A Framework for Enhancing English as a Foreign Language Teachers' Teaching Self-efficacy in China Secondary Vocational Schools

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Abstract
The field of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teaching in China secondary vocational schools is confronted with the issue of poor teacher qualities. Among the crucial aspects of teacher quality, the teaching self-efficacy of EFL teachers plays a significant role in determining the quality and quantity of English instruction. Researches have found China secondary vocational school EFL teachers' teaching self-efficacy are generally low. However, limited efforts have been made to address this problem. This article aims to present a framework for enhancing the teaching self-efficacy of EFL teachers in China secondary vocational schools. The factors that contribute to enhancing the teaching self-efficacy of EFL teachers are discussed, drawing upon the principles of self-efficacy theory. The framework, derived from a comprehensive review of existing literature, offers valuable insights to improve the teaching self-efficacy. The findings suggest that secondary vocational EFL teachers' teaching self-efficacy can be enhanced through increasing teachers' experiences and knowledge, as well as fostering a supportive school culture.
Keywords: Teaching Self-efficacy, China Secondary Vocational Schools, Efl, Factors Enhancing Teaching Self-Efficacy

Introduction
Teaching self-efficacy refers to evaluations and judgements a teacher has in regard to his/her ability to influence students' learning as well as beliefs about his/her ability to carry out the teaching tasks (Shao, 2015; Wyatt, 2016). As part of teachers' qualities, teaching self-efficacy has been considered as the key determinant of classroom effectiveness. EFL teachers' teaching self-efficacy plays a vital role in implementing EFL teaching practice and driving educational reform. High teaching self-efficacy of EFL teachers tend to employ students-centred and communication-oriented teaching approaches, and their students are more high-

motivated and engaged in class, while EFL teachers with low teaching self-efficacy are more likely to adopt grammar-oriented and teacher-centred teaching approaches, resulting in unsatisfactory students' outcomes (Alibakhshi et al., 2020; Choi & Lee, 2018). Research indicated that EFL teachers' teaching self-efficacy in China secondary vocational schools is lower compared to teachers in senior middle schools (Duan, 2017). Liu (2018) also reported that EFL teachers' lack of confidence in teaching secondary vocational school students. English is one of compulsory Cultural Foundation Courses for students of all majors in China secondary vocational schools. Unlike countries such as Malaysia where English is spoken as a second language (ESL) or native English-speaking countries, English is considered a foreign language (EFL) in China. This means that English language learners in China have limited exposure to English outside of the English language classrooms (Shao, 2015). China secondary vocational school EFL teachers undertake the obligations to nurture students' workplace English knowledge and skills, professional and cultural awareness, and learning strategies, leading to the promotion of students' entrepreneurship and employment (Fu, 2021). Their low teaching self-efficacy will do a harm to EFL teaching qualities, and thus, there is an urgent need to enhance teaching self-efficacy of EFL teachers in China's secondary vocational schools. However, investigations regarding these efforts to enhance China secondary vocational EFL teachers' teaching self-efficacy are of shortage. Although scholars at home and abroad have made efforts on factors enhancing teachers' teaching self-efficacy, like sources of teaching self-efficacy, teacher knowledge, and contextual factors (Moradkhani & Haghi, 2017; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007; Wyatt, 2013, 2016), but the development of these enhancing factors are unbalanced. Therefore, the study aims to explore the efficacy-enhancing factors and formulate a framework for enhancing China secondary vocational school EFL teachers' teaching self-efficacy. The developed framework will serve as reference material for a number of stakeholders, such as school administrators to formulate policies and teacher educators to design EFL teacher teaching self-efficacy enhancement programs and training. Through the framework, low teaching self-efficacy teachers can be supported to enhance their confidence in their ability to support their students in learning on a variety of tasks and to reflect and regulate their own teaching processes, ultimately boosting their professional development. The specific question set for the study was the follow:

What are the factors enhancing EFL teachers' teaching self-efficacy in China secondary vocational schools?

