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Theory on Development of Autonomous Competence for Secondary School Students

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Abstract---Put your abstract here. Use single spacing and don't exceed 250 words. Put your abstract here. Use single spacing and don't exceed 250 words. Put your abstract here. Use single spacing and don't exceed 250 words. Put your abstract here. Use single spacing and don't exceed 250 words. Put your abstract here. Use single spacing and don't exceed 250 words. Put your abstract here. Use single spacing and don't exceed 250 words. Put your abstract here. Use single spacing and don't exceed 250 words. Put your abstract here. Use single spacing and don't exceed 250 words. Put your abstract here. Use single spacing and don't exceed 250 words. Put your abstract here. Use single spacing and don't exceed 250 words. Put your abstract here. Use single spacing and don't exceed 250 words.

Keywords---autonomous competence, autonomy, competence development, secondary school, self-dependence

Introduction

The cause of industrialization and modernization in our country, as well as in the comprehensive renovation of the country, renovating education is one of the central tasks of the development of Vietnam. The goal of education is to raise people's intellectual level, train human resources and foster talents. The renovation requires the school to create autonomous, dynamic and creative people to meet the needs of society. The 8th Conference of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam (XI term) has approved that "Resolution on fundamental and comprehensive renovation of education and training to meet the requirements of industrialization and modernization in the context of a socialist-oriented market economy and international integration;" (ECCV, 2013). The Congress has promulgated Resolution No. 88/2014/QH13 on "renovation of general education curricula and textbooks" ECCV (2013), contribute to the fundamental and comprehensive renovation of education and training. Renovation objectives are set by Resolution 88/2014/QH13 of the Congress stated that: "Renovating general education curricula and textbooks in order to create a fundamental and comprehensive change in quality and effectiveness of general education; combining literacy, teaching and career orientation; contributing to the transition from a knowledge-based education to an education that develops comprehensively in both qualities and competences, harmonizing the virtue, intelligence, physical, and beauty and bringing out the best potential of each student". Implementing the Resolutions of the Party and the Congress, the general education program 2018 GEP (2018), is built in the direction of developing students' quality and competence. For secondary school students, autonomy is one of the common competencies that plays an important role in influencing the ability to critically reflect, make decisions and act independently, to act responsibly, make informed choices and students' ability to be independent. The issue of competence development in general and the development of autonomous competence in particular for students, which was raised in the 2018 CTGDPT, is a matter of interest to domestic and foreign educators and researches to find many suitable developments (GEP, 2018; MET, 2020).

Theory on autonomous competence for secondary students

Autonomous competence

There are many definitions of "competence". Chouhan & Srivastava (2014), argue that competences include the set of success factors necessary to achieve important results in a particular job or of a job role in a particular organization. According to the two authors, competence is the ability to apply or use knowledge, skills, abilities,

behaviors and personal characteristics to successfully perform important job tasks, specific functions or to act in a certain role or position. The success factor is based on a combination of knowledge, skills and abilities of a person when performing the task. The Working Group on Vocational Qualifications (1986) approaches competence as the ability to perform a particular activity according to a specified standard. This means: first, if competence is related to working then it must take place in a context; Second, competence is an outcome: it describes what someone can do. Third, to reliably measure someone's ability to do something, there need to be clearly defined and widely accessible standards by which performance is measured and confirmed; Fourth, competence is a measure of what someone can do at a particular time.

Tucker & Cofsky (1994) identify five main components of competence: 1) Knowledge: is the information available in a person, such as the surgeon's knowledge of human anatomy; 2) Skill: a person's ability to perform a certain action, such as a surgeon's skill to perform surgery; 3) The concept and self-value or attitude of a person, values and image of one's self. 4) Personal characteristics: physical characteristics and the consistent responses to situations or information. Good eyesight is an essential trait for a surgeon, just as autonomy is the ability to stay calm under stress; 5) Motivation: emotions, desires, physiological needs or similar impulses that motivate action. Therefore, competence can be understood as the ability of a person to successfully perform a task, measured by the results of the actions that he or she performs. It includes these factors: knowledge, skill, motivation, personal characteristics of an individual and his or her attitude when performing an action. Knowledge, skill, and attitude are the key components that work together to help a person perform a task effectively.

