

NAVIGATING LEADERSHIP AND IDENTITY: A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF CLASS MONITOR ROLES AMONG VIETNAMESE ENGLISH-MAJORED STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study delves into the impacts of taking on the role of a class monitor among Vietnamese English-majored students, focusing on the nuanced experiences and growth trajectories stemming from this leadership position. Conducted within two higher education institutions in Mekong Delta, the research employed semi-structured interviews to capture the voices and narratives of 15 participants. Grounded in the Constructivist Grounded Theory and the Phenomenological Approach, the study unearthed several pivotal themes. These included feelings of empowerment through leadership responsibilities, the intricate balancing act of cultural mediation and dual identities, enhancement of English communication skills, the evolution of prioritization skills, profound introspective journeys towards self-realization, and a deep-seated desire to inspire and create a lasting legacy. The findings not only shed light on the multifaceted impacts of the class monitor role but also underscore the transformative potential of such positions in fostering personal and academic growth. The study contributes uniquely to the discourse on student leadership, offering educators, policymakers, and institutions a deeper understanding of the experiences and challenges faced by student leaders in a Vietnamese context. It emphasizes the importance of recognizing and harnessing the profound personal and collective journeys these roles can initiate.

Keywords: Class Monitors, Leadership, Qualitative Exploration, Vietnamese English Students

INTRODUCTION

The educational journey of a student is marked by myriad experiences, both academic and non-academic, that contribute to their holistic development. Among these, taking up leadership roles within the classroom context offers a unique opportunity for students to cultivate interpersonal skills, a sense of responsibility, and a broader perspective towards their learning environment (Swaffield, 2008). In the context of the Vietnamese educational system, the role of a class monitor is a prominent leadership position within the classroom. Often, the class monitor is tasked with administrative duties, maintaining discipline, liaising between the students and the teacher, and sometimes, representing the class in school-wide activities.

Historically, leadership roles such as the class monitor have been observed to provide students with a sense of purpose (Wallin, 2003), improved self-esteem (Wong et al., 2012), and an opportunity to develop life skills that are not explicitly taught in the curriculum (Blackwell et al., 2007). The acquisition of these skills is crucial for students as they navigate their way through higher education and eventually, the workforce. Especially in the domain of English-majored students in Vietnam, where effective communication, teamwork, and leadership are essential components of their academic and professional journey, understanding the impacts of such roles becomes even more critical.

Despite its significance, there is a lacuna in the literature regarding the specific impacts of the role of class monitor on the personal and academic growth of Vietnamese English-majored students. This study aims to fill this gap by providing a qualitative exploration into the experiences, challenges, and benefits that come with being a class monitor, and how it influences the holistic growth of these students. Through in-depth interviews, personal narratives, and observations, this research seeks to shed light on an often-overlooked aspect of student life and its long-term implications.

Several studies have indicated that student leadership roles foster personal growth. Skills such as time management, responsibility, problem-solving, and interpersonal communication are frequently cultivated when students assume leadership roles (Chen et al., 2019). These positions push students out of their comfort zones, encouraging them to face challenges head-on, often translating to improved self-esteem and confidence (Ross, 2015).

In many Asian educational settings, the role of the class monitor is deeply rooted in tradition (Poole, 2016). Unlike western student leadership roles like student council members, class monitors usually handle administrative duties and are the link between teachers and students (Marzano et al., 2003). This position not only imparts a sense of responsibility but also allows students to gain insights into classroom management, a skill rarely acquired by students in other roles.

For English-majored students, particularly in non-native English-speaking countries like Vietnam, leadership roles provide an additional platform to hone their language skills (Bodewig et al., 2014). Engaging in tasks such as organizing events, representing the class, or communicating between peers and teachers necessitates the use of English, facilitating practical language application.

In the Vietnamese context, respect for authority and collectivist values play a significant role in classroom dynamics (Truong et al., 2017). The class monitor, thus, becomes an embodiment of these cultural values, making their role all the more crucial. Their position is not just administrative but also cultural, ensuring harmony and respect within the classroom.

While there exists considerable research on student leadership and its impacts, very few studies delve deep into the role of class monitors, especially within the Vietnamese context. Moreover, the specific experiences of English-majored students, given their unique academic demands and challenges, are scarcely documented. Understanding the role of class monitors, particularly among Vietnamese English-majored students, requires a nuanced approach. The available literature provides a foundation by emphasizing the general benefits

of student leadership. However, the specificity of the class monitor's role in Vietnam, combined with the unique challenges and opportunities presented to English-majored students, suggests a compelling need for this study.

