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Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

EDUCATORS' EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES ON TEACHING SEXUALITY
EDUCATION TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN VIETNAM

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Global Leadership and Change

by

Tram Van

May, 2024

Danielle Espino, Ed.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Tram Van

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Doctoral Committee:

Danielle Espino, Ed.D., Chairperson

Kevin Wong, Ph.D., Committee Member

Seung Lee, Ph.D., Committee Member

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DEDICATION

As I approach my 33rd birthday, I am cognizant of the ever-flowing river of time, yet I feel a reverence for the present moment. On my path of self-discovery and personal evolution, I am surrounded by an abundance of blessings: the endless love of precious family and friends, and the success and achievements that come from hard work. With my heart tuned into the present, I feel gratitude for the enduring love and support of those who journey alongside me.

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Bill Thong Khac Van and Kathy Thinh Thi Hang Vo, whose words of encouragement and unshakeable support fuel my determination. To my siblings, whose shared experiences have enriched my life beyond measure. To my devoted husband, Tuyen Pham, and our darling daughter, Zenifer Pham—your love and understanding have illuminated my path.

This work stands as a testament to the transformative power of love, faith, and encouragement. It is a tribute to each of you whose presence has turned this journey into a symphony of growth, discovery, and boundless potential.

VITA

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Education, Pepperdine University, 2024

Concentration: Global Leadership & Change

Dissertation: Educators' Experiences and Perspectives on Teaching Sexuality Education to High School Students in Vietnam

Dissertation Advisors: Danielle Espino, Ed.D., Kevin Wong, Ph.D., Seung Lee, Ph.D.

MBA, Chapman University, 2018

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Van Investments LLC, Self-employed Real Estate Investor, 2016 - Present

- Acquired residential and commercial properties for investment through strategic market analysis and favorable negotiations.
- Conducted comprehensive market research to identify high-growth areas and emerging trends.
- Managed due diligence, including property inspections, title searches, and financing.
- Directed property rehabilitation and renovation projects to enhance value and returns.
- Implemented efficient property management strategies, ensuring high occupancy and positive cash flow.
- Monitored market conditions and property performance continuously, making data-driven decisions to optimize investment portfolios and identify opportunities for property appreciation or strategic divestment.

Boomi Inc, Consultant II, 2015 - 2022

- Achieved over 60% client retention through satisfaction and problem resolution.
- Audited revenue, expense reports, and invoices for projects over \$1 million.
- Managed diverse projects, including training audits, customer reports, support cases, and ad launches.

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Sakya Buddha University, Accreditation Liason, 2022 - Present

- Led the accreditation process, ensuring compliance with all standards and regulations.
- Developed and submitted comprehensive accreditation reports and documentation.
- Coordinated with academic departments to gather necessary data and evidence.
- Conducted internal audits to identify areas for improvement and ensured continuous compliance.
- Facilitated communication between the university and accrediting bodies.
- Collaborated with university leadership to implement strategic initiatives for quality enhancement.

Happy People Nonprofit Foundation, Co-founder, 2015 - Present

- Constructed an enriching curriculum to educate youth on the importance of safe sex.
- Provided opportunities for youth to participate in confidential counseling sessions to mitigate potentially detrimental effects.

ABSTRACT

This qualitative phenomenological study explored experiences of teaching sex education and identified challenges to sexuality education among 10 Vietnamese high school educators. Sexuality education high-school teachers in Vietnam participated in in-depth interviews focused on (a) experiences associated with teaching sex education in Vietnamese high schools and (b) how high school educators' experiences with professional training related to sex education influenced their teaching practices. This research explored teacher characteristics, curricula, professional development, and environmental factors. Study data were collected via Zoom interviews, enabling the researcher to engage participants in their subjective viewpoints and overcome the hurdles of long-distance travel and health safety concerns amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Data were analyzed and interpreted using thematic analysis. The problem was twofold: (a) Without comprehensive sexuality education, adolescents and youth are at risk for unplanned pregnancies, abortion, sexually transmitted infections, cervical cancer, HIV, and other diseases; and (b) Comprehensive sexuality education can empower adolescents to make informed choices about their sexual health. Three research questions (RQs) were formulated directly from the existing problem RQ1. How do high school educators in Vietnam describe their teaching practices related to sexuality education? RQ2. What factors influence the experiences and perceptions of educators in Vietnam regarding teaching sexuality education to high school students? RQ3. What recommendations do educators have for training/professional development and content delivery for teaching sexuality education to high school students? Using three theoretical frameworks, Constructivism, Social Cognitive Theory, and Transformative Learning Theory, the research utilized established methodologies developed by prior scholars and theories. While seven themes emerged, the study's results inferred a commonality of the participants' experiences within three main takeaways: the impact of the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training, the participants preferred professional development

setting of blended learning, and a need for mandatory professional development for these dedicated educators. These three takeaways are intertwined and converge with the interests and ability to deliver proper and accurate sex education to adolescents, not only in Vietnam but worldwide. The results of the phenomenological study suggest that professional development can benefit organizations, community groups, and personal enlightenment within broader realms of teaching, coaching, and mentoring.

Keywords: sexuality education, sex education, professional development, blended learning, curricula and policy, high-school students

Chapter One: Study Introduction

Adolescence is a transitory period of an individual's life beginning with the onset of puberty toward their mid-20s; adolescence is a significant developmental phase (Bonnie & Backes, 2019; Wood et al., 2018). Addressing adolescent sexuality within the context of high school can be crucial for healthy youth development (Walsh et al., 2022). Although the importance of sexual health is becoming more widely recognized, promoting it via education remains delicate and controversial worldwide (Shtarkshall et al., 2007).