Theoretical Background
Self-efficacy Theory

Self-efficacy is individuals' judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute actions necessary to achieve specific performance outcomes (Bandura, 1977). Bandura introduction of self-efficacy theory contained the proposition that self-efficacy perceptions is dependent on the environmental, cognitive, and behavioural effects that individuals experience in their daily lives (Bandura, 1997). He identified four primary sources from which self-efficacy is derived: enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasions, and physiological and affective states (see Figure 1). These four areas are recognized as the fundamental components in the development of self-efficacy. Bandura also emphasized that cognitive processing is crucial in assessing how these sources inform teachers' self-efficacy. Through cognitive processing, individuals select and weigh relevant information, integrating it to form their self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997). As a

consequence of this interpretation, teachers' knowledge plays a vital role in the development and enhancement of self-efficacy. Bandura recognized that the self-development of personal efficacy requires mastery of knowledge and skills (Bandura, 1997). Additionally, Bandura highlighted the significance of contextual factors, including social, situational, and temporal circumstances, in relation to the cognitive processing that shapes self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977).
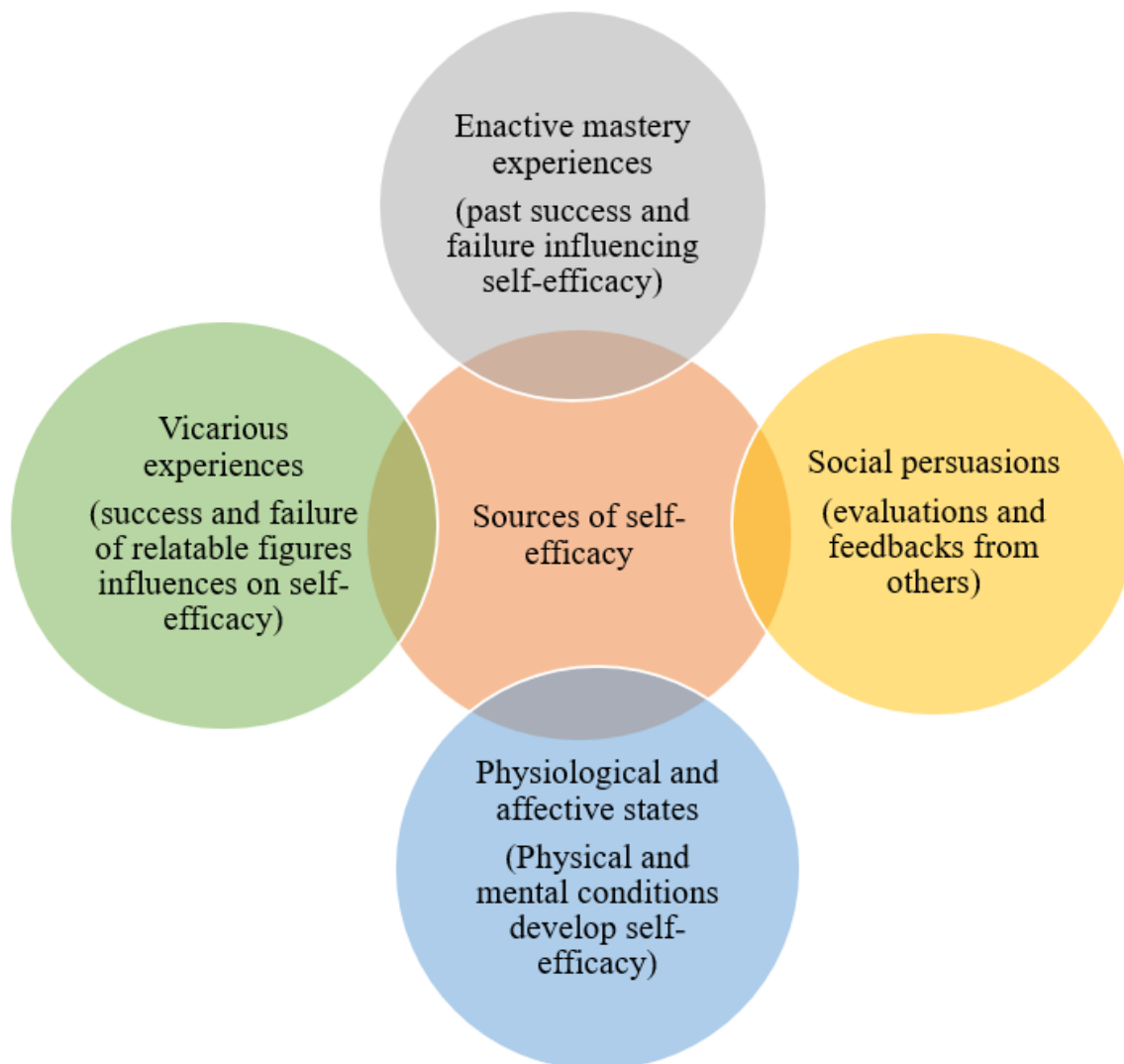

