment, which goes beyond just time and effort.

Additionally, Saleem and Shah (2023) assert that language learning is the process through which newcomers in a community or culture acquire membership, legitimacy, and communicative competence. Language learning involves acquiring the ideologies, sociocultural practices, and beliefs of the target language community. Furthermore, language learning investment refers to a learner's commitment to the identities, practices, and goals that reshape their learning processes as they negotiate various structures of power and social relationships.

2.2. Overview of Darwin and Norton's Investment Model

Darvin and Norton's (2015) investment model builds on Norton's earlier work on investment and identity in language learning. The model identifies three interrelated dimensions that influence learner investment including identity, capital, and ideology.

Figure 1*Darvin and Norton's Investment Model**(Darvin & Norton, 2015)*

2.2.1. Identity

According to Darvin and Norton's (2015) model, identity includes dynamic identity, multiple identities, and negotiated identities. First, dynamic identity and multiple identities refer to the fact that learners have multiple dynamic identities that develop over time and in various contexts. Their language learning experiences both influence and are influenced by these identities. Second, learners' ongoing identity negotiations in connection to language acquisition are referred to as negotiated identities. The expectations and demands of their social and educational environments are balanced with their sense of self.

2.2.2. Capital

Economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital are the four categories of capital that Darvin and Norton (2015) distinguish. The first element supporting learning language is economic capital, consisting of tuition fees, textbooks and extracurricular activities. Cultural capital refers to the knowledge, competence and educational background that learners bring to the language learning process, including their familiarity with the target language and culture; meanwhile social capital refers to the social networks and relationships providing support and opportunities for language practice and learning. Finally, less familiar to everyone but no less important, symbolic capital describes the legitimacy and respect that learners gain from their teachers, peers and the wider community because of their language proficiency and cultural knowledge.

2.2.3. Ideology

Ideology, which is mainly related to language ideology and power relations, is the final component of the model. For language Ideology, learners' perceptions and experiences are shaped by their attitudes and beliefs about language and speakers that can have an impact on learners' motivation and commitment to language acquisition. For power relations, access to opportunities and resources is influenced by hierarchical relationships both within and between social contexts. During the time of attempting to acquire a language, learners must negotiate these power relationships.

2.3. The Concept of Professional Development

Educational research has described professional development in diverse ways. Diaz-Maggioli (2003) provides the definition of professional development as an ongoing learning process in which teachers voluntarily adapt their teaching methods to meet the learning needs of their students. Murray (2010) argues that professional development is an important part of effective teaching. It helps educators stay informed about new trends, change teaching methods,

and enhance student learning. Recently, Perry and Booth (2021) assert that professional development plays an important role in improving teachers' skills, knowledge, and teaching practices, not only in terms of content such as subject matter knowledge or pedagogical strategies, but also in how professional development activities are organized and delivered. According to Sadeghi and Richards (2021) as well, professional development of language teachers is a key measure to ensure that teachers stay updated and avoid risks of leaving the profession. It can be said that professional development is a continuous process in which individuals want to improve their knowledge, skills and abilities to meet current job requirements and prepare for future challenges. In essence, professional development is not only theoretical learning but also a process of practical application, including updating new knowledge in the professional field; refining and innovating working methods and techniques; building soft skills, such as communication skills, collaboration, and problem solving. In particular, it is significant for lecturers to frequently study foreign languages to do research, read foreign language books to update their teaching career, write international journals, attend international conferences, even to pursue higher education, etc.

3. Methodology

This study employed a case study research method to deeply understand the proactive role of learners in investing in language learning in a specific context. The exploratory sequential mixed-methods design typically began with qualitative research followed by quantitative, in particular, this study at first relied on a literature review, then collected data from interviews to get qualitative exploration and gathered data with survey instruments.

The research context was conducted at Hoa Lu University, a higher education institution in Vietnam. The study focused on the case of a Vietnamese university in which lecturers invested in foreign language learning for professional development. They learned foreign languages to pursue professional development such as graduate studies, doctoral degrees, conference attendances, writing international journals, and teaching enhancement. The sample of 75 lecturers from Hoa Lu University took part in the study with a variety of professional backgrounds, majors, and language proficiency levels. All 75 lecturers agreed to participate in the survey phase of the study by answering the survey questionnaire as required. Three representative lecturers from this group were selected for in-depth interviews. To observe the language learning process of lecturers in relation to their continuous professional development, the study was implemented over a period of one year, from November 2024 to October 2025.