METHODS

Research Design

The current study adopts an exploratory qualitative research design to delve deeply into the lived experiences of Vietnamese English-majored students who have taken on the role of class monitor. Qualitative research, inherently explorative in nature, seeks to understand human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior. This approach is especially apt for this study as it allows for rich, detailed insights into the personal and academic impacts of being a class monitor, something which quantitative methods might overlook (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

Underpinning this research design are two critical theoretical frameworks: Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) and Phenomenological Approach (PA). Introduced by Charmaz (2006), CGT, on the one hand, posits that reality is constructed by individual experiences and interactions, emphasizing the subjective interplay between researcher and participant. This perspective aligns well with the study's objective to understand the unique experiences of each student. CGT also facilitates the development of a theory 'grounded' in the data, making it particularly useful for areas with limited pre-existing theoretical foundations. On the other hand, PA centers on describing the commonalities of the lived experience about a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2016). By adopting a phenomenological lens, the study seeks to understand the essence of the experience of being a class monitor, capturing the shared experiences and emotions among the participants.

In employing these frameworks, the research embraces an interpretive paradigm, acknowledging the subjective interplay of individual experiences and broader social constructs. Through this design, it is anticipated that the study will not only shed light on the impacts of the role of class monitor on Vietnamese English-majored students but also contribute to the broader discourse on student leadership roles in varied cultural and academic contexts.

Participants

The participants of this study comprised 15 English-majored students from two renowned higher education institutions situated in Mekong Delta region of Vietnam. These participants were carefully selected to encompass a diverse range of experiences and perspectives related to the role of the class monitor. Among the participants, 7 of them were currently undertaking the duties of a class monitor, while the remaining 8 had previously held the position in their academic journey. This mix ensured that the study captured both contemporary reflections and retrospective insights.

To ensure representativeness and diversity, participants were chosen from different academic years and backgrounds, reflecting both male and female students. The rationale behind selecting participants from two institutions was to acknowledge potential variations in institutional culture, practices, or experiences, thereby enriching the study's findings.

Ethical considerations played a pivotal role in the selection and engagement of the participants. Before the commencement of the study, ethical approval was obtained from the respective higher education institutions and the research review board. In line with ethical research practices, all participants were provided with an information sheet detailing the study's purpose, methods, and potential implications. They were also informed of their rights, including the right to withdraw at any point without repercussions. Written informed consent was obtained from each participant, ensuring they were participating voluntarily and with full knowledge of the study's nature. Additionally, to maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms were used in all study outputs, and any identifiable information was thoroughly anonymized.

Moreover, to address potential power dynamics and reduce potential biases, the interviews were conducted in a neutral location, ensuring that the participants felt comfortable and safe sharing their experiences and views. Participants were also reassured that their responses would not have any impact on their academic or institutional standing, emphasizing the study's primary objective of understanding their unique experiences without any external judgments or repercussions.

Data Collection

The primary tool of data collection for this study was semi-structured interviews. This format was chosen due to its ability to explore the depth and nuances of participants' experiences while retaining a structured approach to ensure that vital topics were covered.

Before the main data collection phase, a pilot study was conducted. This pilot involved interviewing two English-majored students, who had previously served as class monitors, from one of the institutions in the Mekong Delta. The primary aim of the pilot was to assess the clarity, relevance, and flow of the interview questions. Based on feedback from the pilot study and preliminary data analysis, revisions were made to refine and enhance the interview guide.

Some of the revised questions included:

- "Can you describe a typical day or week in your role as a class monitor?"
- "How has the role of class monitor influenced your personal and academic growth?"
- "What challenges did you face while serving as a class monitor, and how did you overcome them?"
- "In what ways did the role allow you to interact or communicate in English more frequently?"
- "How do you perceive the importance of the class monitor role within the cultural context of the Mekong Delta and Vietnam as a whole?"

Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes to an hour. To ensure a comfortable environment for the participants and facilitate open communication, the interviews were

conducted in quiet, neutral locations within the respective educational institutions. Recognizing the cultural and linguistic comfort of the participants, all interviews were conducted in Vietnamese. This choice was pivotal in allowing participants to express their feelings, experiences, and perceptions more naturally and in-depth.