Background of the Study

The prevalence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) has significantly increased among adolescents, attributed mainly to the rise in unprotected sexual activity (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020). Prevention is crucial since the consequences of STIs are dire. Due to the severe outcomes associated with STIs, it is essential to prioritize prevention. These infections can lead to several health issues, such as, infertility and hereditary diseases (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2018; Shannon & Klausner, 2018; Tsevat et al., 2017). Several STIs contribute to the propagation of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) epidemic (Shannon & Klausner, 2018). These researchers stated that

STIs are a growing concern for adolescents. Proper screening and management are of critical importance. Furthermore, prevention efforts such as human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination should be prioritized. Much of the current literature on STIs does not address the unique nature of STIs in adolescents, and additional research into effective prevention and treatment strategies for STIs in adolescents is urgently needed.

(Shannon & Klausner, 2018, p. 1)

Preventing HIV infection remains a critical concern for Asia and Pacific countries, with sexual activity as the primary transmission mechanism in those regions (WHO, 2022). According to estimates provided by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

(UNICEF) in 2008, there were approximately 690,000 HIV infections among those aged 15 to 24 in South Asia, whereas there were 580,000 in the Pacific (UNICEF, 2008).

Examining the circumstances of Asia's adolescents who are at considerable risk for contracting HIV is receiving an increasing amount of attention within the arena of HIV prevention initiatives. However, in a report from 2008, adolescents at risk comprised a negligible portion of the age cohort (1–5%), as focusing on adolescents aged 15–24 may have resulted in overlooking younger teenagers' vital interests and rights (UNICEF, 2008). For instance, the International Women's Health Coalition's (IWHC) 2007 documented sexual understanding, attitudes, and actions of adolescents (12–14 years old), revealing a lack of knowledge and cognitive readiness for sexual interaction in comparison to comparable assessments of older youths (IWHC, 2007).

Studies in Family Planning revealed in 1992 that Vietnam's official abortion rate of 2.5 per woman was the highest in Asia (Goodkind, 1994). In 2008, the United Nations (2008) recorded Vietnam's abortion rate as 35 per 1,000 women aged 15–44, the second highest in the world. Moreover, in 2009, the WHO approximated that 40% of new HIV infections were reported among Vietnamese youth (Do et al., 2017). After nearly a decade, HIV infections continued to harm the nation. In 2020, the Vietnam Health Ministry reported that 15- to 16-year-old HIV carriers increased threefold from 2011 to 2019, with an expected annual increase of 10,000 newly infected youth (Ha, 2020).

Sexuality Education

According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) estimates in Vietnam (2022), there were roughly 20 million young people, comprising 21% of the overall population. Recent research indicated that teenagers in Vietnam become sexually active at a younger age (Watanabe et al., 2020). The WHO's *Global School-Based Student Health Survey* reported that adolescents in Vietnam participated in sexual activity, with first-time sexual activity before the age of 14. This early age doubled between 2013 and 2019 (Nguyen & Matsumoto, 2022).

However, a 2017 UNFPA study of 15- to 24-year-old Vietnamese adolescents disclosed that 83% knew about condoms and 62% understood their usage, but just 24% knew how to use condoms properly (UNFPA, 2017).

There is evidence that schools are among the most favored providers of sexuality education (SeD) for youth worldwide (WHO, 2017), and enhancing the quality of SeD curricula helps safeguard adolescents (Haruna et al., 2018). Truong (2006) reported that international organizations, including the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, have offered monetary assistance to the Vietnamese government since 1997 to incorporate HIV prevention and education regarding reproductive health into school curricula (Truong, 2006).

The SeD's content in Vietnam has been unevenly distributed, emphasizing biological anatomy and social morality and less on developing safe sex practices and attitudes (Truong, 2006). This is attributed to the merging of SeD with traditional topics, for instance, biology and civics education, as part of an abstinence-only policy (Truong, 2006). Consequently, Vietnamese educators' views remained negative, and the programs have not been updated to reflect modern culture and address adolescents' needs (Hoang, 2009). These backgrounds highlight the necessity of providing Vietnamese adolescents and young adults with sexually associated health treatments and an organized SeD system, mandating urgent reform and teacher training in SeD.

Many adolescents begin their sexual lives without proper sexual health preparation (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2008). Investing in youth with accurate information, competencies, and life skills ensures the country's future success. A fundamental aspect of this investment must be SeD. The training of educators is crucial for successfully implementing comprehensive SeD in schools (O'Brien & Burns, 2020). Despite this, there is limited awareness regarding teacher training focusing on SeD training for secondary school instructors (Preinfalk-Fernandez, 2015; UNFPA, 2014).

Recent research by UNESCO in 2015 on the status of SeD in nearly 50 countries found that over 80% of evaluated countries had distinct SeD policies. Despite a firm guideline basis, there needs to be more clarity between global and regional policies and the implementation of comprehensive SeD in schools worldwide (UNESCO, 2015).

Despite the significant benefits of SeD, the research found that many schools disregard and undervalue quality SeD (Goldman, 2010; Kågesten & Reeuwijk, 2021). Teaching SeD and responding to students' inquiries about sexual health and sexual health-related behavior elicited discomfort from many educators (Goldman, 2011; Jobanputra et al., 1999). Specifically, such uneasiness from teachers occurred when teachers required clarification about pedagogies best employed for SeD and how to adapt such teaching methods to their students' age and cognitive ability (Goldman, 2011). When educators lack sufficient direction and assistance, implementing SeD can become ambiguous and euphemistic, resulting in misinformation and a need for practical knowledge transfer to their students (Eisenberg et al., 2010; Goldman, 2011). An additional study revealed that educators of SeD face obstacles when attempting to provide their students with competent and appropriate SeD (Rose et al., 2018). These hurdles ranged from inadequate training to a need for more pertinent educational materials (McDaniels & Fleming, 2016).