During the implementation of the study, various data were collected from different sources by collection techniques to ensure that complete information was obtained. Firstly, 75 lecturers agreed to participate in a survey to express their thoughts. Based on those, the researcher could find out the factors determining language learning and the time they spend on foreign language learning. Secondly, the main technique used to collect data was semi-structured interviews. Darwin and Norton's theoretical framework of investment, emphasizing social, cultural, and economic factors related to identity, ideology, and capital, served as the basis for these in-person or online interviews with three selected instructors. Thirdly, observation was used to monitor participants' communication and activities of learning and supporting learning, documenting their active roles as learners and the influence of those roles. Finally, material analysis was carried out to examine relevant resources such as institutional policies, learning diaries, and learning plans. The researcher kept going on the data collection until saturation was achieved.

The qualitative techniques, mainly thematic analysis, were applied as the pillars of the data analysis process. Naeem et al. (2023) proposed a practical six-step process including transcribing, familiarizing data, selecting quotation, identifying keywords, coding data, developing themes, interpreting keywords, codes, and themes, and creating a conceptual model. In addition, the researcher utilized case-comparison analysis to compare and contrast participant experiences. Furthermore, ethical considerations were strictly adhered to throughout the entire research process to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of participants. To confirm that they would participate voluntarily and understand the objectives and methods of the research, informed consent forms were provided to all participants of the research.

4. Findings and Discussions

4.1. Qualitative Findings from the Interviews and Observation

The questions asked in the interviews focus on the interplay of three aspects including identity, capital, and ideology; each of which is analyzed and explored through different themes based on quotes from the interview participants.

4.1.1. Factors Influencing Investment in Foreign Language Learning

The study indicates that identity is one of the important factors to motivate lecturers to invest in foreign language learning. Regular use of foreign languages in teaching, in reading academic documents as well as participating in training courses helps lecturers increase their confidence in communication as well as affirm their professional capacity.

"I often use English for my teaching work"

"I often use English to read English for Specific Purposes (ESP) documents, to take part in advanced professional training courses"

Foreign languages are not simply a means of conveying knowledge, but also affirming academic status in the global scientific community. Through this, lecturers both demonstrate their professional identity and develop their cultural identity in the context of international integration.

"...I feel more confident about myself - not only in my language competency but also in my role of a culture 'bridge'."; "...That makes me feel proud and appreciate my Vietnamese identity even more." Or "Using a foreign language helps me feel like I am part of the global academic community"; "More confident in expressing my professional opinions"

At the same time, capital is also considered as a factor having a profound influence on the decision to learn a foreign language. Economic capital also plays an important role in two sides: on the one hand, high foreign language proficiency brings a competitive advantage in the labor market and the opportunity to increase income through teaching, translation or participating in international projects; on the other hand, the cost of learning a foreign language (including tuition, materials, intensive courses) seems to be certain barriers, forcing lecturers to consider carefully in allocating resources.

"I think so, job opportunities and salaries will be really higher for candidates with quite good foreign language competences..."; "The economic benefits that foreign languages bring to me are from the additional foreign language classes I teach directly." Or "Because English is valued" "Teachers can have better career opportunities and income"

To adapt to existing conditions, lecturers decide to choose online learning or take advantage of open resources, both of which save a lot of expenses and increase opportunities to access useful new knowledge.

"Focus on appropriate courses that bring gain practical value to my work"; "Use affordable"

learning resources or web-based resources"; "Participate in learning sharing communities"

In addition, social capital is a vital dimension that is clearly demonstrated through lecturers' participation in online learning communities, international conferences or research networks. These social relationships provide emotional support, motivation and increase opportunities to practice foreign languages in practical contexts. Being recognized by colleagues, students and the professional community also contribute to strengthening the commitment to long-term learning.

"Participating in a learning community to share"; "science research groups..."; "... where I not only learn knowledge but also exchange practical experiences with people pursuing the same goals"; "At university and at work, I have also participated in research groups with colleagues..."

