Enhancing Social-Emotional Competence through Mindfulness-based Social-Emotional Learning among Adolescents in Vietnam: An Integrative Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Adolescent mental health has become an increasing concern in contemporary education, particularly in the context of academic pressure, psychological instability, and the expanding influence of digital environments. Social-emotional competence, commonly conceptualized through the five core competencies of the CASEL framework, is recognized as a key developmental resource that supports students' well-being, adaptive functioning, interpersonal relationships, and responsible decision-making. In parallel, mindfulness-based approaches have gained attention as promising strategies for enhancing emotional awareness, self-regulation, attention, compassion, and prosocial behavior. This integrative literature review synthesizes international and Vietnamese studies on mindfulness-based approaches to enhancing social-emotional competence among adolescents. The review shows that international research has provided growing evidence for the positive role of mindfulness in social-emotional competence related outcomes; however, most studies remain fragmented, focusing on isolated indicators such as emotional regulation, self-compassion, empathy, stress reduction, or aggression rather than social-emotional competence as a holistic multidimensional construct. In Vietnam, research on social-emotional competence and mindfulness is still emerging, with studies mainly concentrated on life-skills education, measurement adaptation, and preliminary mindfulness interventions. The review highlights the need for culturally responsive, theoretically integrated, and empirically tested mindfulness-based social-emotional learning programs for Vietnamese adolescents.

Keywords: social-emotional competence; mindfulness; mindfulness-based social-emotional learning; adolescents; Vietnam.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary society, marked by rapidly increasing academic pressure, psychological fluctuations, and the pervasive influence of digital environments, adolescent mental health has become one of the foremost concerns in psychology and educational sciences. International studies have indicated that adolescence is not only a period of significant biological and cognitive development but also a stage of heightened emotional and behavioral vulnerability, with increased risks of anxiety, depression, and maladaptive behaviors (Durlak et al., 2011; Jones & Bouffard, 2012). In this context, equipping adolescents with competencies that enable them to recognize and regulate emotions and adapt effectively to social environments has become an urgent educational and psychological priority. Vietnam's educational development orientation has also strongly emphasized the need to foster holistic human development. The Documents of the 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam affirmed the importance of social skills education (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021). This perspective suggests that the development of emotional, social, and life skills is not only a scientific concern but also a strategic requirement within national educational policy.

Social-emotional competence (SEC) is regarded as a foundational factor contributing to students' holistic development. SEC is not only associated with academic achievement but also functions as a protective factor for mental health by enhancing individuals' adaptive capacity, supporting the development of positive

relationships, and facilitating appropriate decision-making in social contexts (Elias et al., 1997; Denham et al., 2012; Taylor et al., 2017). Among existing theoretical frameworks, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) model, with its five core competencies, has become an influential foundation for research and practice in social and emotional learning (SEL) (CASEL, 2020; Weissberg et al., 2015).

Alongside the growing body of research on SEC, mindfulness has emerged as a promising approach for supporting adolescents' emotional and behavioral regulation. Mindfulness is commonly understood as the capacity to intentionally attend to the present moment with openness, acceptance, and a non-judgmental attitude (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). In educational contexts, mindfulness practices have been shown to improve attention, reduce stress, enhance psychological well-being, and support emotional regulation among students (Meiklejohn et al., 2012; Zenner et al., 2014). More importantly, school-based mindfulness interventions have increasingly been connected to SEL because they may cultivate several psychological mechanisms that underlie SEC, including self-awareness, attentional control, emotional regulation, empathy, compassion, and prosocial behavior (Metz et al., 2013; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015).

Internationally, mindfulness-based SEL programs have been developed and evaluated in diverse school contexts, including Learning to BREATHE, MindUP, .b, MYRIAD, Transformative Life Skills, and Inner Strength. These programs vary in structure, duration, target age group, and theoretical foundation, but they commonly aim to help students become more aware of their internal experiences, regulate emotions, pause before reacting, and respond more adaptively in interpersonal situations. However, although the international literature has produced promising evidence, it also reveals an important limitation. Most studies tend to examine isolated indicators, such as emotional regulation, self-compassion, stress reduction, empathy, prosocial behavior, aggression, or psychological well-being, rather than assessing SEC as an integrated construct comprising all five CASEL competencies. As a result, the current evidence base remains somewhat fragmented, particularly in relation to how mindfulness-based approaches contribute to the holistic development of SEC.

This issue becomes even more significant in the Vietnamese context. Research on SEC in Vietnam has begun to move from conceptual discussion to needs assessment, measurement adaptation, and preliminary educational interventions. However, existing studies have largely been implemented through life-skills education, soft-skills education, or experiential activities rather than through structured, evidence-based school psychological programs grounded in an explicit SEC framework. Similarly, mindfulness has attracted increasing attention in Vietnamese educational and mental health research, but current studies mostly focus on isolated psychological outcomes, such as stress, emotional regulation, well-being, or emotional processing. Few studies have directly examined the relationship between mindfulness and SEC among Vietnamese adolescents, and no coherent research direction has yet been established on mindfulness-based approaches to enhancing adolescents' SEC within Vietnamese schools.

Given these issues, an integrative review of international and Vietnamese research is needed to clarify how mindfulness-based approaches have been used to enhance adolescents' SEC, to identify the extent to which existing studies have addressed the five CASEL competencies, and to specify the research gaps relevant to the Vietnamese school context. By synthesizing theoretical foundations, empirical evidence, intervention models, and contextual considerations, this review aims to provide a foundation for future studies that seek to develop culturally responsive, theoretically integrated, and empirically tested mindfulness-based SEL programs for Vietnamese adolescents.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed an integrative literature review design to synthesize theoretical, empirical, and contextual evidence on mindfulness-based SEL and adolescents' SEC. This approach was selected because the topic involves diverse forms of literature, including conceptual papers, empirical studies, intervention research, program manuals, and context-specific studies in education and school mental health.

Relevant literature was searched through major academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, ERIC, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar. Additional searches were conducted using Vietnamese academic journals, institutional repositories, and national publications related to psychology, education, school

counseling, SEL, mindfulness, and adolescent mental health. The main search terms included "social-emotional competence," "social-emotional learning," "CASEL," "mindfulness," "mindfulness-based intervention," "mindfulness-based social-emotional learning," "school-based mindfulness," "adolescents," "emotion regulation," "self-awareness," "self-management," "empathy," "self-compassion," "school mental health," and "Vietnam."