Teachers require support and training in SeD to achieve confidence and beneficial self-efficacy as they address sexual diversity, contraceptive methods, sexual health, and relationships (Mayberry, 2014; Rose et al., 2018). SeD is frequently indirect, hazy, euphemistic, or too technical without clear guidance and assistance (Breuner & Mattson, 2016). These authors also noted that

adolescents should be shown how to develop a safe and positive view of sexuality through age-appropriate education about their sexual health. Sexuality education can be disseminated through the three learning domains: cognitive (information), affective

(feelings, values, and attitudes), and behavioral (communication, decision-making, and other skills). (Breuner & Mattson, 2016, p. e2)

In addition, teachers need SeD training to combat heterosexism and homophobia in schools as they seek to improve their students' general well-being (Clark, 2010). SeD of inadequate quality brings limited knowledge acquisition, misunderstandings, and a lack of applicable skills (Sato et al., 2022). The insufficient implementation of SeD in schools has been linked to several factors, including a deficiency in promoting a sex-positive environment, obsolete SeD curricula, inadequately trained educators, and a lower priority given to SeD subjects (Pound et al., 2017).

Sexuality Education in Vietnam

Even though Vietnam has national plans for SeD, it still needs to be determined if SeD is required at the local levels, resulting in SeD not being mandated by law across the country (UNESCO, 2021b). Since formal SeD is optional, only some publications and resources provide official SeD training for educators. As a result, the quality of SeD is highly dependent on teachers' intentions. Educators who recognize the importance of SeD and teaching skills to prevent sexual abuse frequently avoid addressing the issues during lessons because they are uncomfortable and lack confidence in discussing these sensitive topics (Goldman, 2011). However, educators are more comfortable discussing related concepts such as biology or citizenship education (UNESCO, 2021b).

Recently, with the assistance of the UNFPA and UNESCO, a 10-day *Training for Trainers* workshop on SeD and life skills was held in Hanoi, Vietnam (Nguyen & Matsumoto, 2022). However, only 30 national trainers were chosen to participate in this event (Nguyen & Matsumoto, 2022). The lack of training standardization hinders sexuality educators' efficacy and remains controversial.

The Problem of the Study

UNESCO's 2021 global status report on comprehensive sexuality education (SeD) indicated that more than 60% of 15–24-year-olds students in Asia and the Pacific held the belief that their school provided inadequate SeD (UNESCO, 2021b). More specifically, SeD for Vietnamese adolescents did not match the needs of Vietnamese youth as the country was confronted with a rise in unfavorable health consequences related to adolescents' risky sexual practices (Tran & Fisher, 2011). A 2021 survey in Vietnam managed by the General Statistics Office (GSO) and UNICEF discovered that adolescents were discontented with modern contraceptive methods. Thus, adolescents' family planning dissatisfaction was four times higher than married women's (40% versus 10%, respectively) (UNICEF & GSO, 2021).

According to UNFPA's research, the prevalence of sexually misleading information among young people due to insufficient exposure to formal SeD was becoming a public health problem (UNFPA, 2013). The WHO, the UNPFA, and the UNICEF have observed that adolescents who engage in sexual activities without adequate information are at risk of sexually transmitted infections, unintended pregnancies, and other severe health complications, including infertility or even death (Kågesten & Reeuwijk, 2021).

Purpose of the Research

This qualitative phenomenological study explored teachers' experiences teaching SeD in Vietnamese high schools. The study discovered the current SeD teacher training experiences using data from secondary school teachers in Vietnam. In addition, the study considered professional development for SeD educators, standardized SeD curricula, and teachers' preferred educational practices. This study elicited participants' knowledge and perspectives regarding secondary school adolescent sex and sexual health in Vietnam.

Research Questions

This study identified common themes in how Vietnamese high school educators described their teacher training related to SeD and their experiences in the classroom. This study emphasized areas that significantly impact the subject of SeD so that teachers could

determine the most efficient way to teach reproductive health and SeD within the current curriculum. The research questions (RQs) were:

- RQ1. How do high school educators in Vietnam describe their teaching practices related to sexuality education?
- RQ2. What factors influence the experiences and perceptions of educators in Vietnam regarding teaching sexuality education to high school students?
- RQ3. What recommendations do educators have for training/professional development and content delivery for teaching sexuality education to high school students?

Theoretical Frameworks

Research studies are reinforced by prior research using “relevant concepts, principles, theories or models, and prior evidence are identified to establish what is known, and more importantly, what is not known” (Johnson et al., 2020, p. 139). Theoretical foundations in research enable investigators to utilize established methodologies developed by prior scholars who have relied on established theories. Such recognized theoretical frameworks serve to fortify both present and future research endeavors. This study was framed using *Constructivism*, *Social Cognitive Theory*, and *Transformative Learning Theory*.

Constructivism

The model of constructivist learning served as one of the study's theoretical frameworks for guiding the development and implementation of this study's design and analysis. Knowles (1990) described constructivism as a learning paradigm that emphasizes knowledge formation by learning through experiences, in contrast to the passive reception of information.

Constructivism posits that learning occurs recursively, primarily based on existing units of knowledge, known as *schemas* (Hendry, 1996; Knowles, 1990). Piaget (1973) characterized the notion of *schema* as a structured framework of knowledge concerning a particular subject or

event developed from an individual's past experiences, which could be accessed to guide present comprehension or behavior.

Piaget's (1957) groundbreaking work on cognitive development theory introduced the concept of schemas. Schema theory proposes that learning occurs when novel information is either assimilated into current schemas or when new schemas are created to adjust the information (Zhiqing, 2015). However, cognitive dissonance may arise when incoming information cannot be easily reconciled with current schemas, necessitating changes in schemas. Piaget (1957) identified three factors that trigger cognitive development: biological development occurring in stages, interaction with the natural and object world, and interaction with others (Bruner, 1966; O'Donovan, 2021).

Individuals carry a collection of reasoning that reflects their experiences and is a foundation for integrating new knowledge (Merriam & Cafarella, 1991; Piaget, 1957).

Richardson (1997) defined constructivist teacher education as collaborative training that enables teachers to reassess and reflect on the implicit beliefs they bring to their teaching.