At the macro level, the ideology of learning foreign languages in society and education policy has a significant influence in progress, modernity and international integration. It creates social pressure for lecturers to keep improving their foreign language proficiency. However, there are some existing skeptical views about *"Westernization"* Or *"Overuse of foreign languages that risk ruining motivation. In addition, education policies, such as regulations on foreign language output standards or mandatory requirements for lecturers, play a role as both a motivator and a pressure. For example, due to the regulation of minimum foreign language proficiency for graduate students or university lecturers, they are forced to invest more in the learning process"; "Recognition policies... put pressure on lecturers"; "Requirements to improve output standards"; "Higher higher education"; "Because it is a necessary requirement (e.g. learning Chinese to study for a PhD)."*

However, it is the real situation that the lecturers in the academic environment in the country still use mostly first language, their colleagues rarely use foreign languages to communicate to exchange professional experiences, leading to limitations in maintaining high language proficiency.

"The working environment uses mostly Vietnamese"

"There is a lack of a real English communication environment."

In short, identity, capital and ideological factors interact in a complex way, both promoting and inhibiting lecturers' investment in foreign language learning. This shows that foreign language learning is considered not only as an individual activity, but also closely related to a broader social-professional context.

4.1.2. Level of Investment in Foreign Language Learning for Professional Development

The interview results show that the level lecturers invest in learning foreign languages is not stable over time. Many lecturers at first studied foreign languages to meet requirements of examination, like entrance exams or output standards. However, the more professional experiences they achieve, the more motivation is gradually replaced by the demand for professional development along with scientific research and international academic integration. This transition reflects the characteristics of "evolutionary motivation", in which learning does not stop at short-term goals, but becomes a long-term career strategy.

"At first, I studied foreign languages because of my unclear motivation for learning foreign languages..."

"...but I liked it..."; "... I saw myself improving, so I liked it more and more" Or "Motivation is not stable over time: from the purpose of taking exams...to the goal of professional development, earning a living"

In teaching practice, foreign languages are regarded as a useful means used regularly in diverse activities such as preparing lesson plans, reading documents, writing articles for international science journals, and participating in international conferences. Therefore, we can claim that foreign languages play varied roles such as a tool of knowledge and a symbol of professionalism. It is proficiency in foreign languages that helps lecturers access global learning resources, update new trends, as well as affirm their personal and organizational positions in the international academic environment.

"I have access to a lot of new documents"; "Improving the quality of teaching"; "... Improving my foreign language proficiency has helped me confidently pursue a teaching career..."; "... confidently develop research deeply"

"English helps me become more confident when making conversation with foreigners or participating in events in international academic and professional environments"; "Helps me be more proactive in updating my latest and valuable professional knowledge"; "affirms my professional position in the context of integration"

However, this level of investment still contains many limitations. Opportunities to practice communicating in a foreign language are still not available, because the working environment mainly uses Vietnamese as the mother tongue, and most learners only focus on exam preparation instead of developing communication skills. These constrain the use of foreign languages by lecturers in the academic contexts, lacking flexibility in daily life.

"The biggest challenge...is the lack of an English communication environment"; "Colleagues also do not use much English in work communication" Or "The working environment mainly uses Vietnamese"; "Lack of a real English communication environment"

In terms of resources, lecturers invest significantly in terms of time, finance and effort. They also mention that their spare time, even night, is spent on studying or researching materials in a foreign language. Financially, they proactively purchase books for self- study, enroll in necessary and suitable courses, hire teachers or utilize technology to support learning. The popularity of online learning platforms, mobile applications and MOOCs open up opportunities for effective, flexible and cost-effective learning.

"...study time including studying at night..."

"...printing materials, hiring teachers..."; "...investing in buying an iPad to learn Chinese"; "Technology-wise..."; "Buy a course"; "Book materials"; "Buy a language learning app" Or "I invest... financially... in learning a language"; "I invest... in technology in learning a language"

"Use affordable learning resources/web-based resources"; "I invest... in technology in learning a language"; "Attend international conferences"

Notably, support from the university or governing body – in the form of supporting, providing learning conditions, or creating flexible hours – also contributes to reducing pressure and maintaining the commitment of lecturers to learning.