Autonomy and its role in student development. In reality, autonomy is a competence, but there has not been a complete concept of autonomous competence given in any research. Those researches only focus on examining autonomy as a psychological need or as an independent human behavior. According to Hargreaves (2014), the implication of autonomy is that an individual can act independently on external powers and actively think and act in the way he sees fit; each individual has an equal right to discover and express his or her own particular point of view, without being inhibited by the judgments of others; and thus, have the ability to challenge habitual thinking and traditional conceptions of one's place in learning or in life. Accordingly, autonomy in learning includes independence, initiative and the ability to discover in the classroom - by focusing on the ability to self-direct and individual trainings in learning and in life living. Montessori (1976), considered independence/autonomy as a need, a natural urge, derived from an inner motivation. It is the removal of barriers (obstacles) to natural development, striving for self-determination to achieve both physical and psychological independence.

Some researchers have referred to autonomy as a set of skills. Reinders (2010); Nir et al. (2016), argue that autonomy is a subset of a store of life skills, sometimes it is referred as daily living activities. In particular, the term "independent" often refers to the following areas of independent behavior: Eating and drinking: Skills may include proper handling and use of tools, eating without spilling, eating variety of food, correct use of napkins, table manners and other mealtime habits; Grooming: This area includes skills such as combing, shaving, and dressing (e.g., picking clothes, dressing and undressing without assistance, and managing laces); Personal hygiene: Skills include those of bathing, brushing teeth, washing hair and applying deodorant; Going to the bathroom: Toilet-related skills include clothing management, personal hygiene, as well as overall bowel and bladder management (Chiniara & Bentein, 2016; Amorose & Anderson-Butcher, 2007).

According to a research group at the Department of Psychology and Education, Hanoi National University of Education Binh (2005), provides a more complete understanding of student's self-dependent that includes: cognitive/direction skills, planning skills, organizational/implementation skills, and testing and evaluation skills. From the understanding of competence and self-dependent competence, what can be understood is that autonomy is the ability of a person to successfully perform a job on his own without being controlled or managed by others thanks to an internal motivation, having awareness and understanding of how to do work, to know how to plan and perform work and evaluate performance. Self-help tends to favor behavioral manifestations and activities. Self-help is closely related to the positive expression of individuals and the will, action, intellect and emotions. In order to be independent, people need to have knowledge and skills for self-reliance such as eating, dressing, self-cleaning, setting tasks, planning, having faith, and being able to have autonomy and self-assessment, having the effort of will, positivity, self-discipline, purposefulness, and discipline. In essence, autonomous competence is formed on the basis that individuals have needs, abilities and believe in their own strength to perform the set tasks, to find their own ways to solve the tasks. Autonomous competence is formed in activities and through human activities with the surrounding world (Chemero & Turvey, 2008; Drejer & Riis, 1999).

The development of autonomous competence in secondary school students

Shaffer & Kipp (2009), stated that autonomy in childhood and adolescence is when a person tries to achieve a sense of self-governance as an individual. Between the ages of 1 and 3, the psychosocial crisis that occurs is about autonomy. It is important at this stage that children learn to be autonomous, and the failure to do so can lead to the fact that children doubting their own abilities and feeling ashamed. When a child becomes self-directed, it allows them to explore and acquire new skills. For children, autonomous competence has two important components: emotions - where a child relies more on himself than on his parents and behavior - where a child makes decisions independently by using their own predictions. Montessori (1976), said that children strive towards independence from the very beginning of their lives. At first, children's eyesight begins to develop, helping them to focus on objects that are further away, and then they begin to approach objects they have already followed with their eyes. Children gain greater independence as they learn to sit up, crawl, walk, feed themselves and dress themselves, and then learn to contribute to their home and community environments in elementary and middle ages learn. The more mature they are, the more they develop their right to self-determination both physically and mentally. This development process according to Montessori et al. (1996), is always age-appropriate, starting from birth until adulthood with continuous activities and constant efforts of the child, helping them to complete and satisfy themselves and self-actualization of their own freedom.

Montessori et al. (1996), suggested that an independent child is either self-determined or self-motivated to perform tasks that are appropriated to their level of awareness of the world. In secondary school age, the self-determined children are confident in their abilities and they are goal-oriented, at the same time being aware of the needs and perspectives of others and how their actions affect family, friends and ultimately the surrounding community. They are not interested in other people's knowledge, only want to get them by themselves. To gain experience and knowledge about the world, youngsters make efforts on their own and do not want to receive any helps. Besides, according to Ryan & Deci (2000), secondary school students want to be adults and to prove themselves capable and autonomous. They spend most of their time listening to adults and friends talking about themselves to determine who they are. This helps children to increase their awareness and identify their true self. This is also reflected in the difference between a child with autonomous competence and a child without autonomous competence.