Figure 1 Sources of Self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997)

Teaching Self-efficacy

Various researches have made efforts on the conceptualizations of teaching self-efficacy. The most influential ones are as the following: 1) teaching self-efficacy refers to a teacher's belief in their ability to positively influence students' learning outcomes (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Berman, 1977; Guskey & Passaro, 1994). This belief emphasizes the level of confidence teachers have in their own abilities to impact student learning. 2) Teachers' teaching self-efficacy is teachers' beliefs in their capacity to organize and execute the necessary actions to successfully accomplish specific teaching tasks within a particular context (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Chinese scholars, such as Shao (2015), view teaching self-

efficacy as teachers' judgments and beliefs regarding their effectiveness in completing teaching tasks, achieving teaching objectives, and fostering student learning. According to Wyatt (2018), language teachers' teaching self-efficacy refers to teachers' beliefs in their own capacities to facilitate language learning through diverse task-, domain-, and context-specific cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social ways. In this study, the definition of teaching self-efficacy is teachers' confidence in their instructional skills, their belief in their ability to manage classroom dynamics and student behaviour, and their conviction that they can positively impact student learning outcomes. Specifically, China secondary vocational school EFL teachers' teaching self-efficacy is vocational school EFL teachers' beliefs about their capabilities to influence vocational students' language learning by performing different teaching tasks.

Contextual Background
Responsibilities and Challenges in EFL Teaching in China Secondary Vocational Schools
As one part of vocational education, China secondary vocational education shoulders the responsibility of cultivating ten millions of highly skilled workers and technical professionals and meeting the needs of students' career development and sustainable growth (Cao, 2017). Thus, compared to EFL teaching in senior secondary schools, vocational school EFL teaching places greater emphasis on the integration of English language skills with specific professional contexts (Fu, 2021). In 2020, the introduction of the "English Curriculum Standard of Secondary Vocational School" further defined the direction of English education in Chinese secondary vocational schools, and outlined four students' core qualities which are "workplace communication, intercultural understanding, critical thinking, and self-directed learning" (MOE, 2020). The curriculum is designed to bridge the gap between English language learning and practical application in vocational settings. Vocational school EFL teaching aims to develop students' language competence in areas directly related to their future careers, such as industry-specific terminology, workplace communication skills, and professional writing abilities, in addition, cultivate students' professional and cultural awareness, thinking ways, and learning strategies, ensuring students possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and awareness for successful employment.

However, China secondary vocational education is often seen as a less desirable option for further education by parents, with only 7.2% considering it as their children's first choice (Ding & Zhang, 2016), and thus the overall quality of students enrolled in secondary vocational schools has been declining, with approximately 90% of students having lower grades and coming from less privileged backgrounds. As English is a Cultural Foundation Course, students continue to be frustrated and weary of learning in English classroom just like in junior high school (Liu, 2019). Furthermore, there are concerns about outdated teaching equipment and facilities (Chen, 2018), rare professional development opportunities and perceived inadequacies of English teachers (Xie, 2017). Secondary vocational school EFL teachers are lack of professional knowledge and skills, such as speciality English terminologies and self-development skills (Liu, 2019).

Research Method
The methodology adopted in this paper is content analysis and document analysis. Content analysis is a research technique used to systematically analyse and interpret the content of texts or other forms of communication. It aims to make replicable and valid

inferences about the texts are used. Content analysis starts with defining the research objectives and selecting the relevant texts for analysis. Researchers then develop a coding scheme or set of categories that capture the important elements or variables of interest in the texts (Krippendorff, 2018). Document analysis was used to classify the research studies by research area. Document analysis is a valuable social research method that holds its own significance in providing insights and understanding around a specific assessment topic (Bowen, 2009). The proposed framework is developed by analysing the results of previous studies about factors enhancing teaching self-efficacy.

