

Factors Affecting the Outcomes of a Teacher Training Program in Competency-Based Student Assessment In Vietnam


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 <https://doi.org/10.54855/ijte.25528>

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Received: 13/01/2025

Revision: 18/05/2025

Accepted: 22/05/2025

Online: 23/05/2025

ABSTRACT

Keywords: Affecting factors, training outcomes, assessment, Competency-based education, Vietnam

The study was conducted to examine the factors influencing the outcomes of a training programme designed for secondary and high school teachers in Northern midland and mountainous provinces. Based on the analysis, the researchers proposed recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of teacher professional development programmes. Data were collected through a questionnaire with 1422 responses from core secondary and high school teachers in seven northern provinces of Vietnam (Vinh Phuc, Phu Tho, Tuyen Quang, Ha Giang, Yen Bai, Lao Cai, and Bac Giang). These teachers have completed a training module on assessment and testing. It was obvious from the investigation that male teachers from non-ethnic majority groups outperformed female teachers and teachers from ethnic minority communities in terms of the results they achieved for the training practices. Furthermore, the linear regression analysis indicated that the following factors: organizing of training, assessment methods, training materials and training contents, affected the training quality from the highest to the lowest, respectively. The paper concludes with some recommendations to address the constraints and improve the quality of training programmes for high school teachers so that they can meet the needs of education innovation in the coming years.

Introduction

Competency-based education is the new idea of the General Education Program (GEP) 2018 in Vietnam. This is the core ideology throughout the program, which results in many significant changes to educational activities in general and teaching, testing and assessment in particular. To help teachers effectively implement the GEP 2018, the Ministry of Education and Training,

through the ETEP Program, has implemented Module 3: Competency-based assessment of primary/secondary/high school students (MOET, 2020). This module also aims to strengthen teachers' long-term and sustainable professional capacity, meeting modern education's requirements in the context of integration and internationalization. The cooperation between the key teacher education universities and the Departments of Education and Training, primary and secondary schools nationwide has implemented it. Hanoi Pedagogical University 2 (HPU2) is one of the seven pedagogical universities assigned by the Ministry of Education and Training to foster teachers under the ETEP Program for 07 northern midland and mountainous provinces: Vinh Phuc, Phu Tho, Tuyen Quang, Ha Giang, Yen Bai, Lao Cai, and Bac Giang.

The practical experience in teacher training in the last three years of implementing GEP 2018 and research-based evidence on the outcomes of teacher training have scientific significance for teacher training institutions and the entire educational sector in Vietnam. This was especially important since GEP 2018 continues to be implemented in the coming years. Therefore, conducting preliminary studies to identify the factors influencing the outcomes of teacher training, including training on competency-based assessment, is essential for the better implementation of GEP 2018 in the upcoming years.

Literature Review

Different factors influencing the outcomes of teacher training have been identified in several studies worldwide and in Vietnam. In a comprehensive study on influencing factors, Prenger, Poortman, and Handelzalts (2017) synthesized various key factors including: teachers' career development motivation; convergence of development goals and leadership; the content of training that is closely linked to students' outcomes; knowledge-sharing support within the school environment; and support from stakeholders (principals and colleagues). Voogt et al. (2011) further emphasized that both the quantity and quality of support from stakeholders are crucial for achieving meaningful changes. Stoll et al. (2006) pointed out that the lack of support from the school hindered the application of the trained content into the teachers' work. Another study conducted in Ghana revealed that teachers primarily engaged in training through workshops, distance learning, and regular training sessions. However, these forms of training rarely met the needs of the teachers. Therefore, a broader policy framework is needed to guide teacher training provision, participation, and implementation (Abakah et al., 2022). In the context of Vietnam, Nguyen (2022) found that teacher agency is critical in influencing training program effectiveness. Nguyen and Truong (2021) added that "relationships" and "environments and structures" were particularly influential factors on training effectiveness.