Taylor (2010), distinguishes the group of children who are independent and those who lack autonomous capability. Children who lack independence depend on others for how they feel about themselves. Children who lack independence often depend on others; they have no control over their own lives and take little responsibility for their own thoughts, feelings, and actions. They make poor decisions because adults always make decisions for them without consulting. In contrast, independent children always have the belief that they are capable of taking care of themselves. They find their own reasons to achieve their goals from an inner impulse. They are given opportunities and guidance to explore activities of their choice. They make decisions on their own, not adults making decisions for them. Isaacs (2000), states that, if a child is not allowed to be independent, they may react with anger and resistance, especially during the self-asserting phase, which is often referred as the resisting phase. Developing autonomous competence also gives the child a sense of self-efficacy (I can do it alone) which promotes self-esteem and confidence, at the same time promotes self-motivation and persistence while at school. When the child becomes independent, the child acquires a sense of importance. Children feel that they are able to contribute to the world and to the social life around them, whether at school or elsewhere. Children also feel more confident in their group of friends (Awuah, 2007; Littlewood, 1996).

According to Montessori et al. (1996), children seek independence both physically and mentally through activities such as playing, learning and working in coordination between school, family and social organizations, in which schools and families play the key role. In Western countries, one of the indispensable activities of parents is to take their children to visit museums about science, art, nature, history, etc. In addition, attractions that have cultural, historical and scientific value such as biological gardens, nature reserves, historical sites, concert halls, art exhibitions are also places that they are allowed to come. Parents are responsible for raising, disciplining their children and shaping their children's future. However, sometimes parents' overprotection can prevent children's independent development. Therefore, with the role of the family, it is necessary to:

- a. Give responsibility: give your child responsibilities at an early age. Start with some household chores depending on their age, which can be tasks like sweeping the floor, washing the dishes or setting up the table. Giving children responsibilities will help to boost their confidence in their work and show them that they are a responsible member of the family. Allow children to make small decisions: Parents should let children make

- their own decisions in small things. When children are given the freedom to make their own decisions, they learn to make choices and this makes them independent in making larger decisions on their own.
- b. Let children do their own homework: families should get them into the habit of creating a time schedule that includes homework and studying for tests. Creating timely work habits will allow your child to learn how to handle their responsibilities independently and being independent while at school.
 - c. Allow them to make mistakes: Allow children to make mistakes so that they learn from their own mistakes and don't repeat the same again. If your child makes a mistake, don't scold them, instead tell them what they did wrong and how they can do it better next time. More important, teach your child to think independently: Encourage your child to get into the habit of thinking about things and forming their own opinions as well as their solutions as this will make them more independent. Your child's success depends on how well they think for themselves and how they come up with solutions from their own independent thinking (Reid & Petocz, 2004).

It can be understood that the development of autonomous competence in children in general, and in secondary school students in particular, is the process of raising student's awareness and desire for independence, developing and perfecting their autonomous ability as well as having a sense of their own rights and desires; initially know how to present and exercise a number of legitimate rights and needs, morale, confident attitude, independence, ability to choose how to act, self-responsibility in study, in life and in various activities of themselves (Bond et al., 2007; Laidra et al., 2007).

Objectives, content and methods of developing autonomous competence for secondary school students
Objectives and contents

The Ministry of Education and Training, stated that the objective of developing autonomous competence in students is: "Doing your own things at home and at school according to the assignment and guidance; Self-affirming and protecting of legitimate rights and needs; Self-regulating emotions, attitudes and behaviors" (GEP, 2018). According to Isaacs (2000), developing autonomous competence is to promote self-confidence and self-esteem as well as motivation and perseverance in students at school. It is a process that promotes independence, allows students to feel in control of their lives, and gives them a sense of importance, this is essential for building social relationships and contributing to the world. Developing autonomous competence also helps students to develop self-awareness and sensitivity towards others, and teach them a sense of helping the surrounding. In particular, developing autonomous competence is to create motivation for students when they have the freedom to find their own reasons to achieve their goals. In addition, developing autonomous competence provides students with confidence that they are competent and capable of taking care of themselves, which makes them resilient to external challenges. Isaacs (2000), also argued that developing autonomous competence is to help students become good decision makers because they have the freedom to consider different options before deciding on the one they feel fit. Not only that, developing autonomous competence also helps students develop other important qualities such as patience, concentration, self-reliance, cooperation, discipline and self-confidence, thereby giving students the freedom to experience life to the fullest and to learn many important lessons. Developing autonomous competence keeps students happy and healthy when they feel a great sense of achievement and success as a direct result of their own actions.