Result and Discussion

As a part of teacher qualities, teaching self-efficacy is a critical determinant of the quality and quantity of instructional qualities (Alibakhshi et al., 2020; Perera & John, 2020). Given the benefits accompanying high teaching self-efficacy, researchers have redirected their focus towards identifying the factors that enhance it. Specifically, there is a growing interest in investigating the experiences and psychological processes that contribute to the development of teachers' teaching self-efficacy. Previous studies have shown that sources of self-efficacy consisting of mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasions, and physiological and affective states are major factors enhancing teaching self-efficacy (Kundu, 2020; Moradkhani & Haghi, 2017; Naidoo & Naidoo, 2021). For example, teachers who have obtained successful experiences related to teaching tasks will be more efficacious. Positive and constructive feedback, ideal teaching models, and emotional well-being are all efficacy-enhancing factors. Teaching self-efficacy can also be enhanced through the development of teacher knowledge, such as pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge (Morris et al., 2017; Palmer, 2006; Swackhamer et al., 2009). Furthermore, contextual factors like working conditions, capacity building programs, and interpersonal support will contribute to enhance teachers' teaching self-efficacy (JO Odanga et al., 2018; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). Apart from this, investigations related to the exploration of factors that enhance teaching self-efficacy are still needed. Based on this investigation, there are three major factors enhancing China secondary vocational school EFL teachers' teaching self-efficacy, including teacher experiences, teacher knowledge, and school culture.

Teacher Experiences

Teacher experiences are one of the major efficacy-enhancing factors, among which are enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, interactive experiences, and physiological and affective states.

Enactive mastery experiences can be described as practical classroom experiences of successfully performing the teaching tasks and overcoming challenges and obstacle, furthermore, students' engagement in the class (Morris et al., 2017; Wyatt, 2016). This point is a consideration of factors that enhance China secondary vocational school EFL teachers' teaching self-efficacy. When vocational school EFL teachers experience successful teaching outcomes, such as students actively participating and demonstrating progress in their language skills, it reinforces their teaching self-efficacy. Successful teaching experiences and students' behaviours and engagement are positive contributors to teachers' teaching self-efficacy (Choi et al., 2019; Moradkhani & Haghi, 2017; von Suchodoletz et al., 2018). When teachers perceive students' willingness to participate, cooperate, and respond positively to instruction, it enhances their teaching self-efficacy in managing the learning environment and

facilitating student learning. Vocational school EFL teachers often face unique challenges in terms of student motivation and disruptive behaviours (Fu, 2021). When teachers are successful in fostering active engagement and addressing these challenges, it serves as evidence of their ability to overcome obstacles and positively impact student learning. This, in turn, boosts their teaching self-efficacy. Teaching self-efficacy is not solely dependent on enactive mastery experiences alone, and it should be derived from a variety of sources (Bautista & Boone, 2015; Ross & Bruce, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009). Diverse experiences and resources contributed to the enhancement of the teachers' teaching self-efficacy.

Vicarious experiences are most effective when individuals have limited prior experiences and are uncertain about their teaching abilities (Naidoo & Naidoo, 2021). Before stepping into vocational education, most teachers are utterly ignorant of vocational students' characteristics and learning styles in EFL classrooms. Modelling is necessary for these vocational school EFL teachers to quickly adapt to the teaching environment. Flores (2015) found that pre-service teachers gain self-efficacy by observing actual classroom implementations in a science methods course. However, instead of relying solely on live modelling, symbolic modelling and self modelling allows vocational school EFL teachers to develop their own pedagogical skills and employ them effectively. Bautista and Boone (2015) indicated that teaching self-efficacy among early childhood teachers can be enhanced through teaching in a virtual classroom. Additionally, teachers can learn new teaching approaches based on their needs from books, research articles, and the internet, which is known as symbolic modelling. In the era of Web 2.0, live modelling is somewhat outdated. However, it is crucial to recognize that an over-reliance on technology may lead to a lack of authentic vicarious learning experiences. Therefore, a combination of online and offline vicarious experiences should be considered in enhancing EFL teachers' teaching self-efficacy in China secondary vocational schools.

