



Research Article

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A Cross-Sectional Study of SEL-Based Practice in Teaching of Vietnamese Primary Teachers

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Abstract

Teachers' SEL-based practice is currently a research trend promoting the SEL framework in the field of education. This cross-sectional study was conducted to find out about teachers' ability to practice SEL in teaching to provide initial evidence on this research area in Vietnam. We used questionnaires to survey 1100 primary school teachers in three regions of Vietnam to provide reliable quantitative data in this study. The findings indicate that Vietnamese teachers currently cannot successfully practice SEL in teaching because they have limited basic knowledge of SEL, and social-emotional skills, and not known how to apply SEL in their professional and living. It is because of the lack of social-emotional competence in the teachers themselves that leads to unsuccessful SEL-based practice in schools despite many educators' efforts to introduce the SEL framework over the years. This is a lesson learned that countries that want to develop SEL frameworks in schools need to pay attention to.

Keywords: *Cross-sectional study, SEL, SEL-based practice, primary teacher, social-emotional competence*

1. Introduction

The trend of applying the social-emotional learning (SEL) model to educational programs is currently of great interest (Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013; Humphrey et al., 2020). This context poses research tasks on how to improve teachers' SEL-based practice in schools (Schonert-Reichl, 2017; Sprenger, 2020). According to CASEL (2017) as well as a study by Schonert-Reichl (2017), teachers need to be trained and have social-emotional competence (SEC) before they are trained in practising or teaching the model. However, from the context that the studies on preparing the SEL-based practice for teachers are still limited, especially in developing countries (Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013; Tran, 2018).

However, in developing countries, there is a limited number of studies conducted on the preparation of SEL-based practice for teachers; thus, a majority of Vietnamese teachers find it challenging to implement the aforementioned model.

Currently, teacher training programs in developing countries need to provide teachers with SEC so that they can apply the SEL model successfully (Buchanan et al., 2009), since teachers' SEC is a crucial factor in developing students' SEC and building positive teacher-student relationships. To successfully practice SEL in school, teachers must create a safe, supportive, and protective classroom atmosphere so that students can feel confident discussing and asking for academic support (Collie et al., 2015). Therefore, teachers must be able to not only teach social-emotional skills but must also possess the knowledge and skills necessary to create a safe and supportive classroom environment (Schonert-Reicht, 2017). In other words, teachers need to be trained in SEL and practice SEL regularly as professionals.

In Vietnam, the SEL model is initially applied to the educational program, but mainly in the private preschool or primary educational system (Huynh et al., 2021). Participants in SEL studies are mainly students (Huynh et al., 2021; Tran, 2018; Van Huynh et al., 2018). Studies on SEL as well as SEL-based practice in the teaching profession have not been carried out in Vietnam. This context leads to a lack of study on the application of the SEL model in teaching and the evaluation of teachers' ability to practice SEL in the public education system. This is a gap in the studies of SEL application in Vietnamese education. The purpose of this study is to find the context of SEL-based practice in Vietnam, specifically in the pedagogical field of the public education system. The findings will contribute significantly to the trend of applying SEL-based practice in other countries and, ultimately, to the development of SEC and mental well-being for students.

2. Theoretical framework

Several studies have shown that teaching is one of the most stressful occupations in the social service sector (Montgomery & Rupp, 2005; Kyriacou, 2010). A study of more than 15,000 Portuguese teachers found that more than 60% of those surveyed suffered from emotional burnout (Plett-Torres et al., 2018). It is revealed that emotionally exhausted teachers are more likely to suffer from apathy and develop a sense that they have little to offer or gain in the teaching profession, which could bring about detrimental consequences for both teachers and students (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). From this perspective, some authors have pointed out the importance of promoting the SEC of teachers and considered this as an important variable to understand and improve teaching capacity. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) proposed a Prosocial Classroom Model that suggests that SEC, as well as teacher happiness, affects classroom management strategies, teacher-student relationships, and the ability to implement SEL programs. According to Weissberg et al. (2015), the most relevant SEL-based practices involve training teachers who can teach social-emotional skills. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) emphasize the importance of teachers having a broader knowledge of socio-emotional skills so that they can respond to students' needs. Cejudo and López-Delgado (2017) suggested that teachers' ability to practice SEL should be promoted as an output standard of the university training process.