Related to the challenges influencing teachers' engagement in professional development, Geldenhuys and Oosthuizen (2015) conducted research in the context of South Africa and identified four issues of concern: inadequate contribution of school management to teacher training; teachers' hesitance to participate in training activities; and insufficient training content in training programs. The study recommended the involvement of teachers in planning, implementing, and evaluating training programs to enhance their effectiveness. Other studies have also added that the success of training courses comes from teachers' autonomy (Nguyen, 2019), a supportive mechanism and a collaborative school culture for successful

experimentation, support from school leadership (Nicolaidis & Mattheoudakis, 2008), respect for and assessment of the professional expertise of participating teachers (Pyle, et al., 2011), a sense of safety to try new things (Guskey, 2000), and the availability of appropriate resources (Nguyen, 2018; Seer, 2010).

Regarding the impact of assessment-focused professional development on teachers, numerous studies have been conducted with various subjects and scales (Andersson & Palm, 2017; Randel et al., 2016). For instance, Andersson and Palm (2017) conducted a study with 22 4th-grade Math teachers in Sweden to investigate the impact of a professional development program on teachers' changes in assessment practices and their influence on students' achievements. The results showed that teachers underwent significant changes after participating in the training, leading to improved learning outcomes for students in their classes. In another study, Randel et al. (2016) conducted a research on the impact of a professional development program focused on formative assessment implementation in classrooms. The researchers randomly assigned 67 elementary schools to receive either formative assessment implementation training or continue regular professional development. Teachers in these schools formed study groups and were provided with instructional materials. They were suggested to implement formative assessments in their classrooms under real conditions, without the researchers' direct involvement or requirements. Analyzing all schools and 9,596 students, no significant impact of the training was found on students' math scores in statewide assessments. Impact analyses with 231 teachers revealed positive effects of the training on teachers' assessment knowledge and the frequency of student participation in classroom assessments. However, the training did not clearly impact teachers' assessment practices.

In a recent study, Schelling and Rubenstein (2023) evaluated the outcomes of teacher training in assessment for elementary school teachers. Among the surveyed teachers ($n = 283$), only 56% of teachers had received assessment training during their university courses, whereas 84% had received training through specialized professional development courses. Quantitative results indicated that the frequency of assessment training was positively related to teachers' competency, attitude, and practices in assessment. It can be observed that these studies highlight the significance of assessment-focused training and professional development for teachers.

In Vietnam, research on teacher training in response to GEP 2018 focuses primarily on theoretical issues. Bui (2018) advocates for redesigning the training process, prioritizing educational research, and extending practical training periods for professional development. Identifying training needs and selecting appropriate models are critical for effective teacher development. Pham and Nguyen (2016) recommend improving capabilities of higher education faculty and secondary school teachers, upgrading infrastructure, establishing collaboration between institutions and schools, developing policy frameworks, and creating training resources. Nguyen (2022) identifies that student factors and access conditions influence online teaching effectiveness in Hanoi high schools. This research proposes five solutions to enhance online teaching based on both positive and negative factors affecting implementation.

A general overview of other studies in Vietnam regarding the factors influencing teachers' professional activities shows that the main focus of research is on surveys, analyses, and assessments of the current situation concerning factors affecting teachers' teaching and

assessment activities, particularly about specific subjects and educational contexts. The overview has illustrated the research landscape regarding teacher professional development in general and the factors influencing the outcomes of teacher training in particular. This study further clarifies the factors influencing the outcomes of teacher training concerning competency-based student assessment in Vietnam through a specific training program - the ETEP program - in the provinces of the northern midland and mountainous region.

Research Questions

From the context mentioned above, this study focuses on answering the following research questions:

1. What are the factors affecting the training effectiveness of a teacher training program in competency-based student assessment?
2. What is the degree of influence of each factor?

Methods

Participants

Table 1 shows the characteristics of the participants in this study. The participants were a convenience sample recruited from 7 provinces: Ha Giang, Bac Giang, Lao Cai, Vinh Phuc, Yen Bai, Phu Tho, and Tuyen Quang.