Interactive experiences involve active engagement, collaboration, and meaningful interactions with others, including mentors, tutors, and fellow students. These experiences provide opportunities for receiving positive feedback, constructive guidance, and affirmations (Wyatt, 2016). In the context of China vocational EFL teaching, these experiences could be helpful. According to Phan and Locke (2015), social persuasions (feedback from others) rather than mastery experiences were the strongest predictors in enhancing Vietnamese EFL teachers' teaching self-efficacy. Similar results were reported by Moradkhani and Haghi (2017) who studies the sources of self-efficacy among Iranian EFL teachers. The high potency of social persuasions can be attributed to the other-oriented nature of non-western cultures (Kim & Park, 2006). Asian cultures placed a high value on the constructions of collectivism and power hierarchies (Phan, 2005). Therefore, China teachers prioritize feedback to inform their teaching self-efficacy, and the same applied to secondary vocational EFL teachers. Furthermore, empirical evidences have found that individualized and specific experiences of verbal persuasion are of great significance for teachers' teaching self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009; Wyatt, 2016). While previous studies have predominantly focused on feedback from expert teachers and professionals, it is crucial to consider feedback from students as well, given its authenticity and reliability. Students' feedback provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of teaching methods and their impact on student learning. By considering feedback from both experts and students, teachers can gain a comprehensive

understanding of their teaching practices and make informed adjustments to enhance their teaching self-efficacy.

Scholars generally acknowledge that physiological and affective states are supplementary sources of teaching self-efficacy (Morris & Usher, 2011; Palmer, 2006). Nonetheless, it is important for researchers to pay attention to physiological and affective states because their influences are often ongoing rather than episodic (Morris et al., 2017). Researchers have examined the effects of negative physiological and affective states on teachers' teaching self-efficacy. For instance, a study focused on China's three-tier higher education institutions (research-oriented, teaching-oriented, and profession-oriented) found that faculty-perceived stress positively influenced teaching self-efficacy among teachers in research-oriented universities but exert negative influences on teaching- and profession-oriented institutions (Yin et al., 2020). In research-oriented institutions, teachers who face heavier workloads and higher expectations for quality instruction, exhibit a strong willingness to actively address these demanding demands as a means to enhance their confidence and perceive it as an opportunity for personal growth and accomplishment. However, for secondary vocational school teachers, negative psychological states like job burnout will badly influence their teaching self-efficacy (Luo, 2018). Only positive physiological and affective states such as enthusiasm and satisfaction can enhance their teachers' teaching self-efficacy. Empirical studies have shown that provide teachers with a sense of satisfaction can enhance their teaching self-efficacy (Zonoubi et al., 2017).

Teacher Knowledge

Teachers' knowledge plays a significant part in the development of teachers' teaching self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) regarded knowledge as something derived from the sources of efficacy information instead of an original source because individuals developed his or her self-efficacy through mastery experience, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasions, and emotional arousal which convey knowledge-related information. Research has consistently shown that teachers who possess a strong understanding of subject matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge tend to exhibit higher levels of teaching self-efficacy (Eslami & Fatahi, 2008; Lauermann & König, 2016; Palmer, 2006). Wyatt (2008, 2009, 2016) has concluded that language teachers' practical knowledge supported the growth of teaching self-efficacy, including learners and learning, the self, the English language, approaches to teaching, the curriculum, the broader school context. Wyatt's finding is consistent with vocational school EFL teachers' construction of knowledge. For vocational school EFL teachers, mastery of pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge are not enough. Although knowledge of organizing classroom activities, adapting vocational English teaching materials, evaluating vocational students' learning, vocation-oriented and student-centred teaching approaches, and grammar and vocabulary can contribute to the enhancement of teachers' teaching self-efficacy, knowledge of the self and the broader school context are also crucial in developing vocational school EFL teachers' teaching self-efficacy. There are evidences indicated that secondary vocational school teachers' teaching self-efficacy can be enhanced through teachers' reflective awareness and skills (Tong et al., 2008). Knowledge about the current trends, advancements, and changes in the industry and vocational education systems will be beneficial for teachers to align their teaching with industry expectations and equip students with necessary skills and knowledge for their future career. Thus, in the knowledge domain, factors enhancing China secondary vocational school EFL teachers' teaching self-efficacy are

learners and learning, the self, the English language, approaches to teaching, the curriculum, and the broader school context.

