

Prioritizing Social-Emotional Competencies for Adolescent Well-Being: Evidence from Vietnamese Lower Secondary Schools

Son Duc NGUYEN¹, Thanh Hai NGUYEN², Chuyen Thi NGUYEN^{3*}

¹²³ Hanoi National University of Education

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify which social-emotional competencies should be prioritized to promote adolescent well-being among Vietnamese lower secondary school students. Using the PERMA framework as the conceptual foundation, a cross-sectional quantitative design was conducted with 486 students in Hanoi. The Social Emotional Competence Questionnaire (SECQ) and the PERMA-Profiler were employed as measurement instruments. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, and hierarchical multiple regression analysis. Results showed that all five SEL competencies positively predicted well-being, but their contributions differed substantially. Self-management emerged as the strongest predictor, followed by relationship skills, whereas social awareness demonstrated the weakest effect. The competency-based model explained 38% of the variance in well-being, exceeding the explanatory power of the overall SEL model. After controlling for demographic characteristics, the prioritization pattern remained stable. These findings suggest that school-based SEL programs in Vietnam should prioritize self-management and relationship skills to maximize students' psychological well-being and provide evidence-based guidance for educational resource allocation.

JEL Codes:

Keywords: social-emotional competencies, student well-being, SEL, lower secondary school students, Vietnam.