Table 1

Characteristics of participants

Characteristics		N	%
Sex	Male	640	45
	Female	782	55
Difficult area	No	847	59.6
	Yes	575	40.4
Ethnic minorities	No	1274	89.6
	Yes	148	10.4
Teacher level	Secondary school	1209	85
	High school	213	15
Do management	No	1352	95.1
	Yes	70	4.9
Years of work	< 15 years	747	52.5
	≥ 15 years	675	47.5
School location	Tuyen Quang	167	11.7
	Ha Giang	206	14.5
	Lao Cai	202	14.2
	Yen Bai	181	12.7
	Phu Tho	268	18.8
	Bac Giang	237	16.7
	Vinh Phuc	161	11.3

A total of 1,422 teachers took part in the study. The majority of participants were female, comprising 55% (n=782) of the sample. Additionally, the majority of teachers were not from challenging areas, accounting for 59.6% (n=847) of the total. Among the participants, 85% (n=1,209) were secondary school teachers, and 52.5% (n=747) had less than 15 years of teaching experience. Within the participant pool, 10.4% (n=148) identified as ethnic minorities, while 4.9% (n=70) were responsible for managerial roles.

Survey method

The survey was conducted during the stage of organizing the training of Module 3 for core high school teachers in the ETEP program, in an online form. The survey consists of two parts: Part one collected demographic information of participants such as gender (Male/Female), difficult area (No/Yes), ethnic minorities (No/Yes), teacher level (Secondary/High school), teacher do management (No/Yes), years of work (<15 years/≥ 15 years), and school location. Part two collected teachers' self-reports after participating in the training on "Training effectiveness", "Training materials", "Software and IT for training", "Training organization", and "Online support after training".

Survey instruments

Teachers evaluated "Training effectiveness" by 6 questions: (1) "Achieve personal needs for professional development", (2) "Help me improve to achieve Teacher's Professional Standards", (3) "I am confident enough to support my colleagues with the contents of the training", (4) "I am confident in my ability to support colleagues in the activities related to the implementation content to the module", (5) "I feel I am a member of the learning community built up by the training course" and (6) "I am satisfied with the quality of the training module". The questions are graded on a Likert scale, from 1 = "Strongly disagree" to 4 = "Strongly agree". Cronbach's Alpha for the "Training effectiveness" scale was 0.84. The mean score of the scale was divided into 4 levels, from completely disagree (1 point) to strongly agree (4 points):

Level 1 (Very low): 1 to 1.75

Level 2 (Low): 1.75 to 2.5

Level 3 (Pass): 2.5 to 3.25

Level 4 (High): 3.25 to 4

The higher the mean score, the better the teacher's agreement about the training effectiveness. In this study, the mean scale "Training effectiveness" score was 3.30 (SD: 0.46) at level 4.

Factors affecting the training effectiveness

In this study, we evaluated 4 factors that affect the training results (Table 2). We use a 4-point Likert scale from 1 = "Strongly disagree" to 4 = "Strongly agree".

Table 2

Reliability and characteristics of the scales

Scales	Cronbach's Alpha	No of items	Mean	SD
(1) Training materials	0.83	4	3.32	0.48
(2) Software and IT for training	0.85	6	3.31	0.47
(3) Training organization	0.84	7	3.28	0.46
(4) Online support after training	0.86	5	3.31	0.48

The analysis results of 4 scales showed that the Cronbach's Alpha reached the high level ($>0,8$), proving that they were suitable for data analysis.

Data analysis

Baseline demographics were analyzed for descriptive purposes. Group comparisons of the "Training effectiveness " were made using t-test and Chi-square tests. Correlation analysis was performed to consider the relationship and influence of the variables "Training materials", "Software, IT for training", "Training organization", and "Online support after training" on "Training effectiveness ". The coefficient β (Beta) was calculated at the significance level of 0.05.

Results

Teachers' self-reported on training effectiveness

The study aimed to assess the effectiveness of Module 3 training by examining self-reported data from teachers who had completed the program. Overall, participants rated the training effectiveness at level 4, with a mean of 3.30 and a standard deviation of 0.46. To delve into variations among teacher characteristics, we conducted t-tests and one-way ANOVA tests, with statistically significant differences indicated by p-values in bold.