School Culture

A positive school culture is the external guarantee for vocational school EFL teachers to develop and enhance their teaching self-efficacy. Lu and Wu (2018) reported that school culture consisting of spiritual culture, material culture, and system culture contribute to the enhancement of teaching self-efficacy among secondary school teachers in China. System culture involves administrative management systems and teacher professional development system. Empirical evidences have shown that access to various aspects of teacher education programs and professional development formats, such as mentoring, professional learning communities, and reflection, generally have positive contributions to teachers' teaching self-efficacy (Cabaroglu, 2014; Feng et al., 2019; Kulaksız & Pala, 2018; Mahalingappa et al., 2018; Mousavi, 2014; Naidoo & Naidoo, 2021; Zheng et al., 2021). However, limitations such as the lack of one-to-one interaction and guidance due to limited technological facilities, dependency on outside experts, and time and geographical boundaries hinder the effectiveness of these programs. Researchers have emphasized the importance of employing technology, such as Web 2.0 technologies and social media tools, to establish more effective interaction and feedback systems and provide various avenues for self-directed professional learning (Carpenter & Green, 2018). Therefore, online learning platforms and remote coaching are recommended, particularly in current times. Another component of system culture like leadership styles also plays a role in the growth of teaching self-efficacy (JO Odanga et al., 2018). Material culture includes teaching resources both inside and outside the school, online resources, curriculum material. The adequacy of teaching resources, including textbooks and educational materials, is another important factor in enhancing teaching self-efficacy (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). In most secondary vocational schools, the emphasis is placed on Professional Courses that develop students' technical skills, with Cultural Foundation Courses playing a secondary role. The proportion of Cultural Foundation Courses in the curriculum is much smaller compared to Professional Courses. Furthermore, there are more trainings and further education opportunities available for teachers of Professional Courses compared to teachers of Cultural Foundation Courses (Lin, 2010). For vocational school EFL teachers, a spiritual culture values both vocational and cultural qualities, more opportunities to professional learning, facilitative leadership styles and autonomy for teachers, and adequate teaching resources are all efficacy-enhancing factors in China secondary vocational schools, grouping into three categories, spiritual culture, material culture, and system culture.

A Framework for Enhancing EFL Teachers' Teaching Self-efficacy in China Secondary Vocational Schools

The results of the study above shows that the following factors can enhance China secondary vocational school EFL teachers' teaching self-efficacy: (1) teachers' experiences including enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, interactive experiences, and physiological and affective states; (2) teachers' knowledge consisting of the learners and learning, approaches to teaching, the curriculum, the self, the English language, and the broader school context; (3) school culture involves spiritual culture, system culture, and material culture. Based on this, its concluded that China secondary vocational school EFL