To ensure data accuracy and facilitate subsequent analysis, all interviews were audio-recorded with the explicit consent of the participants. These recordings were then transcribed verbatim, forming the primary dataset for the study. Participants were also given the opportunity to review and amend their transcripts, ensuring that their views and experiences were captured accurately.

Data Analysis

To make sense of the rich qualitative data collected from the interviews, a thematic analysis approach was employed. Thematic analysis is a flexible and widely used method in qualitative research that facilitates the identification, examination, and interpretation of patterns or “themes” within the data. This method is particularly suited for exploring diverse individual experiences and perceptions, like those encountered in this study. The process commenced with an initial familiarization phase where the researcher immersed themselves in the data by reading and re-reading the interview transcripts. This thorough engagement helped in gaining a holistic sense of the participants’ narratives and experiences. During this phase, initial ideas and patterns were noted down, setting the stage for the subsequent steps.

Following familiarization, an initial set of codes was generated. These codes were fundamental units of meaning, often a word or a short phrase, that captured the essence of the participants’ statements. The coding process was both inductive, stemming from the data itself, and deductive, guided by the research questions and theoretical frameworks. Once coding was completed, the next step involved searching for themes by clustering related codes together. Themes were broader units of meaning that captured an essential aspect of the data relevant to the research question. After identifying potential themes, they were reviewed in two main phases. The first phase involved checking the themes against the coded data extracts to ensure they formed a coherent pattern. In the second phase, the validity of individual themes was assessed concerning the entire dataset. Upon satisfactory review, the final step was defining and naming the themes. This involved fine-tuning the specifics of each theme, determining the overarching narrative, and ensuring that the theme’s name was descriptive and captured its essence.

Throughout the data analysis process, reflexivity was maintained, where the researcher continuously reflected on their role, potential biases, and influence on the research outcomes. The iterative nature of thematic analysis meant that the researcher frequently revisited earlier steps to refine codes or themes as the analysis progressed. By the end of this rigorous process, a comprehensive understanding of the impacts of taking on the role of a class monitor on Vietnamese English-majored students was achieved.

RESULTS

Empowerment Through Leadership Responsibilities

A salient theme that emerged from the analysis was the “Empowerment Through Leadership Responsibilities”. A significant majority, with 12 out of 15 participants, expressed feelings of empowerment and growth resulting directly from their responsibilities as class monitors.

Nguyen, one of the participants, articulated this sentiment by stating, “*Being a class monitor was not just about administrative duties for me. It was a journey of understanding my potential, my strengths, and even my weaknesses. I felt empowered every time I could resolve a class issue or when I successfully represented my classmates in front of the faculty.*” Similarly, Linh shared, “*In my role, I often had to communicate between teachers and students, mediate disagreements, and even lead certain class activities. This leadership gave me a sense of empowerment, making me realize that I could make a difference, no matter how small.*”

These expressions align seamlessly with the CGT. Participants, through their interactions and experiences, constructed their own reality of what it meant to be a class monitor. For many, like Nguyen and Linh, this reality was framed around empowerment, personal growth, and the development of a leadership identity. They were not just fulfilling duties; they were navigating a journey of self-discovery and potential realization.

Further delving into the PA, it is evident that the feeling of empowerment was not an isolated or individual sentiment. Instead, it represented a shared lived experience among the participants. The role of a class monitor became a transformative phase in their academic journey, leading them towards a newfound sense of self and purpose.

Cultural Mediation and the Balance of Dual Identities

Another prominent theme that arose from the interviews was “Cultural Mediation and the Balance of Dual Identities.” This theme was echoed by 10 out of the 15 participants who described their experiences as class monitors as being caught between the cultural expectations of traditional Vietnamese values and the modern demands of English-majored academic pursuits.

Phuong expressed this tension by noting, “*Being an English major often meant adopting a more global perspective, questioning, and sometimes even challenging established norms. However, as a class monitor, I had to respect and uphold our traditional Vietnamese values, especially when communicating with teachers or resolving class conflicts.*” On a similar note, Bao reflected, “*I felt like I was always balancing two worlds. One where I was a budding English scholar, engaging in debates and discussions, and the other, where I was a representative of traditional student values, ensuring respect and harmony in our class.*”

Drawing from the CGT, it is evident that participants, like Phuong and Bao, were constantly constructing and reconstructing their identities in response to the dynamic interplay of cultural expectations and academic demands. The role of a class monitor forced them into a space where they had to mediate between these two often conflicting identities, forging a unique reality that balanced both worlds.