Sources were included if they addressed at least one of the following areas: theoretical foundations of SEL or SEC; mindfulness-based interventions for children or adolescents; school-based mindfulness programs; outcomes related to CASEL competencies; or Vietnamese studies relevant to SEL, mindfulness, and school mental health. Studies focusing exclusively on adult clinical populations, workplace mindfulness, religious meditation without educational relevance, or outcomes unrelated to adolescent social-emotional development were excluded.

The selected literature was reviewed and organized into two thematic categories: (1) International research on mindfulness-based approaches to enhancing adolescents' SEC and (2) Vietnamese research on mindfulness-based approaches to enhancing adolescents' SEC.

Literature Review on Mindfulness-Based Approaches To Enhancing Social-Emotional Competence Among Adolescents

This section reviews international and Vietnamese studies on mindfulness-based approaches to enhancing SEC among adolescents. The review is organized around two major bodies of literature. The first focuses on international research, including educational programs for enhancing adolescents' SEC, empirical studies examining the relationship between mindfulness and SEC-related components, and school-based mindfulness interventions designed to promote SEC. The second focuses on Vietnamese research, with attention to the development of SEC studies, the emerging interest in mindfulness in education, and the current gaps in integrating mindfulness and SEC within adolescent school mental health contexts.

Rather than treating SEC and mindfulness as separate research domains, this review emphasizes their conceptual and practical intersection. SEC is understood as an integrated developmental construct comprising five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Mindfulness, meanwhile, is examined as both a psychological capacity and an educational approach that may support the development of these competencies through mechanisms such as present-moment awareness, emotional regulation, attentional control, self-compassion, empathy, and reflective decision-making.

International Research on Mindfulness-Based Approaches to Enhancing Adolescents' Social-Emotional Competence

Internationally, research on enhancing SEC among adolescents has developed across three interrelated directions. The first direction focuses on educational programs that aim to strengthen adolescents' SEC through SEL curricula, life-skills education, whole-school interventions, and school-based prevention programs. These studies provide evidence that SEC can be cultivated through intentional educational processes and is associated with academic achievement, adaptive behavior, school connectedness, and mental health outcomes.

The second direction examines the relationship between mindfulness and specific components or indicators of SEC. In this line of research, mindfulness is frequently investigated in relation to self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, social support, relationship quality, behavioral control, aggression, and self-harm. Although these studies do not always measure SEC as a complete five-component construct, they provide important evidence that mindfulness is associated with psychological and behavioral indicators corresponding to the CASEL competencies.

The third direction evaluates mindfulness-based interventions in school settings. Programs such as Learning to BREATHE, MindUP, .b, MYRIAD, Transformative Life Skills, and Inner Strength have been implemented with adolescents in different cultural and educational contexts. These programs suggest that mindfulness may contribute to SEC development by helping students become more aware of their internal experiences, regulate

emotions, pause before reacting, cultivate compassion, and respond more adaptively in social situations. However, existing evidence also shows that the effects of these interventions are often concentrated on selected SEC components, especially self-awareness and self-management, rather than on the full structure of SEC.

Taken together, international research has established a growing empirical foundation for mindfulness-based approaches to adolescent SEC. Nevertheless, this literature remains conceptually and methodologically fragmented. Many studies assess isolated outcomes rather than the full five-dimensional structure of SEC, and intervention studies vary considerably in theoretical foundation, program duration, implementation quality, and outcome measurement. These limitations provide an important basis for examining how mindfulness-based SEC enhancement can be conceptualized and adapted in the Vietnamese educational context.

Educational Programs for Enhancing Adolescents' Social-Emotional Learning

From a developmental perspective, SEC should not be conceptualized as a fixed individual trait, but rather as a dynamic system of abilities that can be shaped through social interaction, learning experiences, and intentional educational processes. Denham et al. (2012) argued that SEC begins to develop in early childhood, when children learn to recognize, express, and regulate emotions, and continues to evolve through increasingly complex interactions in school, family, and peer contexts. This developmental view is consistent with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which emphasizes that children's and adolescents' emotional and social functioning is shaped by multiple environmental systems, particularly the school environment. Accordingly, schools are not merely places for academic instruction but also important developmental contexts in which adolescents learn how to manage emotions, build relationships, solve interpersonal problems, and make responsible decisions.

In Western contexts, research on enhancing adolescents' SEC has gradually shifted from problem-prevention approaches toward competence-based educational models. Earlier school mental health programs often focused on reducing risks such as behavioral problems, emotional distress, or maladaptive coping. More recent SEL programs, however, have increasingly emphasized the active development of competencies, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. This shift reflects the growing recognition that SEC is not only a protective factor against psychological and behavioral problems but also a central educational outcome associated with school adjustment, academic achievement, social connectedness, and long-term well-being (Durlak et al., 2011; Jones & Bouffard, 2012; Taylor et al., 2017).

Evidence from Western countries illustrates the diversity of educational programs designed to promote adolescents' SEC. In Sweden, the Social and Emotional Training program demonstrated long-term effects on students' internalizing and externalizing problems, self-esteem, and school satisfaction after one to five years of implementation (Kimber et al., 2008). In the United States, Sources of Strength adopted a whole-school, peer-led approach to strengthen protective factors such as social connectedness, help-seeking norms, and communication with trusted adults, thereby promoting mental health and adaptive social behavior among high school students (Wyman et al., 2010). In Canada, MindUP integrated SEL, neuroscience, positive psychology, and mindfulness practices; empirical findings showed improvements in cognitive control, empathy, perspective-taking, emotional regulation, and prosocial behavior, along with reductions in depressive symptoms and aggression (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015).

Other studies in Europe and Australia have emphasized specific dimensions of SEC such as coping, self-regulation, self-efficacy, and school connectedness. For example, the Positive Attitude program in Portugal improved social awareness and self-control among students in grades 7 to 9 (Coelho & Sousa, 2017). In Ireland, MindOut reduced emotional suppression, avoidant coping, stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms while increasing social-support-based coping among adolescents aged 15 to 18 (Dowling et al., 2019). In Australia, Study without Stress, grounded in cognitive-behavioral principles, reduced academic stress and improved self-efficacy and emotional regulation among senior secondary students (Lowe & Wuthrich, 2021). Digital innovation has also emerged as an important direction, as illustrated by Spain's emoTIC program, which used game-based learning to enhance self-esteem and emotional balance while reducing emotional and behavioral problems among students aged 11 to 15 (de la Barrera et al., 2021).