Teacher education has a clear function in concentrating on a vision of a learning-friendly social environment. The teacher education curriculum must allow learners to study in cooperative or discourse groups while assessing their firsthand experiences to inform their teaching (Hausfather, 2001).

Constructivism is significant to the study of SeD as it recognizes that teachers bring standpoints and experiences to their learning processes, including attitudes, beliefs, and cultural values related to sexuality. Constructivism acknowledges that teachers' experiences and cultural backgrounds shape their views on SeD. By understanding these factors, the researcher can recognize how teachers construct knowledge and meaning regarding SeD. This can help to identify potential obstacles to effective SeD and inform the development of culturally responsive interventions.

Social Cognitive Theory

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) is an intricate, multi-faceted theory that attempts to comprehend human behaviors and mental processes derived from their social environments. Within the topic of SeD, SCT provided a framework for understanding how self-efficacy, contextual circumstances, and goal motivation are connected to sexual behaviors and how these variables interact (Bandura, 1986, 1989). Previous studies have applied SCT to investigate sexual behaviors and methods of contraception among adolescents (Byrne et al., 1993), in addition to the evolution of human sexuality (Oliver & Hyde, 1993).

SCT was utilized throughout the conceptualization of this research project as an additional analytical framework to investigate the impact of SeD training on educators' teaching methodologies. Through self-regulation and reinforcement, SCT aims to acquire sustainable learners' goal-directed behaviors (LaMorte, 2022). Bandura (1986, 1989) introduced SCT as a learning theory that learning arises through dynamic social interactions utilizing the triadic reciprocal causation model of the learner's personal (i.e., values, beliefs, perceptions, and abilities), environmental, and behavioral components. SCT claims that human behavior is guided by purposes and goals driven by an individual's self-efficacy beliefs within a specific social context. In sexuality, SCT utilizes a triadic interaction between the person, the person's behaviors, and external variables to understand human sexual behaviors (Dos Santos, 2020).

A significant component of SCT consists of an individual's cognitive, emotional, and biological aspects (Bandura, 1997). Their mental and behavioral personality traits significantly influence individuals' behavior. These elements include expectations, beliefs, and unique personality characteristics. Bandura (1997) emphasized three interrelated components that significantly impact individuals as personal considerations: self-regulation, self-efficacy, and outcome expectations and goals.

According to Wood and Bandura (1989), self-efficacy is a person's conviction of their capability to "mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to meet situational demands" (p. 408). According to the research, self-efficacy impacts behaviors,

including task selection, effort, perseverance, and effective learning techniques (Hayat et al., 2020; Schunk, 1989). The environmental elements that affect behavior include the physical environment and external stimuli, while the behavioral component pertains to an individual's responses to specific events and conditions.

In the context of SeD, SCT is relevant because it suggests that students learn about sex and relationships through direct instruction and observing the attitudes and behaviors of their peers, parents, and other role models. By understanding the values of SCT, SeD programs can be designed to incorporate positive role models and promote healthy behaviors. This can include using peer educators or community leaders as role models, emphasizing the positive outcomes of healthy sexual behaviors, and addressing prevalent misconceptions and attitudes that may foster risky conduct.

Transformative Learning

According to Mezirow (1997), transformative learning is a profound and constructive journey surpassing simple knowledge acquisition, leading to a richer and more meaningful form of learning. Transformative learning facilitates an approach in which learners derive meaning from their life experiences, leading to a significant shift in their worldviews and perspectives. Perspective growth arises as learners deviate from unquestioningly accepting new knowledge and information to actively reflecting on and consciously engaging with their learning experiences (DeAngelis, 2018; Simsek, 2012). Transformative learning can happen only if teachers are mindful of creating an environment of mutual inquiry (Drago-Severson, 2009).

Mezirow's (1997) transformative learning theory highlighted the process of problem-solving through task-based learning (Knowles, 1984). This framework has emerged as one of the leading theories for studying adult learning, and it is especially relevant to this research study (Mezirow, 2000). According to Mezirow (2000), transformative learning entails profoundly altering an adult's fundamental reference structures in reaction to dilemmas. These dilemmas challenge an individual's worldview, encouraging them to evaluate previously held beliefs.

Although transformative learning concepts apply to various learning contexts, most literature has focused on its application in adult education within higher education settings. However, past research advocated that teachers could promote transformative learning by implementing educational strategies encouraging reflection (DeAngelis, 2018; Chukwuedo & Ementa, 2022; Chukwuedo et al., 2021).

Transformative learning was essential to the current study of SeD because it emphasizes the significance of reflection and examining one's assumptions and beliefs. Transformative learning can enable SeD educators to question their preconceived notions about sex and sexuality, challenge societal norms, and develop a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of these topics. By engaging in critical reflection and considering alternative perspectives, educators can develop a more inclusive understanding of students' diverse experiences and needs regarding sexual health and education. This approach can help to create a more complete and practical approach to SeD that is better suited to meet students' needs, irrespective of their gender, sexual orientation, or cultural heritage.

Study Frameworks Summary

Based on various learning theories and models, this dissertation's research efforts identified Vietnamese secondary educators' experiences within their classrooms. The three frameworks for this study aided in exploring how teacher SeD education may best be supported. The frameworks of this dissertation have many related underlying concepts and include active learning, learner-centered learning, social learning, and cognitive engagement.

Role of the Researcher

Positionality or worldview refers to the practice of a researcher outlining their standing regarding the study. Such a position may influence aspects of the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). Nationality, gender, ethnicity, personal history, and experiences directly influenced the researcher's positionality (Chiseri-Strater, 1996). Flick (2022) indicated that a

researcher's worldview impacts how research questions are posed, which techniques are chosen, how data are collected, and how results are distributed.