Using the PA, it is clear that this experience was not merely individualistic but was a shared phenomenon among the participants. The dual identities, shaped by the intersection of Vietnamese culture and English-majored pursuits, created a common lived experience. This experience was marked by the continuous negotiation of boundaries, roles, and identities, making the role of a class monitor a complex yet enriching journey.

Enhanced Interpersonal Skills and Empathetic Growth

A further distinct theme identified from the interviews was the “Enhanced Interpersonal Skills and Empathetic Growth.” This sentiment was reiterated by 11 of the 15 participants, who believed that their tenure as class monitors significantly developed their interpersonal skills, especially their ability to understand and empathize with their peers.

Trang shared her experience by saying, “As a class monitor, I was often the first point of contact for many of my classmates when they faced challenges. This experience made me more patient, taught me to listen actively, and to empathize with their situations.” Minh, reflecting on his tenure, commented, “There were instances where I had to mediate disagreements among classmates. These moments, although challenging, made me more attuned to different perspectives and honed my skills in conflict resolution.”

Interpreting these experiences through the lens of CGT, it is evident that the continuous interactions and challenges faced by class monitors, such as Trang and Minh, acted as catalysts in shaping their perception and understanding of interpersonal dynamics. The role demanded not just administrative diligence but also a deep understanding and empathy towards peers. These experiences, over time, constructed a nuanced understanding of human behavior and enriched their interpersonal toolkit.

Considering the PA, this enhanced empathetic growth was not an isolated feeling but a collective lived experience among the participants. The act of constantly engaging with, understanding, and sometimes mediating between peers created a shared journey of personal growth. This journey was punctuated with moments of realization, learning, and a deeper appreciation of the diverse tapestry of human emotions and responses.

Development of Effective Communication Skills in English

Another pivotal theme that surfaced during the interviews was the “Development of Effective Communication Skills in English.” This aspect was echoed by 9 out of the 15 participants, who felt that their roles as class monitors granted them ample opportunities to practice and hone their English communication skills in real-life scenarios.

Duc commented, “Though we were in Vietnam, as an English major, many of our class discussions, presentations, and even some administrative tasks were conducted in English. Being a class monitor meant I was often at the forefront of these activities, giving me invaluable practice and confidence in my English speaking abilities.” Similarly, Thu added, “Whether it was presenting a point to the faculty or communicating class feedback, I had to articulate my thoughts clearly in English. Over time, this constant practice made me more fluent and confident.”

Exploring these insights through the CGT, it becomes apparent that participants like Duc and Thu were not just passive learners of the English language. Instead, they actively

constructed their linguistic competencies by leveraging the real-world, authentic opportunities that the class monitor role presented. Every interaction, presentation, or feedback session became a building block in their evolving English communication skills.

From the standpoint of the PA, this development of English communication skills can be seen as a shared journey among the participants. The lived experience of being an English-major student in Vietnam, combined with the responsibilities of a class monitor, created a collective narrative of linguistic growth, challenges, and achievements.

Sense of Legacy and the Desire to Inspire

An intriguing theme that emerged from the data was the “Sense of Legacy and the Desire to Inspire.” This sentiment was reflected by 8 out of the 15 participants who believed that their roles as class monitors gave them not only a platform to lead but also an opportunity to inspire younger cohorts and leave a lasting impact on their academic community.

Chi noted, “One of the most fulfilling aspects of being a class monitor was knowing that my actions and decisions could inspire younger students. I always tried to set a positive example, hoping that future class monitors could look up to and maybe even emulate.” Reflecting on the ripple effect of his leadership, Tan added, “During my tenure, I initiated a mentorship program for our class. Seeing it being adopted by subsequent batches and knowing I had a role in that legacy is deeply gratifying.”

Viewing these reflections through the CGT, it is evident that participants like Chi and Tan actively shaped their roles beyond mere administrative responsibilities. Through their initiatives and actions, they constructed a broader role for themselves—one that was rooted in mentorship, guidance, and the desire to leave a positive legacy for subsequent classes.

Diving deeper with the PA, it is clear that this aspiration to inspire and create a legacy was a shared lived experience. The responsibility of being a class monitor transformed from a position of leadership to a position of influence for many participants. This transformation was marked by a conscious effort to leave an indelible mark, to inspire, and to pave the way for future generations.