Teachers with a high SEC and a good background in SEL practice can develop supportive and emotionally responsive relationships with students and promote student learning, achievement, and social performance (Hen & Goroshit, 2016). Teachers who know how to practice SEL will develop a sense of self-awareness, and self-management, and maintain good relationships with their students, student's parents, and colleagues.

(Hen & Goroshit, 2016). Teachers who demonstrate confidence in their social-emotional skills are more tend to understand the role of emotions in children's behaviour and respond better to those needs by creating trust and respect in relationships with students (Hen & Goroshit, 2016). Without learning about teachers' job satisfaction and how teachers provide knowledge of social-emotional skills to students, we cannot fully understand how best to promote SEL training for students, especially primary school students (Schonert-Reicht et al., 2017). Teachers' SEC influences their ability

to implement SEL strategies and programs to promote a healthy classroom atmosphere that leads to SEC development for students (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017). Therefore, if researchers want to study the SEL-based practice of teachers, it is necessary to explore their SEC, and then learn about how they apply the SEL model to their professional and guide their students to develop SEC.

In this study, we approach the perspective of practical competence according to the experiential learning theory of Kolb (2014). The competence to practice SEL in teaching is the ability of teachers to discover practical problems related to the SEL model, mobilize knowledge or explore and discover knowledge about the SEL model as well as social-emotional skills to implement effective teaching and learning activities (Kolb, 2014; Humphrey et al., 2020). In other words, the process of practising SEL in teaching involves a teacher solving practical problems utilizing theoretical knowledge of SEL models and SEC to a certain extent. This process will develop the SEC for students through a series of carefully designed lessons containing specific learning activities. Teachers who possess this competence can detect the practical requirements while teaching any subject with material similar to that of the SEL model. Then, they can proceed to develop, organize, and implement the lesson plans according to the basic contents and core issues of the SEL model, actively and effectively investing in themselves to serve the teaching goals. This is the theoretical framework on which we based our study design in the next section.

3. Methods

3.1 Study design

This study aims to understand the context of SEL-based practice in the teaching of Vietnamese teachers. Therefore, the author designed a cross-sectional study with the method of data collection from the questionnaire. Because studies and practice on SEL in Vietnam currently focus mainly on primary school students, we conducted a study on the SEL-based practice of primary school teachers in the public education system. At the same time, primary school teachers in the Vietnamese public education system are also the target group who have participated in many SEL training programs in previous studies, so they are guaranteed to provide rich and valuable data for this study.

The questionnaire surveying the context of teachers' SEL-based practice included: Part 1, implementation instructions and demographic information (4 items). Part 2, the questions to explore the context of SEL-based practice in the teaching of Vietnamese teachers are as follows: (1) the Teacher's ability to perceive and apply social-emotional skills (11 items) ; (2) The ability to orientate teaching according to the SEL model (10 items) and (3) The ability to apply the SEL model to teaching, including the ability to design lessons according to the SEL model (6 items), the ability to develop lesson content according to SEL model (9 items) and ability to organize teaching according to SEL model to develop SEC for students (12 items).

The hypothesis is tested through a primary data set with 400 valid observations collected by the convenience sampling method with the Cronbach alpha was 0.845. The tested participants are Vietnamese primary teachers at Ho Chi Minh City (the Southern) and Da Nang City (the Central). The reliability of the pilot questionnaire ensures the validity of this self-developed questionnaire when surveying Vietnamese participants. We only made language adjustments to make the questionnaire more accessible to teachers in different regions. The official questionnaire includes 52 items: 4 demographic items (I1 - I4) and 48 SEL-based practice items (I5 - I52).

3.2 Participants

The participants were 1,100 primary school teachers from three regions of Vietnam selected by a convenient sampling method. The demographic information of the participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic information of the participants

Demographic information		N	%
Gender	Male (M)	369	33.5
	Female (F)	731	66.5
Working experience	Under 5 years (W1)	386	35.1
	5 – 10 years (W2)	380	34.5
	10 – 15 years (W3)	212	19.3
	Over 15 years (W4)	122	11.1
Academic background	Bachelor (A1)	842	76.5
	Master (A2)	221	20.1
	Doctor/ PhD (A3)	37	3.4
Region	Ho Chi Minh City (Southern, S1)	247	22.5
	Can Tho City (Southern, S2)	227	20.6
	Da Nang City (Central, C1)	212	19.3
	Binh Dinh Province (Central, C2)	159	14.5
	Thai Nguyen Province (Northern, N1)	141	12.8
	Ha Noi City (Northern, N2)	114	10.4
Overall		1100	100