Across these Western studies, a key pattern is that effective SEC programs are rarely limited to isolated classroom lessons. Instead, they often involve structured curricula, trained facilitators, school climate improvement, peer support, and opportunities for students to apply skills in daily school life. Studies from the Netherlands, Germany, and Denmark further highlight the importance of implementation quality, intervention dosage, and contextual support. Skills4Life improved self-management and vocational readiness among lower-achieving secondary students, especially when delivered by trained facilitators (Van de Sande et al., 2022). Healthy Learning Together improved classroom climate, social inclusion, and self-efficacy, particularly when students received sufficient exposure to the program (Schwager et al., 2019). Similarly, Shaping the Social in Denmark enhanced school engagement and reduced dropout risk in vocational education, with teacher support and school connectedness functioning as important mediating factors (Andersen et al., 2018).

In Eastern contexts, research on enhancing adolescents' SEC has developed later than in Western countries, but it demonstrates distinctive cultural and educational characteristics. Whereas Western SEL models often emphasize autonomy, self-expression, and independent decision-making, Eastern approaches tend to place stronger emphasis on social harmony, emotional restraint, relational adaptation, respect for collective norms, and school belonging (Trommsdorff et al., 2012). This does not mean that Eastern programs neglect individual competencies; rather, these competencies are often framed within relational and collective contexts. As a result, SEL in Eastern countries is frequently integrated into character education, citizenship education, moral education, or school-based mental health programs instead of being delivered as a separate curriculum.

Singapore provides an example of a system-level approach, in which SEL is embedded throughout the school year within character and citizenship education, experiential learning, and daily school practices. Rather than relying on short-term interventions, Singapore positions SEL as a continuous educational process aimed at cultivating self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (Liem et al., 2017). In India, the SEHER program represents a strong empirical example of a multi-component, contextually grounded intervention. Implemented over one academic year in public secondary schools in Bihar, SEHER targeted not only individual skills but also school climate, student support, and positive relationships. A cluster randomized trial showed that the program, particularly when delivered by lay counselors, improved school climate and several indicators of mental health, behavior, and well-being among grade 9 students (Shinde et al., 2018).

In Hong Kong and Japan, SEC enhancement has often been connected to mindfulness or cognitive-behavioral approaches. Lau and Hue (2011) found that a six-week mindfulness program was feasible for secondary students and contributed to reduced depressive symptoms and improved psychological well-being. Lam and Seiden (2020) further showed that an adapted version of Learning to BREATHE improved executive functioning, including emotional control, self-monitoring, and working memory, while reducing anxiety, depression, and rumination among grade 7 students. In Japan, Kato et al. (2022) evaluated a brief school-based program combining emotional awareness, emotional regulation, and mindfulness meditation among junior high school students, reporting improvements in emotional regulation and reductions in depression and generalized anxiety. At a broader level, Takizawa et al. (2023) synthesized 85 controlled intervention studies and found that universal school-based SEL programs in Japan had positive effects on social-emotional skills, attitudes toward self and others, prosocial behavior, and emotional difficulties, although the overall effect sizes were generally small to moderate.

In China, SEL research has largely involved school-based programs adapted from international frameworks, particularly the CASEL model. Chen and Yu's (2022) meta-analysis of 86 controlled studies involving 8,736 students found that SEL programs improved social-emotional skills, positive attitudes, and prosocial behavior while reducing emotional difficulties such as anxiety, stress, and internalizing symptoms. However, these programs did not produce significant effects on behavioral problems, suggesting that SEL interventions may have stronger effects on emotional and cognitive outcomes than on overt behavior. This finding is important because it indicates that the effectiveness of SEC programs depends not only on program content but also on cultural expectations, school implementation conditions, and the extent to which students are given opportunities to practice skills in real social situations. (see Table 1)

Table 1. Representative International Programs for Enhancing Adolescents' Social-Emotional Competence

Region/ Country	Program/ Approach	Target Group	Core Focus	Key Findings	Implications for SEC Research
Sweden	Social and Emotional Training	School-aged students	Emotional and behavioral adjustment, self-esteem, school satisfaction	Long-term improvements in internalizing/externalizing problems, self-esteem, and school satisfaction (Kimber et al., 2008)	Suggests that SEC requires sustained implementation rather than short-term lessons
United States	Sources of Strength	High school students	Social connectedness, help-seeking, trusted adult support	Improved protective factors, social support, and help-seeking behaviors (Wyman et al., 2010)	Highlights the value of peer-led and whole-school approaches
Canada	MindUP	Late childhood and early adolescence	SEL, neuroscience, mindfulness, empathy, prosocial behavior	Improved cognitive control, empathy, emotion regulation, and prosocial behavior; reduced aggression and depressive symptoms (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015)	Demonstrates the potential of integrating mindfulness into SEL
Portugal	Positive Attitude	Grades 7–9	Social awareness and self-control	Increased social awareness and self-control based on student and teacher reports (Coelho & Sousa, 2017)	Shows the importance of measuring specific SEC components
Ireland	MindOut	Students aged 15–18	Coping, emotional regulation, mental health	Reduced emotional suppression, avoidant coping, stress, anxiety, and depression; increased social-support coping (Dowling et al., 2019)	Links SEC development with adolescent mental health promotion
Australia	Study without Stress	Senior secondary students	Academic stress, self-efficacy, emotional regulation	Reduced academic stress and improved self-efficacy and emotional regulation (Lowe & Wuthrich, 2021)	Suggests that SEC programs can address academic pressure
Spain	emoTIC	Students aged 11–15	Digital game-based SEL	Improved self-esteem and emotional balance; reduced emotional and behavioral problems (de la Barrera et al., 2021)	Reflects the growing role of digital approaches in SEL delivery
India	SEHER	Grade 9 students	Whole-school climate, student support, relationships	Improved school climate and indicators of mental health, behavior, and well-being (Shinde et al., 2018)	Indicates that SEC enhancement may be stronger when embedded in whole-school systems
Hong Kong	Adapted Learning to BREATHE	Grade 7 students	Mindfulness, executive functioning, emotional control	Improved emotional control, self-monitoring, working memory; reduced anxiety, depression, and rumination (Lam & Seiden, 2020)	Supports cultural adaptation of mindfulness-based SEL in Asian contexts
Japan	Universal school-	Students aged 5–18	Social-emotional skills, prosocial	Meta-analysis showed positive effects on SEC-related skills,	Provides evidence for the scalability of

	based SEL programs		behavior, emotional difficulties	attitudes, prosocial behavior, and emotional difficulties (Takizawa et al., 2023)	school-based SEL in East Asia
China	SEL programs adapted from international frameworks	Students aged 6–18	SEC, positive attitudes, prosocial behavior, emotional difficulties	Meta-analysis found improvements in social-emotional skills, attitudes, prosocial behavior, and emotional difficulties, but not behavioral problems (Chen & Yu, 2022)	Suggests stronger effects on emotional-cognitive outcomes than behavioral outcomes