Challenge of Time Management and the Evolution of Prioritization Skills

Yet another significant theme that materialized from the participants’ narratives was the “Challenge of Time Management and the Evolution of Prioritization Skills.” This theme resonated with 13 out of the 15 participants, who consistently expressed that their roles as class monitors compelled them to juggle various tasks, which, in turn, refined their time management and prioritization abilities.

Hai shared, “*There were days when I felt overwhelmed with the dual responsibilities of academic work and class monitor duties. Over time, I developed a system to prioritize tasks, allocate time, and ensure everything was done efficiently.*” An echoed sentiment came from Lan, who mentioned, “*The role taught me the value of time. Balancing studies with the duties of a class monitor was not easy, but it honed my ability to prioritize tasks, delegate when necessary, and make efficient use of available hours.*”

Drawing insights from the CGT, it becomes evident that participants like Hai and Lan were not merely adapting to the demands of the role. Instead, they were reconstructing their approaches to time, tasks, and responsibilities. The challenges they faced acted as stimuli, pushing them to evolve and develop robust time management strategies tailored to their unique situations.

When viewed through the PA, this theme stands out as a collective lived experience among participants. The pressures and demands of being class monitors created a shared journey of navigating time constraints, making tough decisions, and eventually mastering the art of juggling various responsibilities. This shared experience emerged as a cornerstone in their academic and personal growth.

Discovery of Authentic Self and the Reaffirmation of Purpose

An unexpected yet profoundly significant theme that unveiled itself through the interviews was the “Discovery of Authentic Self and the Reaffirmation of Purpose.” This theme was uniquely profound, resonating deeply with 6 out of the 15 participants. These participants felt that their tenure as class monitors acted as a mirror, reflecting their true selves and reinforcing their greater purpose in life.

Quyen, reflecting on her journey, said, “Being a class monitor was like a journey of self-discovery for me. Beyond the tasks and responsibilities, it made me question and understand who I truly was, what I valued, and what I wanted to achieve in life.” Tien added depth to this sentiment, noting, “The role, with all its ups and downs, made me confront myself. It was like a crucible that distilled my essence, making me realize my true passions and the path I genuinely wanted to embark on.”

Interpreting these introspective narratives through the CGT, it is palpable that roles such as class monitors are not just about external responsibilities. For participants like Quyen and Tien, the role became a transformative experience, prompting introspection, self-questioning, and ultimately leading to a richer understanding of their authentic selves. Their experiences as class monitors provided them with opportunities and challenges that acted as catalysts for deeper self-reflection and construction of personal narratives.

Drawing on the PA, this theme, while not universally experienced by all, was a deeply shared and resonating experience among the participants who echoed it. The role of the class monitor was not merely a leadership position but a transformative phase where their external experiences fostered internal journeys of self-discovery, bringing them closer to their true selves and life’s purpose.

DISCUSSION

Empowerment Through Leadership Responsibilities

The theme of “Empowerment Through Leadership Responsibilities” observed in our study finds resonance in a broad spectrum of literature, especially those focused on student leadership roles. Historically, leadership roles within academic settings have been linked to heightened senses of responsibility, empowerment, and personal growth (Cardiff et al., 2018). However, what stands out in our findings is the depth and breadth with which these feelings of empowerment are expressed and experienced by the participants.

Many prior studies, such as those by Thompson (2014), have highlighted the benefits of student leadership roles in fostering a sense of responsibility and contributing to skill development. Yet, the narrative of empowerment, as revealed in our study, goes beyond this conventional understanding. The participants, like Nguyen and Linh, described their journey not just in terms of acquired skills or tasks performed, but as a holistic experience of self-discovery, potential realization, and personal growth.

While Hairon and Dimmock (2012) found that student leadership roles in some Asian educational contexts primarily focus on administrative duties with limited avenues for empowerment, our study contrasts this by showcasing how Vietnamese English-majored students transform these roles into platforms of empowerment. This divergence can be attributed to the CGT, where participants, shaped by their unique experiences and interactions, redefine what the role of a class monitor signifies to them.

Moreover, the shared essence of empowerment, as emphasized by the PA, further distinguishes our findings. Previous research often paints student leadership experiences as individual journeys (Kouzes & Posner, 2018). However, our study underscores the collective lived experience of empowerment among class monitors, suggesting a communal narrative that transcends individual experiences.