A letter was designed for the teachers to introduce the project, explain the purpose of the survey, and get the school managers' permission to participate in the study. The survey process took place online via Google Forms. Participants were informed about the study via an information sheet, which was attached to every single questionnaire. The information sheet provided details about the study aims, the questionnaire content, confidentiality, choice of participation, and withdrawal, as well as the contact details of the research team. Completion of the questionnaire indicated implied consent on the part of the student. Only fully completed questionnaires were included in the final analysis. The survey took place entirely online from September 2021 to December 2021. The Google Form link is sent via email. The results obtained received many positive responses with 1100 valid answer sheets.

3.3 Data analysis

After obtaining the official data, the research team used descriptive statistics by SPSS software (version 22.0) to summarize the data and information of the sample such as gender, working experience, academic background, and region. We used descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage) and an ANOVA test to explore the problems in the participants' ability to practice SEL in teaching. Responses were rated on 5 levels (from 1 to 5 participants' understanding of the item being asked) and coded with a Likert-5 scale.

Table 2: Coding data from the mean score

Mean score	Level coding
1.00 – 1.80	Not achieved in SEL-based practice
1.81 – 2.61	Weak in SEL-based practice
2.62 – 3.42	Average in SEL-based practice
3.43 – 4.23	Good in SEL-based practice
4.24 – 5.00	Excellent in SEL-based practice

4. Results

The context of SEL-based practice in the teaching of Vietnamese teachers was surveyed and analyzed based on the results of the self-assessment of 3 components of SEL-based practice. Table 3 presented

the results of the self-assessment of the ability to perceive and apply social-emotional skills of Vietnamese teachers.

Table 3: Self-assessment of the ability to perceive and apply social-emotional skills

Item	Level					M	SD	Coding	
	1	2	3	4	5				
I5. Explain the concept of SEC	N	344	234	296	190	36	2.40	1.19	Weak
	%	31.3	21.3	26.9	17.3	3.3			
I6. Explain the concept of the SEL model	N	360	316	242	158	24	2.25	1.12	Weak
	%	32.7	28.7	22.0	14.4	2.2			
I7. Explain ways to practice SEL in work and daily life	N	405	216	254	181	44	2.31	1.23	Weak
	%	36.8	19.6	23.1	16.5	4.0			
I8. Identify your strengths, weaknesses, career goals, and resources	N	378	243	228	188	63	2.38	1.27	Weak
	%	34.3	22.1	20.7	17.1	5.7			
I9. Identify social problems and provide social support when needed	N	389	251	244	146	70	2.32	1.26	Weak
	%	35.4	22.8	22.2	13.3	6.4			
I10. Be aware of your emotions, thoughts, and actions in different social situations	N	383	196	233	230	58	2.44	1.30	Weak
	%	34.8	17.8	21.2	20.9	5.3			
I11. Manage your emotions, thoughts, and actions in different social situations	N	367	207	272	196	58	2.43	1.26	Weak
	%	33.4	18.8	24.7	17.8	5.3			
I12. Plan and manage personal goals	N	355	206	285	193	61	2.45	1.26	Weak
	%	32.3	18.7	25.9	17.5	5.5			
I13. Know how to establish and maintain social relationships	N	334	271	249	165	80	2.45	1.29	Weak
	%	30.4	24.6	22.6	15.0	7.3			
I14. Make responsible decisions for your career, and your students	N	349	288	226	141	95	2.41	1.31	Weak
	%	31.1	26.2	20.5	12.8	8.6			
I15. Deal with and adapt effectively to social change and guide others to do so	N	372	238	238	165	87	2.42	1.30	Weak
	%	33.8	21.6	21.6	15.0	7.9			
Overall mean (P1)						2.39	1.25	Weak	

Self-assessment results in the ability to perceive and apply social-emotional skills of Vietnamese teachers at a Weak level ($M=2.39$, $SD=1.25$). This result reflected that Vietnamese teachers were not fully aware of SEL, did not understand the nature of SEL in teaching, and did not have an understanding of their social-emotional skills. Among the surveyed expressions, Vietnamese teachers are most limited in explaining the concept of SEL ($M=2.25$, $SD=1.12$) and how to practice SEL in work and daily life ($M=2.31$, SD). = 1.23).