Taken together, international research shows that adolescents' SEC can be enhanced through several educational pathways, including curriculum integration, specialized skills lessons, experiential learning, whole-school interventions, peer-led programs, school counseling activities, and digital learning environments. These programs can also be classified according to their origins and implementation logic: locally developed programs responding to specific educational needs; direct adaptations of international models; and culturally modified adaptations designed to fit local school systems and social values.

Nevertheless, an important limitation remains. Although the CASEL framework conceptualizes SEC as an integrated structure comprising five core competencies, most empirical studies do not assess all five components in a balanced and systematic manner. Short-term interventions often prioritize self-awareness, self-management, emotional regulation, coping, or social skills, while components such as relationship skills and responsible decision-making are less frequently measured as independent outcomes. Mindfulness-integrated programs, in particular, tend to emphasize self-awareness and self-management because these are closely linked to attention, emotional awareness, and regulation. Therefore, while international research provides strong evidence that SEC can be developed through educational programs, the evidence base remains fragmented in terms of measurement, intervention targets, and theoretical integration. This limitation provides an important foundation for further examining how mindfulness-based approaches may be designed to support the full structure of adolescents' SEC, especially in culturally specific contexts such as Vietnam.

Relationships between Mindfulness and components of Social-Emotional Competence

Alongside the growing literature on social-emotional competence (SEC), mindfulness has become an important construct in positive psychology, educational psychology, and school-based mental health research. Mindfulness is commonly defined as the process of intentionally paying attention to the present moment with openness, acceptance, and non-judgment (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). From this perspective, mindfulness is not merely an attentional skill, but also a psychological capacity that supports emotional awareness, behavioral regulation, reflective responding, and adaptive engagement with social experience. In educational contexts, mindfulness practices have been associated with improved attention, reduced stress, better emotional regulation, and enhanced psychological well-being among students (Meiklejohn et al., 2012; Zenner et al., 2014).

Recent studies have shifted from evaluating only the effects of mindfulness-based interventions to directly examining the relationship between mindfulness, particularly trait mindfulness, and psychological outcomes. Trait mindfulness has often been measured using instruments such as the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ), Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS), and Child and Adolescent Mindfulness Measure (CAMM). Baer et al. (2006) conceptualized trait mindfulness as a multidimensional construct comprising five facets: observing, describing, acting with awareness, non-judging of inner experience, and non-reactivity to inner experience. This multidimensional conceptualization is useful for understanding how mindfulness may be associated with specific psychological processes that correspond to the five CASEL competencies.

However, it is important to note that most existing studies do not examine SEC as a complete five-component construct. Instead, they usually investigate mindfulness in relation to specific variables that represent or correspond to particular SEC components, such as self-compassion, self-esteem, emotional regulation, social support, empathy, prosocial behavior, aggression, impulsivity, or self-harm. Therefore, the current literature

should be interpreted as evidence of associations between mindfulness and SEC-related indicators, rather than as direct evidence of the relationship between mindfulness and the full structure of SEC.

First, mindfulness has been consistently linked to self-awareness, one of the core components of SEC. Self-awareness has often been operationalized through variables such as self-compassion, self-esteem, life satisfaction, and positive self-evaluation. Brown et al. (2013) found that mindfulness was positively associated with positive self-related indicators and negatively associated with depression and anxiety among adolescents and young adults. These findings suggest that adolescents with higher mindfulness are more capable of recognizing internal states, maintaining positive self-perceptions, and reducing negative emotional reactions. Similarly, Galla (2016), using a longitudinal design, showed that a short meditation program increased mindfulness and self-compassion, with several benefits maintained at three-month follow-up. Notably, changes in self-compassion were stronger predictors of emotional well-being than changes in mindfulness itself, suggesting that mindfulness may support self-awareness indirectly by cultivating self-compassion. Other studies further confirm this relationship. Sünbül and Güneri (2019) found that mindfulness significantly predicted self-compassion, while Liu et al. (2022) showed that mindfulness positively predicted self-esteem among Chinese adolescents. Wang et al. (2024) and Zhang et al. (2024) also reported positive associations between mindfulness and life satisfaction, indicating that adolescents with higher mindfulness tend to evaluate their lives and themselves more positively. Li et al. (2025) similarly found that mindfulness predicted self-compassion. Overall, these studies suggest that mindfulness supports self-awareness by enhancing adolescents' ability to recognize, evaluate, and accept themselves in a more positive and non-judgmental manner.

Second, mindfulness has a strong relationship with self-management, particularly emotional regulation, attentional control, emotional reactivity, intentional self-regulation, and behavioral control. Sünbül and Güneri (2019) found that mindfulness was negatively associated with difficulties in emotion regulation among economically disadvantaged adolescents. Yousefi Afrashteh and Hasani (2022) further demonstrated that emotion regulation mediated the relationship between mindfulness and psychological adjustment. These findings suggest that mindfulness improves psychological outcomes by reducing difficulties in controlling and regulating emotions. Several recent studies provide additional support. Fan et al. (2024) found that mindfulness facets, particularly acting with awareness, were positively associated with academic engagement and negatively associated with academic procrastination. Zhou et al. (2024) showed that mindfulness strongly predicted lower emotional reactivity among Chinese adolescents. Karagöz Çetiner et al. (2025) found that mindfulness was negatively associated with difficulties in emotion regulation, emotional impulsivity, and lack of emotional clarity. Similarly, Li et al. (2026), using a large sample of Chinese adolescents, found that mindfulness reduced emotion regulation difficulties and weakened the link between emotional dysregulation and maladaptive behaviors. Guan et al. (2026) also found a positive association between mindfulness and intentional self-regulation, while Zhang et al. (2026) highlighted the role of interpersonal mindfulness in adaptive emotion regulation, especially cognitive reappraisal. Together, these studies indicate that mindfulness contributes to self-management by helping adolescents regulate emotions, control attention, reduce impulsive reactions, and respond more intentionally to internal and external demands.