Due to the interpretative character of qualitative research, acknowledging positionality was crucial for the researcher. Therefore, positionality was disclosed to ensure the elimination of bias in the collection and interpretation of the data. Life experiences and relationships directly affect shaping an individual's identity. The author is a 32-year-old Asian American female from a culturally diverse background. At 14, she left Vietnam to pursue education in the United States. Language barriers, culture adaptation, and coping techniques shaped the author's viewpoints as a cultural hybrid, profoundly identifying with a metropolitan and cosmopolitan mindset.

During the formative years of the author's education, she was exposed to the Vietnamese education system until the completion of ninth grade. This period allowed the author to experience firsthand the teaching strategies employed within the Vietnamese educational context. Subsequently, the author observed the differences in educational practices, particularly sexuality education (SeD), when she migrated to the United States and commenced her education in tenth grade. At 16, the author was first introduced to SeD in a formal educational setting and became aware of its significant role in shaping a student's overall development. The contrast between the absence of SeD in the Vietnamese system and its integration into the U.S. education system prompted the author to undertake this research study exploring SeD practices in Vietnam.

Assumptions and Limitations

In research studies, assumptions and limitations play pivotal roles. Assumptions refer to the circumstances the researcher acknowledged but only sometimes verified due to insufficient data or evidence (Nkwake, 2013). They were also indispensable as they supported the implementation of this study (Ross & Bibler Zaidi, 2019; Simon & Goes, 2013). In addition, assumptions played a critical role in this exploration as they were necessary for initiating and implementing the study (Simon & Goes, 2013).

Meanwhile, limitations encompassed factors outside the researcher's purview, possibly impacting the study's findings (Bastable et al., 2022). Limitations were significant as they shaped the study's outcomes. This study's assumptions and limitations were crucial to this study and will be addressed in the subsequent sections.

Assumptions

An assumption in this study presumed that participants would provide truthful responses during their interviews. The researcher presumed that the participants provided accurate and honest information in response to the study's questions and objectives. The researcher designed the study's methodology to encourage and facilitate honesty. This involved deploying appropriate measures to ensure participant anonymity and confidentiality to help participants feel more relaxed and secure sharing their genuine opinions and experiences.

The researcher also conducted individual interviews with each participant to encourage open and honest dialogue. The researcher strived to create a comfortable environment to promote open communication. Participants were encouraged to share their attitudes and beliefs about SeD, and the researcher used non-judgmental and open-ended questions to facilitate the discussion.

This research study also assumed that the inclusion and exclusion criteria set for participant selection provided consistent insights needed for the study. It was crucial to have clear and specific inclusion and exclusion criteria when selecting participants to guarantee that the study's objectives were met accurately. The parameters set by the inclusion and exclusion criteria established the traits of the study population and ensured that the selected participants fairly represented the target population. Adhering to the inclusion and exclusion criteria was vital to guarantee that the participants' responses addressed the research questions, aligned with the study's objectives, and that the findings were valid and reliable.

Limitations

One of the limitations of this study was the potential impact of the language barrier on the quality of data obtained from the interviews. The researcher conducted and transcribed the interviews in Vietnamese, at which time the detailed transcriptions were member-checked by the participants for accuracy in Vietnamese. The researcher subsequently translated and summarized the findings into English. However, this process introduced potential errors, such as inaccuracies in interpretation, which affected the data's reliability and validity, a study limitation.

Another constraint of this study was its scope, concentrating solely on the viewpoints of secondary school teachers in a particular region of Vietnam regarding the need for formal SeD training. Consequently, the study's findings have limited generalizability because there is a possibility of variation in the participants' backgrounds and SeD experiences in other regions. Therefore, it is crucial to interpret the study's findings in the context of the specific area and group of participants studied.

The third limitation of the study was the data collection method. This study was based on teachers' perceptions, so the results were subjective to social desirability bias (Berg & Lune, 2018). While efforts were made to minimize this limitation using open-ended questions and assurances of anonymity, participants may have delivered answers that they believed to conform to social norms instead of giving genuine responses.

Furthermore, the cultural context of Vietnam posed a fourth limitation to researching SeD. In Vietnamese culture, conversations regarding sex and sexuality are frequently viewed as taboo and may be deemed impolite or inappropriate. This cultural perspective created a significant barrier to open communication and made participants hesitant to share their attitudes and beliefs related to SeD. To mitigate this limitation, the researcher fostered an atmosphere of trust and safety, ensuring participant anonymity and confidentiality and emphasizing the study's potential benefits. By doing so, the researcher encouraged participants to be more forthcoming in their responses and more willing to engage in discussions about SeD despite potential cultural barriers.

Significance of the Study

SeD is essential in providing adolescents with vital information and life skills, such as acquiring knowledge on preventing pregnancy, practicing safe sex, comprehending physical boundaries and bodies, fostering healthy relationships, demonstrating respect towards others' differences, and obtaining consent (UNESCO, 2018). In recent years, countries have become progressively aware of the significance of teaching young people these fundamental life skills. This is especially true given the prevalence of sexually explicit content on the internet and other media that adolescents easily access.

Numerous studies have shown that SeD can benefit adolescents by decreasing the frequency of high-risk behaviors (Scull et al., 2019; Suleiman et al., 2015; Yoost et al., 2021). For instance, adolescents who engaged in SeD were found to postpone the initiation of sex, report fewer sexual partners, use condoms and other contraceptive methods more frequently, and engage in less risky sexual practices (Ott & Santelli, 2007). In addition to impacting adolescents' health behaviors, SeD has the potential to enhance their overall well-being by providing them with crucial tools to make knowledgeable choices regarding their sexual health.

As a result, Vietnamese high school educators needed to understand the context of SeD in the curriculum. This current study supported improving existing policies, allowing governments, policymakers, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders to take progressive actions on Vietnamese SeD training for educators. The findings clarified the need for reforming formal sexuality curricula and for recognizing SeD educators' professional development standards required to build a more resilient and promising future for Vietnamese youth.