Cultural Mediation and the Balance of Dual Identities

The “Cultural Mediation and the Balance of Dual Identities” theme uncovers a complex layer of experiences, which although evident in some strands of research, has rarely been explored with such depth in the context of Vietnamese English-majored students. Previous studies have occasionally touched upon the dual identities that students grapple with, especially in contexts where global education paradigms intersect with deep-rooted local cultures (Kadiwal & Durrani, 2018). However, the cultural mediation aspect, especially in the role of class monitors, unveils a nuanced dynamic unique to this study.

In the broader academic discourse, many scholars, such as Rhoads and Valadez (2016), have emphasized the challenges and advantages of balancing dual identities, especially in multicultural educational settings. Yet, Phuong’s and Bao’s experiences reveal a more intricate dance of identity negotiation, particularly amplified by their roles as class monitors in the Vietnamese context. Their experiences highlight not just the balancing act but also the continuous identity construction and reconstruction, as posited by the CGT.

Moreover, while Howard (2003) did suggest that students in Asia often face a tug-of-war between traditional values and global educational aspirations, our study illuminates how this dynamic manifests uniquely for class monitors. They are not just students navigating these dualities; they are leaders entrusted with the responsibility of upholding traditional values while simultaneously embodying the spirit of their modern academic pursuits.

Furthermore, the shared essence of this experience, as emphasized by the PA, adds another dimension to our findings. Whereas many studies often depict the balancing of dual identities as a solitary journey (Harklau, 2003; Torres et al., 2009), our research accentuates its collective nature among the class monitors. This shared narrative of identity negotiation,

boundary-setting, and cultural mediation underscores a communal experience that extends beyond individual introspections.

Enhanced Interpersonal Skills and Empathetic Growth

The emergence of “Enhanced Interpersonal Skills and Empathetic Growth” as a central theme aligns with a body of research emphasizing the significance of leadership roles in fostering interpersonal growth. Various studies, for instance, Goffee and Jones (2015), have suggested that leadership positions, especially in academic settings, can lead to enriched interpersonal understanding and the development of conflict resolution skills. Our study, however, delves deeper into these dynamics, elucidating the unique interplay between these roles and empathetic growth among Vietnamese English-majored students.

While earlier research like Xu et al. (2019) has noted that student leadership roles often lead to improved interpersonal skills, the depth of empathetic growth as highlighted by our participants, especially Trang and Minh, adds a fresh perspective. Their narratives suggest that the class monitor role is not just about leadership or problem-solving; it is about understanding, connecting, and growing with their peers on a deeply emotional level. This profound connection and growth, as conceptualized through the CGT, emphasize the transformative nature of their experiences.

Furthermore, the collective essence of this empathetic journey, underscored by the PA, presents a departure from many earlier studies. While Patterson (2012) have hinted at the shared experiences of student leaders, our study emphasizes the collective empathetic growth journey experienced by class monitors. This shared narrative offers a richer understanding of the intertwined nature of leadership, interpersonal dynamics, and collective growth.

Development of Effective Communication Skills in English

The emergence of “Development of Effective Communication Skills in English” as a prominent theme brings to the fore the practical implications of leadership roles in linguistic development, especially in non-native English contexts like Vietnam. In the realm of academic literature, several studies, such as those by Ismail and Al Allaq (2019), have underlined the pivotal role of authentic experiences in enhancing linguistic proficiency. However, our study, with its unique setting and demographic, adds a fresh layer of understanding to this discourse.

Previous research, such as that by Askildson et al. (2013), underscores the importance of authentic engagement in improving English proficiency. Still, the role of class monitors, as exemplified by Duc and Thu, provides a novel lens to appreciate this dynamic. Instead of mere classroom engagements, these students were at the crossroads of administrative responsibilities, peer interactions, and academic demands, all of which were often navigated in English. Their narratives, through the lens of the CGT, highlight that their linguistic proficiency was not a static skill but an evolving competency, honed and refined through genuine interactions and responsibilities.

Contrastingly, while Wood (2017) have documented the isolated journeys of students in developing English communication skills in non-native settings, our study, through the PA,

suggests a communal narrative. The shared experience of leveraging the class monitor role to enhance English skills indicates a collective journey of linguistic growth, challenges, and triumphs.

Sense of Legacy and the Desire to Inspire

The emergence of the theme “Sense of Legacy and the Desire to Inspire” accentuates a dimension of student leadership that, while recognized, is often under-explored in academic research. The idea that student leadership roles can transcend their immediate responsibilities and become platforms for long-lasting impact is echoed in some literature (e.g., Love & Estanek, 2004), but it gains unique significance in our study, especially in the context of Vietnamese English-majored students.