Third, mindfulness is also related to social awareness, although this relationship is often examined indirectly through variables such as bullying, social support, academic anxiety, school engagement, teacher support, and technology dependence. Múzquiz et al. (2022) showed that self-compassion, which includes mindfulness as a core component, mediated the relationship between bullying victimization and emotional well-being. Adolescents with higher self-compassion were less likely to experience negative emotional outcomes after bullying. This suggests that mindfulness-related capacities may help adolescents process negative social experiences more adaptively. In the academic context, Fan et al. (2024) found that mindfulness was positively associated with academic engagement and negatively associated with procrastination through motivational mechanisms. Xiang and Li (2025) showed that mindfulness was positively associated with social support and emotion regulation, and negatively associated with academic anxiety. Social support mediated the relationship between mindfulness and academic anxiety, suggesting that mindfulness may help adolescents perceive and mobilize social resources more effectively. Ma XiaoFei et al. (2026) also found that mindfulness reduced academic anxiety directly and indirectly through academic self-efficacy, with teacher support strengthening this pathway. Other studies showed that mindfulness may buffer the effects of stressful life events and technology

dependence by improving attention control and emotional adjustment. Overall, social awareness in this literature is approached through adolescents' ability to understand, interpret, and adapt to social and academic contexts, with mindfulness functioning as a regulatory and protective factor.

Fourth, mindfulness is closely associated with relationship skills. Doğan and Metin (2023) found that mindfulness was positively related to social competence, self-esteem, and life satisfaction among high school students. Their mediation analysis suggested that mindfulness may promote well-being partly through improved social competence and self-esteem. Zhou et al. (2024) showed that mindfulness weakened the effect of peer victimization on proactive aggression, indicating that mindfulness can reduce maladaptive responses in peer relationships. Another study by Zhou, Zhang, and Cao (2024) found that trait mindfulness buffered the negative impact of maternal psychological control on emotional reactivity and aggression. These results suggest that mindfulness helps adolescents regulate emotions in stressful relational contexts and manage interpersonal conflicts more effectively. Recent studies further emphasize the interpersonal dimension of mindfulness. Colaianne and Falcone (2025) argued that school-based mindfulness programs should move beyond individual self-regulation and include relatedness, empathy, and social connection. Yang et al. (2025), using a longitudinal design, found that social mindfulness predicted increased altruistic behavior and reduced aggression over time. Zhang et al. (2026) also found that interpersonal mindfulness components, such as bodily presence, awareness of others, and mindful responding, were positively associated with friendship quality and prosocial behavior. In the context of digital family interactions, Yang et al. (2026) found that mindfulness moderated the effect of parent-child technology interference on adolescents' phubbing behaviors. These findings suggest that mindfulness contributes to relationship skills by fostering presence, empathy, prosocial behavior, and healthier responses in interpersonal contexts.

Fifth, mindfulness is associated with responsible decision-making. This component is often examined through variables such as impulsivity, inhibitory control, aggression, self-harm, maladaptive behaviors, and executive functioning. Zhou et al. (2024) found that mindfulness was negatively associated with cognitive impulsivity and both proactive and reactive aggression. Hu et al. (2024) showed that trait mindfulness was positively related to executive functioning and negatively related to rumination and depression. Another study by Hu et al. (2024) found that mindfulness was negatively associated with impulsivity, executive dysfunction, inhibitory dysfunction, and aggressive behaviors, with indirect effects through impulsivity and inhibitory control. Studies on self-harm provide particularly strong evidence. Karagöz Çetiner et al. (2025) found that mindfulness was negatively associated with self-harm, partly through reduced emotion regulation difficulties. Li et al. (2026) similarly found that mindfulness predicted lower emotion dysregulation and indirectly reduced self-harm. Zhang et al. (2025), using a large sample of Chinese adolescents, found that mindfulness mediated the relationship between school bullying and non-suicidal self-injury, with acting with awareness playing the strongest mediating role. These findings suggest that mindfulness supports responsible decision-making by reducing impulsivity, improving behavioral control, and helping adolescents consider consequences before acting.

Taken together, the reviewed studies suggest that mindfulness is meaningfully associated with psychological and behavioral indicators corresponding to all five CASEL competencies. Nevertheless, the current evidence base remains fragmented. Most studies examine separate variables, such as self-compassion, emotional regulation, empathy, social competence, aggression, or self-harm, rather than measuring SEC as a complete multidimensional construct. This fragmented approach is methodologically useful because it allows researchers to clarify specific psychological mechanisms, such as attentional control, emotion regulation, or impulse inhibition. However, it also reveals a significant research gap: the relationship between mindfulness and SEC as a holistic five-component structure remains insufficiently tested, especially among adolescents. This gap is particularly important because adolescence is a transitional developmental period in which self-awareness, emotion regulation, peer relationships, moral reasoning, and decision-making develop simultaneously and interactively. Therefore, future research should move beyond isolated indicators and examine how mindfulness relates to the integrated structure of SEC. Such an approach would allow researchers to determine whether mindfulness primarily supports self-awareness and self-management, as much of the current evidence suggests, or whether it can also contribute more broadly to social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. This issue is especially relevant for culturally specific contexts, including Vietnam, where both mindfulness and SEC are still emerging as integrated research and intervention domains.

Mindfulness-Based Interventions for Promoting Social-Emotional Competence

A third major direction in the international literature concerns the development and evaluation of school-based mindfulness interventions aimed at promoting adolescents' social-emotional competence (SEC). Compared with general SEL programs, mindfulness-based interventions tend to place stronger emphasis on present-moment awareness, attentional regulation, emotional awareness, non-reactivity, self-compassion, and reflective responding. These processes are closely related to several SEC components, especially self-awareness and self-management. Depending on program design, they may also contribute to empathy, prosocial behavior, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

Existing programs vary considerably in theoretical orientation, structure, target group, and implementation format. Some programs originate from mindfulness traditions or mindfulness-based clinical approaches, such as MBSR, MBCT, or mindful self-compassion, and are adapted for school settings. Others are SEL programs that integrate mindfulness as a pedagogical strategy to support social-emotional development. Table 2 summarizes representative mindfulness-based programs that have been used to promote SEC-related outcomes among adolescents (see Table 2).