Definition of Terms

Adolescence: "Adolescence is the phase of life between childhood and adulthood, from ages 10 to 19. It is a unique stage of human development and an important time for laying the foundations of good health" (WHO, 2023a, para.1).

Pre-Service Teacher: “Pre-service teachers complete academic coursework, gain experience through supervised teaching, and often work with a mentor to prepare for careers in the classroom” (National Science Teaching Association [NSTA], 2023, para.1).

Reproductive Health: “Reproductive health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes” (WHO, 2023b, para.1).

Sexuality Education: “Learning about the cognitive, emotional, social, interactive and physical aspects of sexuality. SeD starts early in childhood and progresses through adolescence and adulthood. For children and young people, it aims at supporting and protecting sexual development. It gradually equips and empowers children and young people with information, skills, and positive values to understand and enjoy their sexuality, have safe and fulfilling relationships, and take responsibility for their own and other people’s sexual health and well-being” (WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2010, para.3).

Sexually Transmitted Infections: “A disease caused by infection with certain bacteria, viruses, or other microorganisms that can be passed from one person to another through blood, semen, vaginal fluids, or other body fluids, during oral, anal, or genital sex with an infected partner. These diseases can also be spread through sharing needles, blood transfusions, breastfeeding, or from an infected mother to an infant during pregnancy and childbirth ... [t]here are many types of sexually transmitted infections, including human papillomavirus (HPV), HIV, genital herpes, chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis. If not treated, some sexually transmitted infections can lead to long-term health problems” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [HHS], n.d, para.1).

Secondary Schools: “General secondary education encompasses grades 10 to 12 (ages 15-18) and concludes with the award of the Secondary Education Graduation Diploma. In Vietnam, programs are offered in three different streams or subject groups (technology, natural

science, social sciences, and foreign languages)” (World Education News + Reviews [WENR], 2017).

Teacher Education: “Formal teacher training (pre-service or in-service) designed to equip teachers with the knowledge, attitude, behavior, and skills required for teaching at the relevant level” (UNESCO, 2023, para.1).

Chapter Summary and Organization of the Remainder of the Study

Chapter 1 introduced the study’s main research topics and objectives. The background section provided a detailed overview of the SeD of adolescents, specifically focusing on its implementation in Vietnam. This chapter offered a context for the study by describing the current state of SeD among high school students in Vietnam and identifying the factors that influence it. Additionally, the chapter underscored the study’s significance by discussing its potential contributions to the literature on SeD in Vietnam.

Chapter 1 comprehensively outlined the study’s frameworks, goals, and significance and laid the groundwork for the subsequent chapters. Upcoming Chapter 2 builds on this foundation by presenting a comprehensive scholarly perspective of SeD through an extensive literature review. Chapter 2 situates the study within the existing body of research on SeD and provides theoretical frameworks for interpreting the findings.

In Chapter 3, the phenomenological qualitative study design will be detailed, including a comprehensive breakdown of the data collection instruments, data analysis methods, and ethical considerations. The main aim of Chapter 3 is to provide a well-defined and evident overview of the research methodology employed to explore and address the research questions.

In Chapter 4, the research results will be presented, accompanied by a thorough evaluation of the collected data. The analysis of the results will provide an in-depth interpretation to identify critical themes and trends emerging from the data. The examination will

be led by the research questions and objectives established in Chapter 1. Chapter 4 is central to the study as it presents the results and is the basis for its conclusions.

Chapter 5, the concluding chapter, will thoroughly discuss the study's results and provide proposals for future investigation. This section will summarize the study's primary findings and offer insights into the implications of the exploration. Additionally, Chapter 5 will provide suggestions for future studies related to Vietnamese adolescent SeD and propose potential avenues for further research.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

The literature review incorporates a comprehensive synthesis of peer-reviewed literature on sexuality education (SeD). This review gathers various scholarly works related to SeD to investigate the topic from multiple angles and perspectives. Furthermore, the literature review also examines the three theoretical frameworks of the current study – *Constructivism*, *Social Cognitive Learning*, and *Transformative Learning* - which serve as the foundation for the research.

In addition to exploring global literature on SeD, the review examines literature related explicitly to SeD in Vietnam. SeD can be notably influenced by diverse factors of culture, socioeconomics, and community (Chavula et al., 2022). These authors stated that “Adolescents and young people, especially those from low and middle-income countries (LMICs), face sexual and reproductive health (SRH) challenges” (Chavula et al., 2022, p. 197). Examining the literature on SeD in Asian countries, notably Vietnam, this current qualitative phenomenological study was equipped to explore individuals’ lived experiences as it obtained descriptions of a unique phenomenon.

This qualitative phenomenological study explores the lived experiences of high school teachers in Vietnam who teach SeD. By delving deeply into their experiences, the study aimed to understand the challenges and opportunities that arise when teaching SeD in Vietnam.

Methods of Searching

Electronic journals, databases, interlibrary loans of articles, and book chapters from Pepperdine University’s online library were used to find existing academic works to be reviewed. The primary indices used were the EBSCO Research Platform, PubMed, and Scopus. The primary academic journals include the *Journal of Adolescent Health*, the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, the *American Journal of Sexuality Education*, and the *Journal of School Health*. The *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, the *Qualitative*

Research Journal, and *The Qualitative Report* were consulted on qualitative research methodology.

At the beginning of the review, a comprehensive set of search terms was employed to identify academic works and studies relevant to the research questions. The combination of primary search terms included sexuality education, sex education, sex ed, adolescence, comprehensive sex education, high school, secondary school, Asia, and Vietnam. These terms were chosen due to their relevance to the study's main topic areas and capture various academic works related to sexuality education.

As the exploration progressed, additional search terms were added to the search to refine and narrow the range of relevant literature, including teacher training, teacher education, educator preparation, instructional training, and pedagogical training. These included terms related to the study's sub-topics, such as the impact of teachers and educators on sexuality education, the effectiveness of different teaching methods, and the role of teachers in promoting sexuality education.