Examining the results by gender, male teachers rated the training more positively than their female counterparts (Mean: 3.36 vs 3.25, $p < 0.05$). Similarly, teachers who were not from ethnic minorities perceived the training as more effective compared to those who identified as ethnic minorities (Mean: 3.31 vs 3.20, $p < 0.01$). High school teachers also rated the training higher than secondary school teachers (Mean: 3.37 vs 3.29, $p < 0.05$). The training effectiveness of Module 3 for secondary school teachers was shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Training effectiveness

Variables		Training effectiveness	
		Mean	p
Sex ^a	Male	3.36	0.000
	Female	3.25	
Difficult area ^a	No	3.32	0.151
	Yes	3.28	
Ethnic minorities ^a	No	3.31	0.008
	Yes	3.20	
Teacher level ^a	Secondary school	3.29	0.016
	High school	3.37	
Do management ^a	No	3.30	0.511
	Yes	3.33	
Years of work ^a	< 15 years	3.29	0.631
	≥ 15 years	3.30	
School location ^b	Tuyen Quang	3.32	0.003
	Ha Giang	3.31	
	Lao Cai	3.29	
	Yen Bai	3.17	
	Phu Tho	3.34	
	Bac Giang	3.28	
	Vinh Phuc	3.37	
Note: ^a t-test; ^b One way ANOVA test; P-values in bold indicate a statistically significant difference			

However, no statistically significant differences were found in the assessment of training effectiveness based on difficulty areas (No/Yes), management roles (No/Yes), and years of work (<15 years/≥ 15 years). This suggests that the training program's impact was consistent across teachers working in diverse difficulty areas, holding management roles, and varying levels of teaching experience.

The study findings highlight variations in teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of Module 3 training based on gender, ethnicity, and school level. This finding is consistent with that of Prenger, Cindy, and Adam (2017), identified various key factors influencing teachers' perceptions of training quality. These insights can inform future training initiatives to tailor approaches and content to better meet the diverse needs of teachers in different contexts.

Factors affecting the training effectiveness

Four factors affecting the training results of Module 3 were considered: (1) "Training materials", (2) "Software and IT for training", (3) "Organization of training", and (4) "Online support after training". First, it is necessary to consider the correlation between these factors

with the training effectiveness. Table 4 shows the correlation between the four factors and the training effectiveness.

Table 4

Correlation between training effectiveness and influencing factors ^a

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
(1) Training effectiveness	1				
(2) Training materials	0.83**	1			
(3) Software and IT for training	0.84**	0.84**	1		
(4) Training organization	0.85**	0.85**	0.85**	1	
(5) Online support after training	0.89**	0.89**	0.84**	0.85**	1

Note:

** p<0.01

^a Spearman correlation coefficient

Four factors are highly positively correlated with statistical significance with training effectiveness ($r > 0.8$; $p < 0.01$). To confirm the influence of these factors on the training effectiveness, we carried out a linear regression analysis. Dependent variable is "training effectiveness", and independent variables are (1) "Training materials", (2) "Software and IT for training", (3) "Organization of training", and (4) "Online support after training". The results of the linear regression are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Results of linear regression analysis^b

Model	R	R ²	R ² _{adj}	Standard error	Durbin-Watson
1	0.934 ^a	0.873	0.873	0.166	1.949

Note:

^a Predictive factors: Training materials, Software and IT for training, Organization of training, Online support after training.

^b Dependent variable: Training effectiveness

The R-value of 0.93 shows that the relationship between the variables in the model has a high correlation. The regression results report of the model shows that the value of $R^2 = 0.87$, which means that the model's relevance is 87.3%, or in other words, 87.3% of the variation of the model. The variable "training effectiveness" is explained by four components. The R^2_{adj} value is 0.87, which means a linear regression model between training effectiveness and four factors. Durbin-Watson coefficient (DW) confirmed that the model does not violate when using the multiple regression method because the obtained DW value is 1.95 (ranges from 1 to 3). Thus, the multiple regression model meets the evaluation and appropriateness test requirements for drawing research results.

Table 6

Regression coefficients in the model

Independent variables (X)	Dependent variables (Y)	Beta (β)	t	p
Constant	Training effectiveness		4.45	0.000
Training materials		0.098	4.34	0.000
Software and IT for training		0.136	5.41	0.000
Organization of training		0.212	8.59	0.000
Online support after training		0.525	21.76	0.000

The standardized regression values of the independent variables in the model: Training materials is 0.098; Software and IT for training is 0.136; Training organization is 0.212; and Online Support after training is 0.525.