Similarly, Bowlby (1956), suggested that the goal of developing a child's autonomous competence is to help them gain an independent confidence and grow up with a healthy mind. Sylvester et al. (2019), suggests that the further goal of student autonomous competence development is to support children to develop into peace committed and respected individuals who will go out to the world on their own and create the difference. For this goal to become a reality, from an early age, children must be provided with opportunities to exercise their minds and bodies in ways that promote independence. The Ministry of Education and Training, points out the autonomous competencies that need to be developed in secondary school students described in Table 1.

Table 1
 Autonomous competencies that need to be developed in secondary school students

| Component competence | Criteria |
|--|--|
| Self-help | Do your own work in learning and in life. |
| Self-regulating emotions, attitudes, behaviors | Be able to assess your own feelings and emotions. Know how to self-regulate emotions, attitudes and behaviors. Ready to accept and |

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Adapting to life | determined to overcome challenges in learning and life. Adjust individual's knowledge, skills, and experience needed for the new activity. |
| Career orientation | Make a plan to choose subjects that are suitable for your career orientation. |
| Self-improvement | Identify learning tasks based on achieved results; Set detailed and specific learning goals and overcome limitations. Evaluate and adjust the studying plan. Identify and correct mistakes, learn from experience. Self-regulate learning. |

Source: GDPT program, (2018)

Montessori et al. (1996); Bangera (2017) argue that education should cultivate the skills that children need to become independent adults who challenge and contribute to a diverse, democratic society. Montessori (1976), specifically pointed out that, developing autonomous competence for secondary school students includes: Developing knowledge, skills and educating students to be independent. Formed in them: confidence; pride; individual respect; develop neatness and cleanliness. Arthur & Linde (2015), recommended the need to teach children to solve problems on their own from an early age. According to the author, teaching children the steps to problem-solving is an important lifelong skill. Besides developing these above skills, Arthur & Linde (2015), believes that children should be asked to participate in housework and be responsible for the family. The author advises parents to support their children's growing sense of themselves and desire to do things on their own by giving them housework. Even very young children can do small chores like taking out the trash or putting dirty clothes in the trash.

The purpose of developing student autonomous competence is to help them become independent, successful, to become lifelong learners that are capable of cooperating and problem solving (Pretorius et al., 2019). Therefore, it can be seen that the goals of developing autonomous competence include: developing knowledge (knowledge on how to perform actions); skills (3 groups including: self-service skills; self-care skills, independent work/study skills) and educating independent attitude for students (Formed in children: confidence; pride; self-respect; development of orderliness). Besides that, it is also about educating children patience, focus and attention on work, cooperation, self-discipline and confidence; promote children's sociability and sensitivity towards others (Rikli et al., 2020; Bakar & Cheen, 2013).

Method of the study

Michelle Welman (2018), pointed out that autonomy is a learnable and teachable skill and it is the responsibility of teachers to develop this skill. In order to develop students' autonomy, appropriate methods are needed. According to Michelle Welman (2018), to develop autonomy requires students to have learning skills such as setting goals, determining learning outcomes, developing study plans and solutions to achieve goals. Arthur & Linde (2015), believed that developing autonomy for students needs to be taught like teaching a new skill or habit. Arthur & Linde (2015), pointed out that the skill needs to be broken down into simple steps. Give specific instructions on how to complete each step. The author requires adults to have children demonstrate each step in turn and check that the child has fully understood before moving on to the next one. Adults and teachers need to use words consistently at each step. As children become more independent, we can reduce verbal cues until they can fully act on their own. If a child is unable to complete a step, adults can help the child with that step and try to gradually reduce the help so that the child becomes more independent. Isaacs (2000), argued that children should have the right to make choices about their activities. This freedom of choice should be based on a perception of the work. To do that, adults need to exercise empowerment and accompany, monitoring the child.