Continuing the questionnaire on the second expression in the ability to orientate teaching according to the SEL model of Vietnamese teachers, the results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Self-assessment of the ability to orientate teaching according to the SEL model

Items	Level					M	SD	Coding	
	1	2	3	4	5				
I16. Describe the social-emotional components and skills in the SEL model	N	252	263	294	210	81	2.64	1.23	Average
	%	22.9	23.9	26.7	19.1	7.4			
I17. Present the social-emotional components and skills in the SEL model and explain the psychological basis of the SEC	N	253	272	269	223	81	2.65	1.25	Average
	%	23.0	24.7	24.5	20.3	7.4			
I18. Determine the manipulation of social-emotional skills in the SEL model	N	249	306	331	179	35	2.50	1.10	Weak
	%	22.6	27.8	30.1	16.3	3.2			
I19. Design situations, questions, and exercises to practice social-emotional skills in the SEL model	N	274	268	307	202	49	2.53	1.18	Weak
	%	24.9	24.4	27.9	18.4	4.5			
I20. Apply methods, means and forms of teaching organization to develop learners' competence according to the SEL model	N	235	296	306	205	58	2.60	1.17	Weak
	%	21.4	26.9	27.8	18.6	5.3			

I21. Apply social-emotional skills in the SEL model to handle real-life situations	N	232	302	327	189	50	2.57	1.13	Weak
	%	21.1	27.5	29.7	17.2	4.5			
I22. Design and organize teaching activities to help students practice SEL	N	224	300	287	174	115	2.69	1.25	Average
	%	20.4	27.3	26.1	15.8	10.5			
I23. Detect and correct students' mistakes when practising SEL	N	226	314	302	176	82	2.61	1.19	Weak
	%	20.5	28.5	27.5	16.0	7.5			
I24. Design content, organize and use results of the assessment of students' knowledge and social-emotional skills.	N	211	309	313	186	81	2.65	1.18	Average
	%	19.2	28.1	28.5	16.9	7.4			
I25. Assess the progress and results of SEL practice of students.	N	203	285	320	212	80	2.71	1.18	Average
	%	18.5	25.9	29.1	19.3	7.3			
Overall mean (P2)							2.62	1.19	Average

The results of the self-assessment of Vietnamese teachers' ability to orient their teaching according to the SEL model were Average ($M=2.62$, $SD=1.19$). This result reflected that Vietnamese teachers can design and plan lessons according to the SEL model despite many difficulties. One of the biggest obstacles that participants faced when they designed lessons according to the SEL model was determining the process for implementing social-emotional skills ($M=2.50$, $SD=1.10$).

Table 5 presented the results of the self-assessment of Vietnamese teachers' ability to apply the SEL model to teaching.