Table 2. Representative Mindfulness-Based Programs for Promoting Adolescents' SEC

Program	Theoretical orientation	Target group	Structure	SEC-related focus	Key implication
Learning to BREATHE (Broderick & Metz, 2009; Metz et al., 2013)	Adolescent mindfulness; SEL-oriented mindfulness	Adolescents aged 12–18	6–12 sessions, 45–90 minutes each	Self-awareness, emotion regulation, empathy, stress reduction	Developmentally appropriate model directly relevant to adolescent SEC
.b / Dot-be (Kuyken et al., 2013)	School-based mindfulness	Students aged 11–18	9–10 lessons, 40–60 minutes each	Attention, self-awareness, emotional regulation, relational skills	Shows feasibility of mindfulness in secondary schools
MYRIAD (Kuyken et al., 2022)	MBCT-adapted universal school mindfulness	Early adolescents aged 11–14	10 classroom lessons, 30–50 minutes each	Attention, emotional awareness, mindful responding	Large-scale findings show that mindfulness is not automatically superior to usual SEL; implementation matters
Healthy Learning Mind (Volanen et al., 2016)	MBSR/MBCT-informed school mindfulness	Students aged 12–15	9 weekly sessions, 45 minutes each	Emotional regulation, attentional control, resilience	Integrates mindfulness and relaxation for school stress adaptation
Inner Strength (Razza et al., 2025)	Mindfulness, self-regulation, self-compassion	High-risk urban high school students	12 weekly sessions, 45–60 minutes each	Self-regulation, self-compassion, identity, compassion	Useful for older adolescents and high-risk contexts
Mind in Action (Dariotis et al., 2023)	Experiential mindfulness and movement	Grade 9 students in urban settings	Approximately 27–31 short sessions, 4 times/week	Emotional awareness, pausing before reaction, behavioral regulation	Highlights value of repeated brief practices

MSC-T / Making Friends with Yourself (Bluth & Blanton, 2015; Bluth et al., 2016)	Mindful self-compassion	Adolescents aged 14–17	8 sessions, about 90 minutes each	Self-compassion, emotional regulation, well-being	Strongly linked to self-awareness and self-management
Transformative Life Skills (Frank et al., 2014)	Mindfulness-based SEL	Grades 6 and 9	Approximately 48 structured lessons	Stress management, body-emotion awareness, self-regulation, healthy relationships	Explicitly combines mindfulness with SEL and relationship development
MindUP (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015)	SEL, mindfulness, neuroscience, positive psychology	Preschool to grade 8; includes early adolescents	15 lessons plus daily brief practices	Executive functioning, empathy, prosocial behavior, reduced aggression	A clear example of SEL integrated with mindfulness
Think Happy-Be Happy (Kennes et al., 2023)	Mindfulness-based strengths practice	Adolescents	8 sessions, 45 minutes each	Strengths, self-regulation, relationships, subjective well-being	Connects mindfulness with positive psychology and strengths development
Heartfulness Self-Care (Iyer et al., 2024)	Mindfulness, meditation, self-care	High school students and school personnel	4 weeks; weekly webinars and daily practice	Stress management, self-observation, positive emotions, goal setting	Illustrates flexible and scalable school-based implementation

Across these programs, mindfulness-based interventions for adolescents can be classified into two broad groups. The first includes SEL programs that integrate mindfulness, in which SEL provides the overarching developmental framework and mindfulness functions as a pedagogical tool to cultivate emotional awareness, self-regulation, compassion, mindful communication, and prosocial behavior. MindUP, Transformative Life Skills, and Think Happy–Be Happy are examples of this approach. The second includes mindfulness programs directed toward SEL-related outcomes, which originate from mindfulness-based, compassion-based, or clinical traditions but are adapted to support adolescents' social-emotional development in schools. Learning to BREATHE, .b, MYRIAD, Healthy Learning Mind, Inner Strength, Mind in Action, MSC-T, and Heartfulness Self-Care can be understood within this category.

Taken together, international evidence suggests that mindfulness-based approaches can contribute meaningfully to adolescents' social-emotional development, but the current literature remains conceptually and methodologically uneven. School-based mindfulness programs have shown promising effects on emotional awareness, attention regulation, perceived stress, self-compassion, and psychological well-being. These outcomes are closely aligned with the intrapersonal dimensions of SEL, particularly self-awareness and self-management. However, the evidence is less consistent regarding interpersonal and decision-oriented competencies, such as social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. This imbalance indicates that mindfulness-based SEL is often evaluated through isolated psychological indicators rather than through a comprehensive SEC framework. Many studies claim relevance to SEL, yet their outcome measures tend to focus on emotion regulation, stress reduction, empathy, or prosocial behavior separately. As a result, the mechanisms through which mindfulness practices support the full range of CASEL competencies remain insufficiently clarified. Moreover, most intervention studies have been conducted in Western educational settings with stronger institutional support, trained facilitators, and more developed school mental health

systems. Therefore, the international evidence should be interpreted as promising but not directly transferable. For contexts such as Vietnam, mindfulness-based SEL requires cultural adaptation, implementation safeguards, and assessment models that capture SEC as an integrated multidimensional construct.

Vietnamese research on Mindfulness-based Approaches to Enhancing Adolescents' Social-Emotional Competence

Compared with the international literature, research on mindfulness-based approaches to enhancing adolescents' SEC in Vietnam remains at an emerging stage. While international studies have developed and evaluated multiple school-based mindfulness and SEL programs with relatively clear theoretical foundations, intervention structures, and outcome measures, Vietnamese research has mainly focused on conceptual discussion, needs assessment, measurement adaptation, and small-scale educational interventions. This contrast suggests that Vietnam has begun to recognize the importance of SEC and mindfulness in school mental health, but has not yet established a coherent research direction that integrates these two domains.

In recent years, Vietnamese schools have increasingly promoted students' social-emotional development through life-skills education, soft-skills education, and experiential and career-oriented activities under the 2018 General Education Curriculum. These educational activities aim to help students apply knowledge to real-life situations, regulate emotions, cooperate with others, and develop adaptive social behavior. However, SEC enhancement in Vietnam has often been embedded within broader educational activities rather than developed as a specialized, structured, and evidence-based school mental health program.