"...and receive financial support from parents"; "I request my university for financial support to pay for the expenses"

In addition, classroom observations reveal that the learners strive to reach the best results of expressing themselves in front of the lecturers, classmates and postgraduate students that they are responsible for mentoring as teaching assistants, thereby affirming their own identity. Some feedback from graduate students guided by PhD students during the research process report that they receive dedicated, quality and effective guidance. During the process of studying the prescribed subjects, reviewing the knowledge learned, and supplementing the

teaching assistant tasks assigned by the lecturer, postgraduate students devote all their efforts, taking advantage of the inherent things such as knowledge gained from university, postgraduate, and experience accumulated from the working process to be able to study best and guide postgraduate students most effectively. These findings suggest that, in addition to financial resources invested so that postgraduate students can maintain long-term study, cultural and social capital also plays an extremely important role in determining whether or not language learning is successful. In terms of ideology, the role of institutional policies is also very important, because leaders convey ideas to employees, create a comfortable or pressured mood at university, enthusiastic or reluctant. Through the media, the document analysis shows that most PhD students are encouraged by the agency's leaders with specific incentive mechanisms, helping students decide to pursue a PhD program because they realize the benefits of studying a PhD program, which is both useful for themselves to improve their professional capacity and useful for the university to improve the quality of its staff. In addition, it is also the family ideology because a PhD student requires their own perseverance along with support from the family to be able to research for a long time. Family is also a great resource for them to overcome obstacles, partly contributing to helping learners learn better than the ideology from peers, because in fact if you study with like-minded teammates, it will give you more strength to go further; On the contrary, if some individuals think negatively and become discouraged, it will lead to bad thoughts that affect the long journey ahead.

In short, the level of investment in foreign language learning by lecturers is not only reflected through individual efforts, but also reflects the interaction between individuals and the social, academic, and policy environment. This clearly demonstrates the “multidimensional” nature of the foreign language learning process in the context of current higher education.

4.2. Quantitative Findings from the Questionnaire

Respondents to the survey are lecturers working at the Faculties and Departments in the university. They constitute the core academic workforce responsible for teaching and research, directly affecting the quality of training, and at the same time making an important contribution to promoting international integration and enhancing the reputation of the educational institution.

Specifically, the survey includes 75 lecturers participating to respond to the questionnaire. In terms of gender characteristics, most of the participants are female accounting for the majority with 86.7%, while male participants account for only 13.3%. In terms of educational level, most lecturers hold a Master's degree (71 lecturers, 94.7%), in contrast, the remaining participants are much fewer with 3 lecturers with doctoral degrees and one lecturer with a bachelor's degree.

In terms of age, a vast majority of participants are the lecturers from 41 to 50 years old accounting for the highest proportion (64%), the second significant proportion of respondents are the group from 30 to 40 years old with 30.7%. A negligible number of lecturers over 50 years old account for 5.3%, and there are no lecturers under 30 years old participating in the survey.

In terms of working units, lecturers come from various faculties and departments. The highest percentage of lecturers work in the Faculty of Secondary Education (29.3%) and the Department of Foreign Languages (22.7%). The remaining survey respondents are from Department of Information Technology (10.7%), Faculty of Economics (10.7%), Department of Political Theory (8%), Faculty of Culture - Tourism (6.7%), Primary - Preschool Education (6.7%), and Department of Psychology - Physical Education (5.3%).

In addition, the foreign language is used with the extremely high rate in the work as well as in research of the lecturers is English, with 72 lecturers (accounting for 96%); whereas, only a few of them use other languages such as Chinese (1.3%) or French (2.7%).

4.2.1. Factors Influencing Investment in Foreign Language Learning

a. Identity

Based on the result of the survey, summarized and analyzed data demonstrates learners' level of agreement with two aspects of personal identity in foreign language learning. This research used a 5-point Likert scale (from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) in the survey. Generally, both aspects indicate very high levels of agreement from respondents, illustrated with mean values of 4.44 and 4.17 respectively. This indicates that personal identity and future orientation play an extremely important role in learning motivation.

Specifically, involving the first criterion on international academic integration and opportunities, to express the point "I am convinced that learning foreign languages helps me integrate and extend opportunities in the international academic environment", a really great number of learners (up to 94.6%) agreed or strongly agreed (combining levels 4 and 5). Of these, the "Strongly Agree" rate was surprisingly the majority at 53.3%. The rate of disagreement (levels 1 and 2) was extremely low with only 2.6%. As a result, it can be affirmed that this is the strongest motivation. Learners see foreign languages not only as a subject, but also as an intangible tool to lead people to step out into the world and assert themselves in a global academic environment.

Regarding the criterion of self-development and self-expression, to demonstrate the point "I am motivated to learn foreign languages because I wish to develop myself and express my personal identity," the total level of agreement is rather high with 88% (levels 4 and 5). In spite of being slightly lower than criterion 1, this is still an overwhelming number. The "Agree" level (level 4) accounts for the highest percentage at 57.3%. Therefore, foreign language learning is related to intrinsic needs in which learners want to make use of a new foreign language as a tool to shape themselves and express their individuality.