Various studies, like Hamdani (2018), have acknowledged that leadership roles often instill a sense of responsibility in students. However, Chi’s and Tan’s narratives illuminate a deeper emotional connection to the role, suggesting a genuine aspiration to impact future generations positively. This depth of purpose, as understood through the CGT, indicates that these students are not merely responding to their immediate roles but are proactively constructing a larger, more impactful narrative for themselves, one that emphasizes legacy and inspiration.

While Bowman (2007) have discussed the individual aspirations of students in leadership roles to inspire peers, our study, rooted in the PA, underscores the collective nature of this aspiration. The desire to inspire, to leave a legacy, is not an isolated journey but a shared ambition among many class monitors. Their collective narrative emphasizes a transformation, where the role shifts from being a simple administrative duty to a broader platform for mentorship, guidance, and lasting influence.

Challenge of Time Management and the Evolution of Prioritization Skills

The emergence of “Challenge of Time Management and the Evolution of Prioritization Skills” in our study touches upon a universal theme often associated with leadership roles. Time management and prioritization are frequently cited in the literature as crucial skills honed through leadership experiences (Daft, 2014). However, our study unveils a more intricate relationship between these skills and the role of a class monitor, especially within the context of Vietnamese English-majored students.

Previous research, like that of Coleman and Glover (2010), highlighted how academic leadership roles often foster better time management skills in students. Yet, the narratives of our participants, particularly those of Hai and Lan, deepen this discourse by emphasizing not just the acquisition of time management skills but the evolution of a strategic, adaptive approach to managing multiple responsibilities. This adaptive nature of skill development is further corroborated by the CGT, suggesting that these students were not just passively learning but actively constructing and refining their approaches to time management.

Moreover, while Benjamin and O’reilly (2011) did suggest that student leaders often experience an enhanced ability to prioritize tasks, our study brings forth the challenges that catalyze this skill development. The constant juggling, decision-making, and responsibility navigation painted a vivid picture of the pressures class monitors face. Yet, it is these very

pressures, as articulated by our participants, that precipitate the honing of their prioritization skills.

Furthermore, the shared nature of this experience, as spotlighted by the PA, provides another layer of understanding. It suggests that this is not just an individual struggle but a communal narrative shared by class monitors. The collective journey of navigating challenges, evolving strategies, and mastering time management and prioritization becomes a defining experience in their academic trajectory.

Discovery of Authentic Self and the Reaffirmation of Purpose

The emergence of the theme “Discovery of Authentic Self and the Reaffirmation of Purpose” carves out a niche within academic discourse on student leadership roles. While literature has often alluded to leadership roles fostering personal growth (Baron & Parent, 2015), our findings emphasize a deeper, more introspective journey catalyzed by the class monitor role, particularly among Vietnamese English-majored students.

Historically, scholars like Day et al. (2021) have discussed how leadership positions can serve as platforms for personal development. However, the introspective journey described by participants like Quyen and Tien delineates a more profound transformation than traditionally depicted. Their narratives suggest that the class monitor role is not just a leadership position; it is a pathway to self-realization, a catalyst for introspection, and a mirror reflecting one’s deepest values and aspirations. This intricate relationship between external responsibilities and internal reflections is further contextualized by the CGT, showcasing the active construction and understanding of their personal narratives in response to their leadership experiences.

While Quinlan (2014) have explored how leadership roles in academic settings can align with students’ broader life goals, our study delves into the depths of this alignment. It is not just about realizing career ambitions or honing skills for the future; it is about understanding oneself, identifying core values, and charting out a purposeful life trajectory. This profound journey of self-discovery and reaffirmation, while rooted in individual experiences, emerges as a collective narrative, as suggested by the PA. It presents a communal introspection where the role of a class monitor becomes a conduit for shared experiences of self-realization.

CONCLUSION

This part consists of two (2) sub-parts: conclusion of the article and suggestions or recommendations from the research. Conclude your article critically and logically based on the research findings. Please be careful in generalizing the results. You should also state your research limitation in these parts. Generally, the conclusion should explain how the research has moved the body of scientific knowledge forward. In suggestion, please describe your recommendation for further studies regarding your research implication.

This research embarked on an exploration into the multifaceted impacts of assuming the role of a class monitor on Vietnamese English-majored students, delving into the personal, academic, and developmental implications of such a leadership position. Situated within the academic milieu of higher education institutions in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam,

the study aimed to capture the nuanced experiences, challenges, and growth trajectories of these student leaders.