Table 5: Self-assessment of the ability to apply the SEL model to teaching

Items	Level					M	SD	Coding	
	1	2	3	4	5				
The ability to develop lesson content according to the SEL model									
I26. Identify the content of lessons in the educational program related to the core elements of the SEL model	N	374	255	250	144	77	2.36	1.26	Weak
	%	34.0	23.2	22.7	13.1	7.0			
I27. Select some content in the SEL model to integrate into the lesson aimed at developing SEC for students	N	274	323	232	218	53	2.50	1.20	Weak
	%	24.9	29.4	21.1	19.8	4.8			
I28. Develop the idea of lesson content according to the SEL model into practical content	N	314	293	282	165	46	2.40	1.17	Weak
	%	28.5	26.6	25.6	15.0	4.2			
I29. Identify requirements, and manipulate social-emotional skills to integrate into the lesson	N	328	280	245	199	48	2.42	1.21	Weak
	%	29.8	25.5	22.3	18.1	4.4			
I30. Identify data sources for students to collect information about lessons according to the SEL model	N	357	278	248	177	40	2.33	1.19	Weak
	%	32.5	25.3	22.5	16.1	3.6			
I31. Ensure that the lesson content will be explored and discovered by students to develop their SEC through specific, age-appropriate activities	N	289	278	271	204	58	2.51	1.21	Weak
	%	26.3	25.3	24.6	18.5	5.3			
Overall mean							2.42	1.21	Weak
The ability to design lessons according to the SEL model									
I32. Point out the relationship between the lesson objectives and the SEL elements that need to be developed	N	293	300	261	189	57	2.47	1.20	Weak
	%	26.6	27.3	23.7	17.2	5.2			
I33. Orientate for the development of components of SEC in the lesson	N	273	288	282	202	55	2.53	1.19	Weak
	%	24.8	26.2	25.6	18.4	5.0			
I34. Propose a list of suitable tools and equipment for teaching according to the SEL model	N	328	237	285	174	76	2.48	1.26	Weak
	%	29.8	21.5	25.9	15.8	6.9			
I35. Design teaching activities of teachers and students according to teaching methods to develop learners' competence	N	308	212	326	187	67	2.54	1.23	Weak
	%	28.0	19.3	29.6	17.0	6.1			
I36. Design teaching activities to develop core components in SEC for students	N	288	247	303	188	74	2.56	1.23	Weak
	%	26.2	22.5	27.5	17.1	6.7			
I37. Expect results from students after each activity	N	286	225	282	228	79	2.63	1.27	Average
	%	26.0	20.5	25.6	20.7	7.2			
I38. Make lesson plans according to the SEL model	N	251	252	318	229	50	2.61	1.18	Average
	%	22.8	22.9	28.9	20.8	4.5			
I39. Determine the test and assessment goals of students according to the SEL model	N	191	338	330	175	66	2.62	1.12	Average
	%	17.4	30.7	30.0	15.9	6.0			
I40. Assess the behaviour and products that reflect the SEC of students	N	143	287	376	217	77	2.82	1.11	Average
	%	13.0	26.1	34.2	19.7	7.0			
Overall mean							2.58	1.20	Weak

Items	Level					M	SD	Coding	
	1	2	3	4	5				
The ability to organize teaching according to the SEL model to develop SEC for students									
141. Guide students to apply lesson knowledge to make responsible decisions and solve problems effectively in life	N	228	298	329	180	65	2.60	1.16	Weak
	%	20.7	27.1	29.9	16.4	5.9			
142. Guide students to apply lesson knowledge to recognize strengths, and limitations and show confidence in themselves	N	173	289	307	262	69	2.79	1.16	Average
	%	15.7	26.3	27.9	23.8	6.3			
143. Guide students to apply lesson knowledge to master and express their personal feelings appropriately	N	260	307	291	184	58	2.52	1.17	Weak
	%	23.6	27.9	26.5	16.7	5.3			
144. Guide students to apply lesson knowledge to recognize and explore the world around them	N	216	286	324	195	79	2.67	1.18	Average
	%	19.6	26.0	29.5	17.7	7.2			
145. Guide students to apply lesson knowledge to establish and maintain social relationships	N	254	290	296	200	60	2.57	1.18	Weak
	%	23.1	26.4	26.9	18.2	5.5			
146. Organize and support students to apply lesson knowledge to solve emotional and social problems	N	198	270	348	217	67	2.71	1.15	Average
	%	18.0	24.5	31.6	19.7	6.1			
147. Organize and support students to conduct experiments on models of social-emotional skills training to draw lesson knowledge	N	227	268	325	209	71	2.66	1.19	Average
	%	20.6	24.4	29.5	19.0	6.5			
148. Organize and support students to investigate, survey to understand social or emotional problems, and learn about themselves	N	186	279	345	229	61	2.73	1.13	Average
	%	16.9	25.4	31.4	20.8	5.5			
149. Organize and support students to exploit information from textbooks and reference books to find knowledge related to the lesson	N	205	242	362	227	64	2.73	1.15	Average
	%	18.6	22.0	32.9	20.6	5.8			
150. Organize and support students to apply information and communication technology to find knowledge related to the lesson	N	158	289	352	229	72	2.79	1.12	Average
	%	14.4	26.3	32.0	20.8	6.5			
151. Organize and support students to evaluate the behaviour and products of their friends' SEC	N	197	250	317	254	82	2.79	1.20	Average
	%	17.9	22.7	28.8	23.1	7.5			
152. Organize and support students to self-assess their SEC behaviour and products.	N	155	282	356	239	68	2.80	1.12	Average
	%	13.9	25.5	32.4	22.0	6.2			
Overall mean							2.70	1.16	Average
Overall the ability to apply SEL to teaching (P₃)							2.57	1.19	Weak