teachers' teaching self-efficacy can be enhanced through increasing teacher experience, teacher knowledge, and fostering a positive school culture. The framework is shown in Figure 2.
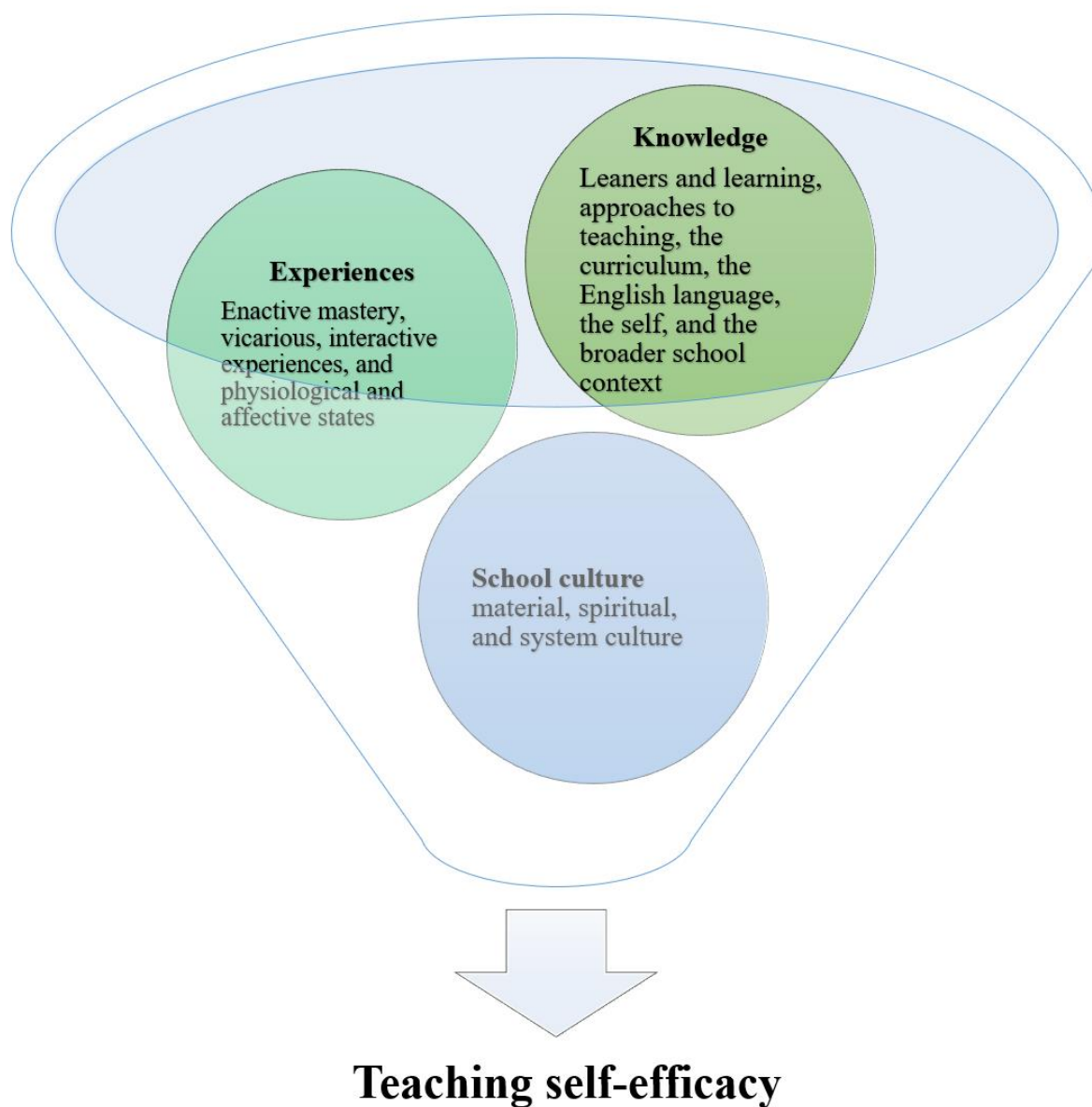

Knowledge
Leaners and learning, approaches to teaching, the curriculum, the English language, the self, and the broader school context

Experiences
Enactive mastery, vicarious, interactive experiences, and physiological and affective states

School culture
material, spiritual, and system culture

Teaching self-efficacy

Figure 2 Framework for enhancing EFL teachers' teaching self-efficacy in China secondary vocational schools

Conclusion and Recommendation

The core of this article is how to improve China secondary vocational school EFL teachers' teaching self-efficacy. This study uses several theoretical studies related to sources of teaching self-efficacy, teacher knowledge, and contextual factors, which have been discussed in the context of China secondary vocational EFL teaching. The three main components that can enhance secondary vocational school EFL teachers' teaching self-efficacy are teacher experience, teacher knowledge, and school culture. The proposed framework revealed that all stakeholders of secondary vocational education—teachers and institutions—have crucial roles for its implementation. The author hopes the framework will

prove useful for school administrators and teacher educators to formulate policies and design professional trainings and programs, especially for the hundreds of thousands of China secondary vocational school EFL teachers who possess low teaching self-efficacy. Although the framework has been established theoretically and empirical results referred to with previous research, the proposed model needs to be tested empirically. Hence, this study has a wide scope of future work by conducting empirical studies to test the validity of the model.

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