Utilizing a qualitative approach, the study employed semi-structured interviews as its primary data collection tool, ensuring a rich and in-depth understanding of the participants' perspectives. The underlying theoretical frameworks, namely the CGT and the PA, provided the scaffolding for interpreting, understanding, and presenting the lived experiences of these students. These methodologies not only facilitated a rigorous exploration of the subject but also ensured that the voices and narratives of the participants remained at the forefront.

Our findings unveiled a tapestry of experiences and insights. From feelings of empowerment through leadership responsibilities to the intricate dance of cultural mediation and balancing dual identities, the narratives shed light on the myriad ways the role influenced these students. Additionally, themes like the development of effective communication skills in English and the evolution of prioritization skills underscored the practical and transformative impacts of their roles. Yet, perhaps the most profound revelations were those of introspective journeys—whether it was the discovery of one's authentic self or the deep-seated desire to inspire and leave a lasting legacy.

The findings of this research have profound implications, both academically and practically, for educators, policymakers, and institutions of higher education, especially within the Vietnamese context. First and foremost, the understanding that leadership roles, such as class monitors, go beyond administrative responsibilities to catalyze personal growth and self-discovery suggests that institutions need to view and frame these roles as pivotal developmental opportunities. By doing so, they can better support and guide students, ensuring that they fully harness the transformative potential these roles offer.

The theme of cultural mediation and balancing dual identities sheds light on the unique challenges faced by English-majored students in Vietnam. This implies that educators should be cognizant of these cultural dynamics, tailoring their pedagogical approaches to recognize and address the dualities their students navigate. Further, institutions might consider providing training or workshops focused on bridging these cultural gaps, facilitating smoother academic and personal journeys for their students. Additionally, the evident enhancement in English communication skills among class monitors underscores the invaluable role of authentic, real-world practice in linguistic development. This points to the need for curricula that integrates more real-life interactions, presentations, and leadership opportunities in English, thereby accelerating students' linguistic proficiency and confidence.

Furthermore, the deeply introspective journeys of self-realization and purpose reaffirmation highlight the significance of reflective practices in education. Institutions and educators might benefit from integrating more reflective components—like journals, mentorship programs, or group discussions—into their curricula, ensuring that students have structured opportunities to introspect, discover, and grow. Lastly, the shared experiences of time management challenges and the subsequent evolution of prioritization skills emphasize the importance of providing students with opportunities to face and navigate real-world challenges. This suggests that experiential learning, coupled with adequate support systems, can be instrumental in equipping students with critical life skills.

Given the rich insights unearthed in this research, there are several avenues for further exploration that can deepen our understanding of the impacts of leadership roles on students. It would be valuable for subsequent studies to explore similar themes in different academic disciplines within Vietnam, providing a broader picture of how leadership roles influence students across diverse fields of study. Additionally, a comparative study between Vietnamese institutions and those in other Southeast Asian countries could offer a more comprehensive perspective on the cultural and educational dynamics at play. Longitudinal studies following class monitors over several years, post their tenure, could provide insights into the long-term impacts and transformations induced by such roles. Given the profound introspective journeys highlighted in this study, it might also be worthwhile to delve deeper into the psychological and emotional facets of these experiences, possibly employing methodologies like narrative inquiry or even psychoanalytic approaches. Lastly, considering the evident linguistic benefits of the class monitor role, studies focusing exclusively on the interplay between leadership responsibilities and language acquisition could further elucidate this dynamic.

While this study provides valuable insights into the impacts of leadership roles on Vietnamese English-majored students, it is not without its limitations. Firstly, the research was confined to two higher education institutions in the Mekong Delta, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings to broader contexts or regions within Vietnam. The sample size, consisting of 15 participants, while adequate for a qualitative study, may not capture the full diversity of experiences and perspectives that a larger cohort might reveal. Additionally, the study relied solely on semi-structured interviews for data collection. While this method offers depth, it might have benefited from the inclusion of other qualitative methods, such as observations or focus groups, to triangulate and enrich the data. The retrospective nature of some participants' reflections could also introduce elements of recall bias, potentially influencing the authenticity of their recollections. Furthermore, the study's scope, focused primarily on English-majored students, might not encompass the nuanced experiences of students from other academic disciplines. These limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings and should serve as points of consideration for future research endeavors in this area.

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