In addition to these search terms, various combinations of keywords and phrases were used to identify specific types of studies or academic works. For example, words such as qualitative study, phenomenological, case study, and qualitative research were utilized to narrow the search and identify specific types of academic works.

Citation chaining, or reference mining, was utilized to supply further depth and explore resources for this study (Alves et al., 2018; Colavizza et al., 2017). This process included finding relevant and valuable resources using citation chaining to uncover added references related to the dissertation's topic. This process involved reviewing an author's existing reference list to locate added resources. Using citation chaining, the researcher identified a range of scholarly works related to SeD and provided valuable insights into the research questions. This approach helped to ensure that the study was based on a wide range of academic literature and resources, making the research more comprehensive. Citation chaining played a vital role in

enhancing the depth and quality of the research and contributed significantly to the overall value of the study.

Theoretical Frameworks for the Study

The importance of studying prior research to reinforce research studies has been highlighted by Johnson et al. (2020). Identifying pertinent concepts, principles, theories, or models and preliminary data helps establish what is known and, more crucially, what is not (Johnson et al., 2020). The present study relies on three frameworks that serve as theoretical and conceptual foundations. These frameworks provide the researcher with the opportunity to embrace established methodological choices, which have been devised by prior researchers employing well-established theories. Grant and Osanloo (2014) articulated the definition of a theoretical framework as follows:

The foundation from which all knowledge is constructed (metaphorically and literally) for a research study. It serves as the structure and support for the rationale for the study, the problem statement, the purpose, the significance, and the research questions. The theoretical framework provides a grounding base, or an anchor, for the literature review, and, most importantly, the methods and analysis. (Grant & Osanloo, 2014, p. 14)

This study will use three theoretical foundations: *Constructivism*, *Social Cognitive Theory*, and *Transformative Learning*. These teaching and learning theories are learner-centered and self-directed (Loeng, 2020). A learner-centered curriculum involves collecting information on students' interests and pursuits and creating appropriate lesson plans to appeal to students' aims and objectives. Self-directed learning is part of a learning-centered approach, where an individual takes on the primary accountability for organizing, commencing, and implementing the learning process. Knowles (1975) identified specific attributes of self-directed learning, which encompass:

1. Individuals who take the initiative in learning learn more things, and learn better, than do people who sit at the feet of teachers waiting to be taught,

2. Self-directed learning is more in tune with our natural processes of psychological development, and

3. Many new developments in education put a heavy responsibility on the learners to take a good deal of initiative in their own learning. (Knowles, 1975, pp. 14-15)

Thus, learners - including students, teachers-in-training, and during teacher professional development (PD) - play a more active role in the classroom, also known as *active learning* (Panadero, 2017; Schunk & Greene, 2018). All learners and school administrators adapt knowledge outcomes for individual students based on their distinct directions.

Per the learner-centered model of *Constructivism*, learners trust their existing knowledge to build new understandings and meanings. On the other hand, *Social Cognitive Theory* focuses on social interactions and observational behaviors in the learning process. This approach acknowledges the importance of social and cultural contexts in forming learning experiences and outcomes. Additionally, *Transformative Learning* emphasizes the need to reflect and question expectations, views, and values to promote personal and social change.

By utilizing these three frameworks, the study builds upon existing models and gains a better comprehension of the application of these approaches in the context of SeD in Vietnam. The goal is to offer a thorough and sophisticated comprehension of the obstacles and prospects involved in instructing SeD within the given cultural and societal contexts.

Constructivism

Constructivism is a model of learning in which knowledge cannot be provided to a learner by a teacher at the front of the classroom (Brooks & Brooks, 1999; Jonassen, 1999). Instead, a student's knowledge is constructed through an active cognitive process, as learners are the architects and inventors of their learning (Piaget, 1973; Glasersfeld, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978).

The constructivist model uses student-centered teaching strategies to help students cultivate critical thinking and collaboration skills (Dada et al., 2022). Learning occurs more

deeply in environments where students can participate dynamically, a setting known as active learning (Reuell, 2019). Constructivism as a model denotes educational practices that are student-centered, collaborating, and receptive to the learner's interests and needs (Shah, 2019).

Dewey, a renowned scholar and educator in 20th-century educational thought, is widely recognized as the seminal philosophical author of Constructivism (Xyst, 2016). Dewey emphasized the role of experience in education, maintaining that educators must provide students with immediate practical experiences that enable them to contribute to society (Dewey, 1966). Dewey's model is based on two fundamental principles: continuity and interaction (Bassey, 2010; Rodgers, 2014). Continuity suggests that a learner's past experiences shape their future meaning-making, while interaction posits that an individual's prior experiences contribute to their present experience (Bassey, 2010). According to Dewey, a good education should benefit society and the individual.

Bruner expanded upon the model of *Constructivism*, suggesting that learners actively construction their comprehension of the world by engaging in experiences and social interactions within their environments (Bruner, 1960, 1966). Bruner emphasized that learning be viewed as a cultural transmission process within a social context (Bruner, 1960, 1966; Metsamuuronen & Rasanen, 2018). Bruner's view of *Constructivism* encourages learners to engage actively in learning through participation and discovery. Bruner further stressed that learners should not be passive recipients of information but should be able to explore and manipulate ideas and concepts to create their understanding. This approach involves learning through problem-solving, inquiry-based learning, and hands-on experiences (Bruner, 1978).

In contrast to Bruner, Piaget viewed *Constructivism* as a developmental process that occurs through active engagement with the learners' environments and the formation of mental models or schemas to make sense of experiences (Piaget, 1932, 1936, 1957). Piaget de-emphasized the role of social interactions and noted allowing learners to explore and discover new concepts independently (Blake & Pope, 2008). Piaget determined that while learners

should be allowed to assemble their understanding of the world, they should not be given knowledge beyond their current level of development (Weinert & Helmke, 1998). Thus, educators should provide learning undertakings suitable to each learner's readiness, including cognitive, psychosocial, and physical maturation (Crandell et al., 2012; Immordino-Yang et al., 2018).