Several domestic studies illustrate this developmental trajectory. Nguyen Thi Tu (2019) examined SEC among 509 lower secondary school students aged 12–15 in Ho Chi Minh City and implemented awareness-raising activities, SEL-integrated life-skills lessons, teacher training, and school-based planning. Tran Chi Vinh Long (2021) applied the SEL model to develop soft-skills education materials for high school students, surveying 2,008 students aged 16-18 in Hanoi, Da Nang, and Ho Chi Minh City and conducting an intervention with 251 students. Tran Thi Thanh Tra (2023) emphasized the role of SEC in helping lower secondary school students develop as global citizens, build positive school climates, and reduce bullying and conflict. More recently, Giang Thien Vu and colleagues (2024) argued that although SEC has received increasing attention in Vietnamese psychological and educational research, its application to school mental health care for children and adolescents remains insufficiently explored.

A related concern is the difficulty of implementing SEL in Vietnamese schools. Huynh Van Son and colleagues (2021) found that although SEL had been piloted at the lower secondary level, implementation faced major challenges, including incompatibility between existing curricula and teachers' pedagogical capacity, difficulties in integrating SEL into school activities, insufficient attention to students' psychological characteristics, and students' limited understanding of how to develop SEC. These findings help explain why SEL implementation in Vietnam remains fragmented, often dependent on individual school initiatives, and difficult to sustain over time.

Alongside SEC, mindfulness has also begun to attract attention among Vietnamese researchers and educators, particularly in relation to school mental health, emotional regulation, and student well-being. However, the Vietnamese literature on mindfulness remains limited and has not yet been systematically connected to SEC. Existing studies mainly fall into two categories: measurement adaptation and empirical studies examining mindfulness in relation to isolated psychological outcomes. Nguyen Bao An (2018), for example, adapted the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire in the Vietnamese cultural context and reported acceptable reliability. Dinh Thi Hong Van and colleagues (2021) validated the Social and Emotional Competence Questionnaire among 1,250 Vietnamese secondary school students and confirmed the five-factor structure of SEC aligned with the CASEL model. These measurement studies provide important methodological foundations, but they do not directly examine the relationship between mindfulness and SEC as an integrated construct.

Some empirical studies have provided preliminary evidence that mindfulness may be related to specific components of SEC. Tran Quang Anh Minh and colleagues (2022), in a study of 654 university students, found that mindfulness was associated with psychological well-being, positive affect, reduced stress, and self-esteem-

related outcomes. These findings suggest possible links between mindfulness and self-awareness or self-management, although the sample was university students rather than adolescents. Tran Minh Duc (2025) reported that mindfulness practice among students was associated with better emotional regulation, self-regulation, reduced stress and anxiety, improved empathy, communication skills, and lower negative behaviors. These outcomes correspond to several SEC-related domains, but the evidence remains preliminary and does not yet amount to a comprehensive model of mindfulness-based SEC.

In the field of school-based mindfulness interventions, Nguyen and Dorjee (2021, 2022) made important contributions by examining mindfulness programs among Vietnamese students. Their intervention studies included practices such as mindful breathing, emotional recognition, non-judgmental observation of thoughts, emotional acceptance, and compassion. Findings suggested improvements in emotional awareness, emotional regulation, non-reactivity, and emotional processing, including neural indicators such as LPP and P3b. These studies are significant because they demonstrate the feasibility and potential benefits of school-based mindfulness in Vietnam. Nevertheless, their primary focus was emotional processing and regulation rather than SEC as a full five-component construct.

More recent qualitative work has also pointed to the cultural potential and implementation challenges of mindfulness-based SEL in Vietnam. Do Tat Thien and Giang Thien Vu (2024) suggested that mindfulness-based SEL may be culturally adaptable in Vietnam due to the country's philosophical and religious pluralism, particularly the tradition of religious trinity or the harmonization of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. However, they also noted that mindfulness-based SEL is sometimes misunderstood as traditional meditation or psychological therapy rather than as an educational approach to social-emotional development. This misunderstanding may lead to narrow implementation, such as asking students to meditate for stress reduction without explicitly connecting mindfulness practices to self-awareness, empathy, ethical awareness, relationship skills, or responsible decision-making.

Table 3. Representative Vietnamese Studies Related to SEC, Mindfulness, and School-Based Intervention

Research direction	Representative studies	Main contribution	Remaining limitation
SEC assessment and SEL-integrated education	Nguyen Thi Tu (2019); Tran Chi Vinh Long (2021); Tran Thi Thanh Tra (2023); Giang Thien Vu et al. (2024)	Shows increasing attention to SEC in Vietnamese education; connects SEC with life skills, soft skills, school climate, and school mental health	Mostly integrated into life-skills or experiential education; limited specialized school mental health programs
SEL implementation challenges	Huynh Van Son et al. (2021)	Identifies practical barriers in lower secondary schools, including curriculum mismatch, teacher capacity, integration difficulties, and limited student readiness	Highlights fragmented implementation but does not provide a tested intervention model
Measurement adaptation	Nguyen Bao An (2018); Dinh Thi Hong Van et al. (2021)	Provides Vietnamese adaptations of mindfulness and SEC measures, including FFMQ and SECQ	Measurement studies remain separate; the mindfulness–SEC relationship has not been tested as an integrated model
Mindfulness and SEC-related outcomes	Tran Quang Anh Minh et al. (2022); Tran Minh Duc (2025)	Suggests links between mindfulness and well-being, positive affect, emotional regulation, empathy, communication, and reduced negative behaviors	Often uses university or mixed-age samples; focuses on isolated outcomes rather than five-component SEC
School-based mindfulness interventions	Nguyen & Dorjee (2021, 2022)	Demonstrates feasibility and potential effects of mindfulness programs on emotional awareness, regulation, and emotional processing in Vietnamese students	Primarily focuses on emotional processing; does not evaluate SEC comprehensively

Cultural adaptation of MBSEL	Do Tat Thien & Giang Thien Vu (2024)	Highlights cultural compatibility and possible misunderstandings of mindfulness-based SEL in Vietnam	Provides qualitative insight but requires further empirical testing

Taken together, Vietnamese research shows a gradual transition from a life-skills and soft-skills orientation toward a broader understanding of SEC as a protective resource for school mental health. However, this transition remains incomplete. SEC research and mindfulness research have largely developed as separate streams. SEC studies have focused mainly on educational integration and measurement adaptation, while mindfulness studies have focused mainly on emotional regulation, well-being, stress reduction, or emotional processing. Few studies have directly examined how mindfulness relates to adolescents' SEC, and even fewer have considered SEC as a multidimensional construct comprising all five CASEL competencies.