It can be seen that the SD (Standard Deviation) values in both criteria are low (0.54 and 0.62 respectively). These figures indicate the survey participants' views are highly consistent. There are no significant differences or controversies among their answers; In other words, most people share the same opinion about the importance of identity in learning a foreign language.

Table 1

Results of Factors Related to Identity Impacting on Investment in Learning Foreign Languages

Identity	(1)	%	(2)	%	(3)	%	(4)	%	(5)	%	M	SD
I am convinced that learning foreign languages helps me integrate and extend opportunities in the international academic environment.	1	1,3	1	1,3	2	2,7	31	41,3	40	53,3	4,44	0,54

I am motivated to learn foreign languages because I wish to develop myself and express my personal identity	1	1,3	2	2,7	7	9,3	43	57,3	23	30,7	4,17	0,62
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* Note: Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree partly (3), Agree (4), Strongly agree (5), Mean (M), Standard Deviation (SD)

Nevertheless, a lot of barriers from oneself are noted and demonstrated in participants' responses. Lack of motivation, determination and perseverance in daily foreign language learning is one of the major difficulties. Some lecturers are also self-conscious about their foreign language background, lacking confidence when studying intermittently and are afraid of changing themselves. Along with the perception that learning foreign languages is replaced by translation tools, personal ability affects investment motivation. In addition, participants identify limitations in background knowledge, poor listening and speaking skills, and even age as significant obstacles.

b. Capital

Unlike the Identity factors with relatively high average scores (>4.1), the average scores of Capital factors dip slightly, ranging from 3.83 to 3.88. This shows that although learners are aware of the importance of finances, they seem to be reserved to pay for language learning compared to their personal will.

In particular, with the criterion of financial investment enthusiasm, learners have a positive attitude towards paying for education; however, learners still consider this "enthusiasm" carefully within the limits of practical conditions. The data in the table suggests that the average value ($M = 3.88$) is the highest. The majority of learners chose "Agree" (4) with 57.3%; However, the percentage of "Strongly agree" (5) is only 17.3%, much lower than the Identity factors in the previous table.

Regarding the criterion of the influence of economic conditions, a high SD index indicates a clearer differentiation in views among target groups. Different family economic conditions create different barriers or advantages to the determination to study. This is reflected in the average value of 3.83. Of these, 53.3% of learners agreed that economics is a decisive factor. At the same time, the standard deviation ($SD = 0.73$) in this category is higher than in the previous category (0.56).

Thus, learners have a tendency to be more inclined to invest ($M=3.88$) than to be concerned about income barriers ($M=3.83$). However, about 22.7% of learners in both criteria only "partially agree", indicating that a significant portion are still uncertain to invest in learning language. The data also show that the overall agreement rate (levels 4 and 5) reached approximately 72-74%, indicating that finances play determined roles and are considered an inseparable pillar of foreign language learning investment.

It is capital factors that include financial capital, time capital, and human capital. In terms of finance, the majority of lecturers are willing to pay for foreign language learning in their appropriate ability condition. However, income and economic conditions still have an obvious impact on their investment decisions, even financial difficulties, training costs, and time limitations are also notable obstacles. In terms of time, most lecturers have difficulty in arranging for foreign language learning. Heavy teaching workloads, administrative work, family

responsibilities such as taking on household chores, looking after children, and age all restrain their ability to invest time in learning languages. In addition, maintaining high concentration and serious, continuous investment in learning is also highly challenging which is extremely difficult to overcome. Whereas, in terms of human capital, the majority of the teaching staff has a relatively high level of education with 94.7% possessing a Master's degree, 4% owning a PhD and 1.3% having a Bachelor's degree. English is used at work by lecturers as the main foreign language (96%), while Chinese and French only account for a very small proportion.

In short, the data reveal that capital is a practical factor that strongly influences learners' actions. Although they tend to have a desire to develop their identity (as shown in the previous table), financial capability and income are regarded as a necessary condition to transform intentions into concrete investment actions such as buying materials, taking part in training courses, registering for exams, etc.