Regression equation for the model:

$$Y = 0.098X_1 + 0.136X_2 + 0.212X_3 + 0.525X_4$$

The model explains 87.3% of the variation of the variable Y, the remaining 22.50% of the variation is explained by other variables outside the model. The model shows that the independent variables positively influence the training effectiveness at the 99% reliability level. The regression equation shows that the evaluation score of “Training materials” increases to 1, the training effectiveness increases by 0.098. Similarly, when the evaluation score of “IT software for training” increases by 1 point, the training efficiency increases by 0.136; when “Organization of training” increases by 1, the training effectiveness increases by 0.212; when “Online support after training” increases by 1, the training effectiveness increases by 0.525.

The above analysis concludes that the theoretical model is suitable for the research data and four factors affecting the training effectiveness of Module 3. The results of testing the theoretical model are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1.

Factors affecting the effectiveness of Training Module 3

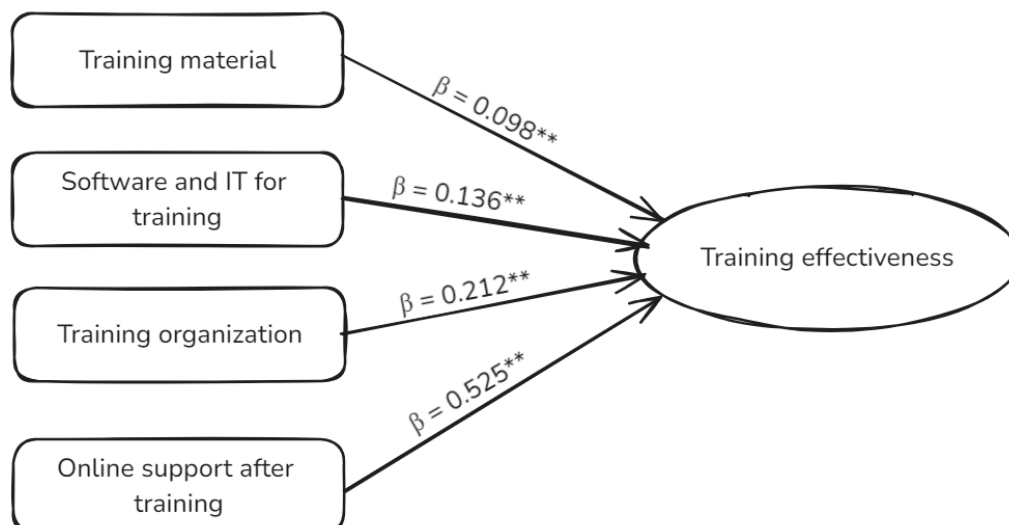


Figure 1 shows that the training effectiveness was most influenced by the “Online support after the training” factor (Beta = 0.525, $p < 0.001$); the second is the “Organization of training” (Beta = 0.212, $p < 0.001$); the third is “Software and IT for training” (Beta = 0.136, $p < 0.001$) and the fourth is “Training materials” (Beta = 0.098, $p < 0.001$).

Therefore, the results of regression model testing show that all four independent variables have a positive influence on training effectiveness. This study supports evidence from previous observations (e.g., Nguyen, 2019; Pyle et al., 2011) that teacher training and retraining institutions need to make efforts to improve these factors to improve the effectiveness of teacher training.