Findings on the current context of Vietnamese teachers' ability to apply the SEL model in teaching are at a Weak level (M=2.57, SD=1.19). Teachers have not been able to successfully apply the SEL model to their teaching. Which, they have the most difficulty in developing the lesson content according to the SEL model (M=2.42, SD=1.21) and designing the lesson according to the SEL model (M=2.58, SD=1.20). Regarding the ability to organize teaching according to the SEL model to develop SEC for students, Vietnamese teachers self-assess that they can do it at an average level (M=2.70, SD=1.16). This result concerns us because if teachers do not understand SEL, and are not able to develop and design SEL lessons, how can they successfully organize SEL lessons for students?

In general, the SEL-based practice in the teaching of Vietnamese teachers has many limitations, one of the most challenging tasks is the identification and classification of the content, expression, and manipulation of social-emotional skills as well as the SEL model. Since then, it has not been possible to practice this model in teaching. From this result, we continue to use the ANOVA test to find out the difference between SEL-based practice with socio-demographic variables.

Table 6: ANOVA test

Source		P ₁			P ₂			P ₃		
		M	SD	p	M	SD	p	M	SD	p
Gender	M	2.43	1.16	0.000	3.08	1.18	0.000	2.94	1.32	0.000
	F	2.81	1.10		3.76	0.85		3.86	0.68	
Working experience	W1	2.93	1.08	0.000	3.56	0.97	0.029	3.43	1.18	0.010
	W2	2.65	1.87		3.30	1.05		3.22	1.17	
	W3	2.19	1.16		3.32	1.23		3.45	1.11	
	W4	2.32	1.11		3.15	1.23		3.33	1.01	
Academic background	A1	2.65	1.15	0.001	3.44	1.06	0.013	3.51	1.02	0.000
	A2	2.69	1.12		3.45	1.16		3.49	1.13	
	A3	2.98	1.01		3.99	0.93		3.93	1.29	

Region	S1	3.02	1.06	0.002	3.26	1.05	0.034	3.63	1.03	0.014
	S2	1.70	1.03		3.56	1.19		3.40	1.11	
	C1	2.45	1.03		3.44	1.13		3.24	1.34	
	C2	2.84	0.99		3.46	1.01		3.21	1.23	
	N1	3.06	1.05		3.47	1.11		3.32	1.05	
	N2	3.25	1.09		3.52	1.04		3.78	1.17	

Table 6 shows that the SEL-based practice of Vietnamese teachers' teaching has statistically significant demographic variables (all $p < 0.05$). Female teachers are more likely to practice SEL than male teachers. Teachers with less than 5 years of experience will have a better understanding and ability to practice SEL than senior teachers. Teachers with a doctoral degree will practice SEL better than the rest of the academic backgrounds. Finally, teachers in the North have a higher ability to practice SEL than teachers in the central region and the lowest are teachers in the South. The difference in SEL practice that we discovered brings meaningful contributions to the investment and development of SEL-based practice of current and future Vietnamese teachers.

5. Discussion

This cross-sectional study focused on exploring the context of SEL-based practice in teaching among 1100 Vietnamese primary school teachers. By surveying questionnaires on a group of teachers from three regions of Vietnam, we found that teachers currently cannot practice SEL in their profession. The main reason is that teachers do not understand the true nature of SEL as well as they do not realize and practice their social-emotional skills. In other words, Vietnamese primary school teachers in public schools currently do not have SEC. This finding is consistent with previous studies on SEL in Vietnam by Tran (2018), Van Huynh et al. (2018) and Huynh et al. (2021) when it comes to the limitation the SEC of teachers, it has made it difficult for them to develop SEC for students, as well as teach SEL to them. Our findings both reinforce previous findings and broaden our understanding of the limits of teachers' ability to practice SEL: Vietnamese teachers are limited in their SEL awareness, and the ability to develop lesson content and design lessons according to the SEL model.