This gap becomes clearer when compared with international research. Globally, programs such as Learning to BREATHE, MindUP, .b, MYRIAD, Transformative Life Skills, and Inner Strength have been developed, implemented, and evaluated in school settings with identifiable theoretical foundations, program structures, target groups, and outcome indicators. Although international research also remains limited by fragmented measurement and uneven attention to the full CASEL framework, it has established a stronger empirical foundation for mindfulness-based SEL. In contrast, Vietnam lacks a structured, evidence-based, culturally responsive program designed specifically to enhance adolescents' SEC through mindfulness.

Therefore, the Vietnamese literature reveals three major research gaps. First, there is a lack of quantitative studies examining the relationship between mindfulness and SEC among adolescents using standardized measures. Second, there is no empirically tested intervention program that integrates mindfulness with the full five-component CASEL framework for Vietnamese adolescents. Third, there is insufficient research on how such programs should be culturally adapted to fit Vietnamese school realities, including academic pressure, teacher readiness, school counseling capacity, students' emotional expression patterns, family expectations, and possible misunderstandings of mindfulness as religious or clinical practice.

For these reasons, future research in Vietnam should move beyond isolated outcomes and short-term activities toward a theoretically integrated and culturally responsive model of mindfulness-based SEL. Such a model should not frame mindfulness merely as a stress-reduction technique, but as an educational pathway for developing self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making among adolescents in Vietnamese schools.

Practical implications for Mindfulness-based SEL in Vietnamese schools

The findings of this review suggest several practical implications for developing and implementing mindfulness-based SEL in Vietnamese schools. First, mindfulness-based SEL should be positioned as an educational approach to SEC rather than as a stand-alone stress-reduction technique. For Vietnam, this means that mindfulness activities should be explicitly connected to the five CASEL competencies, rather than being limited to breathing exercises or relaxation.

Second, teacher and school counselor preparedness is a central condition for responsible implementation. Mindfulness-based SEL requires facilitators who understand adolescent development, SEL theory, classroom processes, and trauma-sensitive practice. Evidence from Learning to BREATHE shows that teacher training, implementation fidelity, and facilitator embodiment of mindfulness are important for program quality (Metz et al., 2013). In Vietnamese schools, where teachers may already experience workload pressure and limited formal training in SEL, professional development should include not only basic mindfulness techniques but also skills in emotional check-in, group facilitation, classroom safety, and referral procedures. Without such preparation, mindfulness activities may become mechanical or disconnected from students' real social-emotional needs.

Third, curriculum overload must be carefully considered. Vietnamese students often experience strong academic pressure, while schools have limited time for additional developmental programs. Therefore, mindfulness-based SEL should not be introduced as a separate subject that increases the burden on teachers and students. A more feasible approach is to integrate short, structured modules into existing spaces such as homeroom periods, life-

skills education, experiential activities, school counseling programs, or mental health promotion activities. Brief practices such as mindful breathing, grounding, emotion labeling, mindful listening, or pause-before-reacting exercises may be combined with discussion, reflection, and real-life problem-solving tasks.

Fourth, cultural attitudes toward mindfulness should be addressed directly. In Vietnam, mindfulness may be misunderstood as a religious practice, traditional meditation, or a clinical intervention for psychological problems. Such misunderstandings can limit acceptance among school leaders, parents, teachers, and students. Thus, mindfulness-based SEL should be framed in secular, developmentally appropriate, and educational language. Terms such as present-moment awareness, emotional recognition, self-care, compassionate communication, and responsible response may be more acceptable than spiritually loaded terminology. This is consistent with the need for cultural adaptation rather than mechanical transfer of international programs to Vietnamese schools.

Finally, mindfulness-based SEL should be implemented with mental health safeguards. Trauma-informed approaches emphasize that students need a sense of safety before engaging deeply with bodily sensations, emotions, or memories. Some practices, especially breath-focused or body-focused exercises, may activate discomfort among students with trauma histories, anxiety, depression, or other psychological vulnerabilities. Schools should therefore provide flexible participation, alternative grounding practices, emotional check-ins, and clear referral pathways to school counselors or mental health professionals. In this sense, mindfulness-based SEL in Vietnam should be developed as part of a broader school mental health system that links universal prevention, targeted support, and professional intervention.

CONCLUSION

This integrative literature review indicates that mindfulness-based approaches have become a promising direction for enhancing adolescents' SEC. International research has provided growing evidence that mindfulness is associated with psychological and behavioral indicators corresponding to the five CASEL competencies, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. School-based mindfulness and mindfulness-integrated SEL programs have also shown potential benefits for adolescents' attention, emotional regulation, self-compassion, empathy, prosocial behavior, stress reduction, and psychological well-being.

However, the current evidence base remains conceptually and methodologically fragmented. Most existing studies examine isolated variables such as self-compassion, emotional regulation, empathy, social competence, aggression, or self-harm, rather than assessing SEC as a holistic multidimensional construct. Similarly, although mindfulness-based programs often claim to support social-emotional development, their outcome measures tend to focus primarily on self-awareness and self-management. Other CASEL competencies, particularly relationship skills and responsible decision-making, are less frequently conceptualized and measured in a systematic manner. This suggests that the relationship between mindfulness and the full structure of SEC remains insufficiently examined.

In the Vietnamese context, research on SEC and mindfulness is still emerging. Existing studies have contributed important foundations through conceptual discussion, needs assessment, measurement adaptation, and preliminary school-based mindfulness interventions. Nevertheless, SEC research and mindfulness research in Vietnam have largely developed as separate streams. SEC has mainly been addressed through life-skills education, soft-skills education, and experiential activities, while mindfulness studies have tended to focus on emotional regulation, stress reduction, well-being, or emotional processing. To date, there remains a lack of quantitative studies examining the relationship between mindfulness and SEC among Vietnamese adolescents using standardized measures, as well as a lack of structured, evidence-based, culturally responsive intervention programs designed to enhance all five components of SEC through mindfulness.

Therefore, future research in Vietnam should move toward an integrated mindfulness-based SEL model that is theoretically grounded, culturally appropriate, and empirically testable. Such a model should not position mindfulness merely as a stress-reduction technique, but as an educational pathway for cultivating self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making among adolescents.

This direction is particularly meaningful in the current Vietnamese educational context, where schools are increasingly expected to support not only academic achievement but also students' mental health, adaptive functioning, and holistic development.

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