Discussion

The findings of this study offer valuable insights into the factors influencing the outcomes of teacher training programs in competency-based student assessment within the Vietnamese context. Consistent with prior literature, the results affirm that individual and contextual factors significantly shape teachers’ perceptions of training effectiveness. More specifically, the study identified a significant disparity in training perception between ethnic majority and minority teachers, with the latter group rating the program less favorably. This aligns with Nguyen’s (2022) conclusion that individual and contextual access issues—particularly in underserved regions—can hinder teachers’ engagement and learning outcomes in professional development. It also suggests potential language or cultural barriers that may not have been adequately addressed in the training content or delivery. Teachers’ professional level (secondary vs. high school) emerged as another influential factor. High school teachers rated the training higher than secondary school teachers, suggesting that the content or pedagogical orientation of Module 3 may have been better aligned with high school curricula or expectations. This calls attention to the importance of aligning training content with the specific instructional contexts of different school levels, as emphasized by Voogt et al. (2011) and Abakah et al. (2022). Interestingly, variables such as working in difficult areas, having management roles, and years of teaching experience did not produce significant differences in the perceived effectiveness of the training. This is a noteworthy finding as it suggests that the ETEP training may have achieved a degree of consistency in delivery across various professional and regional contexts. However, the lack of significant differentiation also raises questions about whether the program was sufficiently responsive to the specific challenges faced by teachers in particularly disadvantaged areas—an issue highlighted by Stoll et al. (2006) and Pham & Nguyen (2016).

The findings support the idea that individual characteristics and school-level contexts, rather than administrative roles or seniority, play a more central role in shaping the outcomes of teacher training in competency-based assessment. This resonates with the findings of Geldenhuys and Oosthuizen (2015), who stressed the importance of teacher involvement and contextual alignment in the planning and implementation of training.

The results emphasize the importance of contextual responsiveness, cultural sensitivity, and alignment of content with teaching levels in teacher training programs. These findings reinforce the call from Vietnamese scholars such as Bui (2018) and Nguyen (2022) for more needs-based

and regionally adaptable training models. To enhance the overall effectiveness and equity of training initiatives, future efforts should consider differentiated strategies that take into account the diverse backgrounds and needs of teachers, particularly in ethnically diverse and resource-constrained settings.

The analysis also indicates that the theoretical model is suitable for the research data, and all four factors significantly and positively affect the training effectiveness of Module 3. The results strongly suggest that "Online support after training" is the most influential factor among those examined, followed by "Organization of training".

These findings align with and support evidence from previous observations (e.g., Nguyen, 2019; Pyle et al., 2011), which emphasize the importance of various support mechanisms and organizational aspects in teacher training. The study underscores the need for teacher training institutions to focus efforts on improving these specific factors, particularly post-training support and organization aspects, to enhance the overall effectiveness of teacher professional development programs like the one studied.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study explored the determinants influencing teacher training programs' effectiveness, specifically focusing on the development of students' quality and capacity. The empirical testing of our theoretical model revealed four key factors that significantly impact training effectiveness: Online support post-training, Training organization, Software and IT infrastructure for training, and Training materials.

Moreover, the research illuminated noteworthy disparities in the evaluation of training effectiveness across different teacher demographics. Male teachers, non-ethnic minority educators, and those in high schools reported higher levels of satisfaction with the training compared to their female counterparts, ethnic minority teachers, and secondary school instructors. While the study provides insights into the differences in evaluating training effectiveness among different teacher demographics, it has some limitations. First, our data was collected using the self-reported method; therefore, the responses may be biased due to social desirability. Second, this study was performed on data collected at a single point in time, so caution should be exercised when interpreting the results of analyses based on cross-sectional data.

In response to these findings, we put forth several recommendations for educational institutions. Emphasizing the enhancement of online support post-training and optimizing the organization of training programs are crucial steps. Investing in upgrading software and information technology infrastructure for training is necessary to facilitate a more efficient and modernized learning experience. Additionally, improving the quality of training materials is imperative, aligning them with practical and effective strategies that conform to the evolving landscape of general education innovation as mandated by the 2018 education program.

Similarly, for departments of education and training, high schools, and secondary schools, the study suggests tailoring training to the specific needs of teaching staff, especially among female

teachers and those from ethnic minorities. Collaborating with teacher education universities for regular exchange and coordination in organizing online training and post-teacher training support is paramount. This collaboration should also focus on enhancing the information technology infrastructure to ensure a more convenient learning environment. Lastly, involving qualified teachers in the active creation of training materials is recommended, ensuring they are well-suited to practical applications and align with the requirements of the 2018 education program.

By implementing these recommendations, educational institutions and relevant departments can contribute to continuously improving teacher training programs, meeting the dynamic needs of education innovation in the years to come.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank all colleagues and school teachers who participated in this study for their support.

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Biodata

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