In addition, the authors Isaacs (2000); Arthur & Linde (2015); Montessori et al. (1996), suggested that adults need to be patient and encourage and cheer the children for each completed step. In particular, it is necessary to be patient and to reward the child whenever they complete a certain goal. To develop autonomous competence, it is necessary to organize activities such as: learning, entertaining, self-service in eating, cleaning, dressing, etc. These activities are carried out the following methods: visualization (break down the steps of an action, take a picture, and give visual instructions); speech (explanation and instructions on how to do it); practice: let the children practice acts; encourage and reward children when they do well on their own (Pérez et al., 2016; Hidir et al., 2021).

Methods of assessing results of developing autonomous competence for secondary school students
Competence assessment

According to [Duyen & Lieu \(2017\)](#), competence assessment is a type of assessment built based on a table of output criteria. Based on this table, the evaluator observes and analyzes to assess the level of achievement. Skills assessment is an important area that determines a student's ability and often done through hands-on activities and the products they create. To demonstrate that students are capable to a certain extent, have students solve problems in real-life situations so that they can apply the knowledge and skills they have learned at school and outside of school. Attitude assessment is usually done through observation and conversation. Competence assessment is carried out regularly in each lesson, each period and at the end of each period to see the progress of learners. Assessment of a student's ability can be qualitative and quantitative and can be a combination of both (Ministry of Education and Training).

Subjects participating in the assessment of autonomous competence for secondary school students

Students' self-assessment: According to [Hargreaves \(2014\)](#), the assessment of autonomous competence needs to comply with the goals, methods, and forms of capacity assessment and with the participation of many different subjects. One of the assessment forms is the student's self-assessment. According to [Andrade et al. \(2019\)](#), student self-assessment is the process by which students gather information and reflect on their own learning. It is the student's own assessment of a self's progress in knowledge, skills, processes, or attitudes. When students self-assess, they self-monitor and regulate their own learning; see their own strengths and areas for improvement; self-assess the results compared to the original plan; students see for themselves the progress they have made in their subjects. In addition, there are also teacher assessments of student autonomy and group assessments.

Assessment of schoolmate: According to Group5hah's blog, assessment of schoolmate involves students reviewing each other's work and evaluating it against previous agreed criteria. Then, the children gave each other feedback on the work. There are a variety of assessment by schoolmate methods, such as written and oral assessments, and they can be conducted in pairs or in groups. Typically, assessment of schoolmate is used on a regular basis to provide support and feedback so that students can create better work on the summative assessment. Student assessing each other is extremely important for the following reasons: students can participate in each other's learning; encourage students to discuss and promote good relationships; to improve achievement and increase learning motivation; students can learn and support each other and encourage self-reflection and help students realize their own learning needs. Besides, students are likely to have a clear idea of expectations and students often achieve more when they receive helps, evaluations and suggestions from friends ([Cole et al., 2001](#); [Linde, 2015](#)).

For teachers, having students self-assess each other provides more assessment information for the teacher. Those are useful information for teachers' teaching planning; helps teachers identify differentiated learning outcomes and transform classroom environments and supports students to become independent learners and forge closer, more intimate teacher-student relationships. Another benefit that comes with effective assessment of schoolmate is that children also become experts at self-assessment. Reflecting on the work of others, using constructive language, in pairs, groups, or as a class can help children discuss their own work and how it can be improved. It can create a key communication link between students and teachers, which is very important. An example of schoolmate assessment sheet can be found in the appendix.

It is clear that assessment of schoolmate is an extremely important evaluation tool. Especially for secondary school students working together means the kids will know what they're looking for, resulting in them being able to identify it independently. Assessment of teachers: According to [Maxwell et al. \(2001\)](#), to assess students' autonomy, teachers can use many different tools and the most important one is observation. Teachers can observe students participating in planned activities. Teacher observations can be characterized into two categories: random and planned. Methods of collecting information when observing: Product observation: preserving products; Observing activities: direct recording through audio recordings, videos and photographs; indirect recording through observations and diaries. Observational assessment is also mentioned by Scholastic, teachers will gain valuable information about students, especially their skills, by "sitting beside" them, observing and talking to them at the place where they are having activities and having fun. Teachers will notice that students are at many levels of competence. When observing children, watch for the frustration (the child cannot do the job independently) and discouragement (the student is not challenged by the content) to tailor lessons to the level of that student.

Conclusion

For secondary school students, autonomy is one of the competencies in the group of common competencies, which plays an important role in influencing students' learning, communication and other activities in the present and future. Autonomous competence education for students in secondary schools is an important issue. The above research results are important theoretical basis to help educators and education administrators find reference and to perfect the process of organizing autonomous competence development activities for students in general and for secondary students in particular.

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