Regarding the ability to perceive and apply social-emotional skills of teachers, they do not clearly understand the concept of SEL as well as how to practice SEL in their lives. Schonert-Reichl et al. (2017) considered that the preparation of knowledge and skills about SEL for teachers themselves is necessary for them to successfully teach SEL in schools. Collie et al. (2015) emphasized the importance of guiding teachers to practice SEL in their own lives and careers during university training and continuing education after graduation so that they can handle effective social-emotional problems of students. Compared with the teacher training process in developed countries, or with those countries that focus on promoting SEL for students, Vietnam's teacher training program as well as the preparation of pedagogical universities for teachers to ensure they can practice SEL in teaching is not guaranteed and needs to be invested to improve teachers' understanding of the SEL model and how to apply SEL.

The ability to orient teaching according to the SEL model is inconsistent with the teacher's ability to perceive and apply SEL revealing many potential dangers. If teachers are not fully aware of SEL and do not know how to apply SEL, then in principle, they cannot orient teaching according to the SEL model. Schonert-Reichl (2017) emphasized that teachers' SEL knowledge and skills are the foundation for them to design SEL lessons for students. Vietnamese teachers are quite confident in their competence, they have very good pedagogical competence and teaching orientation (Nguyen et al., 2020). However, the teaching approach according to the SEL model is a new educational initiative for Vietnamese education and teachers need to be trained to implement SEL in schools. Therefore, the application of a common teaching-oriented theoretical framework for SEL-based teaching is not compatible with each other and creates inadequacies in student achievement later on. This is something to avoid in developing countries that want to apply the SEL framework to schools,

especially the public system. The ability of Vietnamese teachers to apply the SEL model in teaching has many shortcomings. Because they are not fully aware of the SEL theoretical framework, they cannot develop the lesson content according to SEL as well as divide the topics, and content circuits based on the SEL model and guide students to master this knowledge. These are the current limitations in the ability of Vietnamese teachers to practice SEL in teaching.

Based on these limitations and the results of the ANOVA test, we discussed and proposed some solutions as follows: First, the significant difference between teachers' years of experience in the ability to practice SEL allows us to discuss more deeply the awareness of the importance of SEL with Vietnamese higher education institutions. It is this positive self-awareness that has created conditions for young Vietnamese teachers to come into contact with SEL from undergraduate training (Nguyen, 2020) and promote in them a certain background in SEL. This is both a premise to develop the SEC of a group of young teachers and a model of peer support among teachers to promote the development of SEL practice in their teaching professionals. Secondly, the difference between teachers in different regions of Vietnam broadens our understanding of the policy of investment and development of teaching competence under SEL in Vietnam, which is mainly concentrated in the 2 biggest cities. Not only that, previous studies on SEL were conducted mainly in these 2 regions (S₁ and N₁), as well as in the North (N₁ and N₂) more than in the South and Central regions. This leads to a limitation in the perception and ability to practice SEL of teachers in the Central region (C₁ and C₂) as well as in the Southern region (C₂). From this finding, we realize that promoting and expanding more SEL training courses for teachers in areas with limited SEL knowledge is essential to promote SEL in schools. Above all, the study emphasized the importance of retraining for Vietnamese teachers to properly understand the content of SEL and how to practice SEL in their living and professional.

6. Conclusion

The results on the context of Vietnamese teachers' ability to practice SEL in teaching in public schools showed that they cannot successfully practice SEL because of the limitation in understanding and applying the concepts of SEL skills. Although most teachers met the requirements of teaching and pedagogical competence, they had difficulty in understanding, defining, and applying the SEL model and SEC development orientation for students in teaching. Unfortunately, they did not know how to link the content of the SEL framework with specific lessons, nor were they able to practice SEL in their lives and as professionals. These findings were important practical evidence to suggest measures to improve the awareness and SEL skills of Vietnamese teachers. Only when Vietnamese teachers master the background knowledge related to the SEC or the SEL model, they can apply the SEL framework to the process of lesson design, teaching, testing, assessment, and counselling to develop students' SEC, or to develop the ability to practice SEL in their teaching. This study complements the system of cross-sectional studies on teachers' SEL practice in developing countries to promote applied studies and possible measures to contribute to the widespread development of the SEL framework in a public educational setting.

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7.2 Availability of data and material

The data and material for this study are available for those who want to know about the in-depth

interview data of the participants.

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