Table 2

Results of Factors Related to Capital Impacting on Investment in Learning Foreign Languages

Capital	(1)	%	(2)	%	(3)	%	(4)	%	(5)	%	M	SD
I am enthusiastic to invest finances in learning foreign languages (courses, materials, certification exams, etc.)	1	1,3	1	1,3	17	22,7	43	57,3	13	17,3	3,88	0,56
Income and economic conditions influence my determination to invest in learning a foreign language	2	2,7	2	2,7	17	22,7	40	53,3	14	18,7	3,83	0,73

* Note: Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree partly (3), Agree (4), Strongly agree (5), Mean (M), Standard Deviation (SD)

c. Ideology

Ideological factors are related to beliefs, views on the role of foreign languages and policies to encourage foreign language learning at the organizational level. The majority of lecturers are convinced that learning a foreign language is the most suitable way to lead them to integrate and expand opportunities in the international academic environment

In general, both social/peer pressure and university policy have a positive impact on lecturers' foreign language learning, but the level of impact differs significantly.

For pressure from colleagues, students, and society, the mean value ($M = 3.48$) indicates that this level is rather near the average score and somewhere between "Partially Agree" and "Agree". These findings display that lecturers feel a certain amount of pressure from their surroundings which makes them feel necessary to improve their foreign language proficiency. Specifically, the majority of lecturers chose level (4) - Agree (48%) and level (3) - Partially Agree (28%); Meanwhile, only a significant percentage (14.7%) did not feel pressure (levels 1 and 2). Furthermore, the relatively high standard deviation ($SD = 0.89$) indicates a strong divergence in faculty members' views on social pressure; some perceive the pressure as very high, while others consider it as normal.

Regarding the university's incentive and support policies, up to 96% of faculty members present agreement or strong agreement that the university has supportive policies (total points 4 and 5). Of these, 41.3% chose "Strongly agree", manifested by a very high average value ($M =$

4.35), approaching the "Agree" to "Strongly agree" range. Meanwhile, the proportion of respondents who disagreed was almost overshadowed by the agreed ones with only 1.3% selecting "strongly disagree". These findings confirm the extremely important role of management and support mechanisms from the governing body. In addition, the very low standard deviation ($SD = 0.44$) indicates a high level of consensus among faculty members. Most lecturers participating in the survey acknowledged and appreciated the importance of university policies.

In short, referring to external and organizational motivation, in spite of pressure from society and colleagues, the university supports policies that have a stronger and more direct impact on lecturers' decisions to invest in foreign language learning (4.35 and 3.48). Furthermore, the working environment, especially the pedagogical environment, is evaluated as highly motivating one. Lecturers learn foreign languages not only due to pressure by themselves or from public opinion, but also owing to receiving clear support and guidance from the university.

Overall, to improve the foreign language proficiency of the staff, it is prominent to maintain and promote financial, time-saving, or reward support policies from the university. This is likely to yield more significant results than relying solely on psychological pressure from society. The lecturers also proposed several useful encouraging solutions for language learning improvement such as increasing financial support, reducing the number of mandatory teaching hours, organizing courses appropriate to the level and major, creating an environment for foreign language practice, encouraging and rewarding when achieving certificates or good results, evaluating staff based on foreign language results, as well as determining a more specific roadmap and support.

Table 3

Results of Factors Related to Ideology Impacting on Investment in Learning Foreign Languages

Ideology	(1)	%	(2)	%	(3)	%	(4)	%	(5)	%	M	SD
I feel pressured by colleagues, students, or society to enhance my foreign language proficiency	3	4,0	8	10,7	21	28,0	36	48,0	7	9,3	3,48	0,89
The university has policies to encourage and support lecturers to learn foreign languages	1	1,3	0	0,0	2	2,7	41	54,7	31	41,3	4,35	0,44

** Note: Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree partly (3), Agree (4), Strongly agree (5), Mean (M), Standard Deviation (SD)*

4.2.2. Level of Investment in Foreign Language Learning for Professional Development

In general, the level faculty members invest in foreign language learning is at a moderate one (M ranges from 2.44 to 3.20). Although the majority of them indicate their intention to keep learning in the future, their daily practical activities and engagement in the professional community remain limited.

Specifically, the table suggests that the intention to invest in the future ($M = 3.2$) is the issue with the highest average score. Approximately 82.6% of respondents provide the answers from Moderate to Very Much (levels 3, 4, 5). This indicates a positive attitude and awareness of the long-term significance of foreign languages. Regarding the use of foreign languages in

teaching and research, the figure “ $M = 3.07$ ” represents a moderate level of practical use. Of these, 32% of faculty members make use of foreign languages at a high or very high level for their professional work. However, this item also reveals the highest standard deviation ($SD = 1.02$), indicating a large disparity among faculty members. That displays the real situation that one group uses the foreign language very regularly, while another group uses it very rarely.

Regarding daily/weekly study time, $M = 2.79$ demonstrates that maintaining a frequent study habit is not high. More than a half of faculty members only reach an average level with 52%, meanwhile about 32% dedicate very little or no time to learning.

In addition, as mentioning participation in training courses and workshops, the figure $M = 2.73$ shows that investment through formal or semi-formal training programs is still low, less than the average level. The percentage of faculty members participating little or very little (levels 1 and 2) accounts for 34.7%.

Furthermore, participation in professional communities using foreign languages ($M = 2.44$) is also the activity with the lowest score. Nearly half of the faculty (48%) responded that they participated in these communities very little or little.

Thus, faculty members have a high intention to learn ($M=3.2$) but their actual participation in professional communities is very low ($M=2.44$). In other words, lecturers learn foreign language investment primarily due to direct work needs (teaching/research) rather than purely language skill development. The SD indices range from 0.67 to 1.07, indicating rugged levels of effort among individuals, which reveals especially in application of their knowledge in researching and participating in the professional community.

It is obvious that the level of investment in foreign language learning of lecturers at Hoa Lu University can be evaluated as having high potentiality in terms of motivation and awareness; however, the actual level of investment is still at an average level and is affected by many difficulties, especially time and finance.

In other words, faculty members have a proactive spirit but are struggling to transmit their intentions into concrete daily actions. In particular, the professional networking environment in foreign languages (research communities, academic forums) is the weakest link that needs improvement.

Table 4

Results of Lecturers' Level of Investment in Learning Foreign Languages

	(1)	%	(2)	%	(3)	%	(4)	%	(5)	%	M	SD
I spend time learning a foreign language every day or every week.	5	6,7	19	25,3	39	52,0	11	14,7	1	1,3	2,79	0,67
I take part in courses, seminars, or training programs to enhance my foreign language competence.	8	10,7	18	24,0	36	48,0	12	16,0	1	1,3	2,73	0,81
I utilize a foreign language in teaching or academic research.	5	6,7	15	20,0	31	41,3	18	24,0	6	8,0	3,07	1,02
I take part in a learning or professional community that uses a foreign language (e.g., an international research group, an academic forum).	18	24,0	18	24,0	28	37,3	10	13,3	1	1,3	2,44	1,07

I intend to keep investing in learning a foreign language in the future.	4	5,3	9	12,0	34	45,3	24	32,0	4	5,3	3,2	0,83
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* Note: Very little (1), Little (2), Average (3), Much (4), Very much (5), Mean (M), Standard Deviation (SD)

5. Conclusion

In summary, the research at Hoa Lu University shows that lecturers' investment in foreign languages is influenced by various intertwined factors related to identity, capital, and ideology such as social, cultural, economic, personal, and policy-related ones. A more sustained internal desire towards professional development, international research and career advancement stems from the initial motivation, which is often practical and linked to immediate benefits (such as examinations).

Pursuing their career, lecturers always keep making use of foreign languages in teaching, exploit specialized documents and participate in global academic activities. Thanks to that, they broaden their vision, enhance their knowledge, affirm their personal identity, increase their confidence in international communication, and achieve economic benefits through job opportunities and higher income.

However, several problems remain, especially students' exam-focused learning and the lack of authentic social communication environments. It is inferred that not only societal values but also educational policies have a powerful impact on this investment which creates both motivation and pressure.

To maximize the investment in learning a foreign language, there are actually various options such as diversifying resources, investing time, money and technology, fostering intrinsic motivation and focusing on practical, work-related learning. In addition, learners can be encouraged to take advantage of both online and offline professional communities to catch practice opportunities. Educational institutions and agencies are advised to integrate lecturers with learning foreign languages into professional tasks and promote international academic engagement. They should establish structured learning communities and provide financial and time support for advanced programs, creating intensive language environments by encouraging the use of foreign language in the workplace. Last but not least, policies are necessary to emphasize practical application of foreign language skills rather than test preparation to enhance the social and economic value of foreign language proficiency.

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In the preparation of this manuscript, I employed artificial intelligence tools (specifically, ChatGPT by OpenAI, Gemini by Google) exclusively for proofreading purposes, including checking spelling, grammar, and minor language refinements. I confirm that all research ideas, analyses, and interpretations are entirely my own.

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APPENDIX