Vygotsky's ideas on *Constructivism* are well-known and influential within the realms of education and cognitive development (Liu & Matthews, 2005). Vygotsky emphasized that learning is about acquiring information or skills and participating in a particular society's cultural practices and activities. He noted the significance of learners actively engaging in learning and participating in authentic, meaningful, and relevant activities.

Social Cognitive Theory

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) traces its origins to Social Learning Theory (SLT), which suggests that individuals acquire knowledge and skills by observing and imitating others in their immediate surroundings (Bandura, 1999). This theoretical framework highlights the influence of environmental factors on human behavior and learning. Bandura's SCT elucidated the complex interplay between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental elements in shaping an individual's conduct. Human behavior is seen through continuous and reciprocal interactions between these three components.

According to the SCT, there is a continuous interplay between an individual's social surroundings, internal drives, and resulting behaviors, such as those related to sexuality (Swearer et al., 2014). This three-way exchange is reciprocal determinism (Bandura, 1978). The cognitive processes control learning behaviors as individuals transform themselves through imitation, modeling, and feedback (Bandura, 1989, 1999; Romero, 2013). Numerous environmental, individual, and social factors influence cognitive processes, leading to changes in an individual's learning and behavior.

SCT posits that modeling is crucial in conveying gender roles, shaping masculinity and femininity, and determining appropriate behaviors (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). However, SCT also acknowledges that individuals possess a degree of self-direction and may not necessarily emulate sexual expressions modeled in their upbringing or surroundings (Bandura, 1986, 1997; Loeng, 2020). The cognition factor in SCT is a critical determinant of an individual's behavior, as self-regulation takes precedence over predisposition (Farley & Kim-Spoon, 2014; Opdenakker, 2022). Studies suggest that individuals are less prone to be involved in inappropriate sexual behaviors if they perceive such actions as undesirable or improper (Bandura, 1986, 1997).

SCT can be utilized to cultivate positive self-efficacy beliefs that inform how teachers and students approach their sexuality (Anderman et al., 2009; Bandura, 1986, 1997). Adolescents who receive instruction on sexuality from competent instructors view their teachers as more credible, enhancing the lessons' motivational value. Conversely, adolescents who lack truthful and engaging SeD may experience low self-esteem or exhibit negative self-efficacy. This emotional state may prompt young people to adopt positive attitudes towards inappropriate or unsafe sexual behavior to compensate for their emotional deficits. According to SCT, an individual's environment has a significant impact on shaping both their thoughts and behaviors (Bandura, 1986, 1997).

Transformative Learning

There are extensive studies on and a long history of how youngsters learn based on educational psychology and neuroscience pedagogies (Bruner, 1995; Dewey, 1910; Friedman et al., 2019; Vaninsky, 2017). However, the same cannot be said for studying adults' learning (Drago-Severson, 2009; Knowles, 1975, 1990; Mezirow, 1981; Tipton & Wideman, 2021). The emergence of the field of adult learning dates to the early 20th century and continued until the 1970s, with the first studies being conducted during this time.

Since then, research on adult learning has received a new viewpoint with the advent of andragogy, which includes a set of adult learning principles (Tezcan, 2022). Knowles (1975)

posited that developing a learning model for adults required acknowledging that adults learn differently from the pedagogical models used to describe how children learn (Glassner & Back, 2020; Knowles, 1975, 1990, 1996). As educational practices evolved, researchers discovered that engaging adults - such as those involved in the present research - in meaningful learning experiences should accommodate their interests and learning styles (Drago-Severson, 2009).

Drago-Severson (2009) stated how *transformative* learning furnishes adult educators with the ability to address adaptive challenges adults experience. Transformative learning changes how a person knows in a few ways:

- Adult learners require that educators understand their present way of thinking as it shapes how a person interprets added information;
- Adult training must meet the learners where they are within the learning continuum; and
- In adult training, transformative learning entails restructuring the learner's *meaning-making* system (Bruner, 1990; Illeris, 2018).

The concept of meaning-making specifies how individuals interpret circumstances, activities, and conversations in contrast to their previously held knowledge and experience (Illeris, 2018). People actively make sense of situations based on their musings of similar events. Meaning-making also underscores that acquiring knowledge comprises individuality and emotions (Zittoun & Brinkmann, 2012). Using adult learning approaches has proven beneficial in illustrating practices in diverse adult learning settings. Transformative learning theory is predominantly relevant as it highlights the significance of task-oriented in adult learning, which aligns with the learning needs of adults (Knowles, 1984).

Social factors have been documented as a fundamental element in the learning processes of adults and may affect their willingness to engage in new learning experiences (Bandura, 1994). In some cases, adult learners may need to adapt to a technologically

advanced learning environment, which may require them to transform their frames of reference and acquire new knowledge and skills (Mezirow, 1997).

In Mezirow's view, transformative learning involves a fundamental change in an adult's basic cognitive structures, typically resulting from the experience of perplexing problems or situations that challenge pre-existing assumptions about the world, thereby stimulating critical reflection. Chukwuedo et al. (2021) suggested that instructors can endorse transformative learning by employing pedagogical techniques that facilitate critical thinking.

Transformative learning is a framework tailored to adult learners and rooted in human communication. Mezirow (1996) conceptualized learning of learning that involves employing previous interpretations to form fresh or revised understandings of one's experiences, thus informing future actions. Mezirow (1991) highlighted that transformative learning empowers adult learners to grasp the significance of their experiences while acknowledging the influence of social and structural factors on their interpretation of these experiences.

In transformative learning, learners must modify their existing meanings when they encounter disruptive situations, such as when they are required to utilize technology by their instructors without adequate preparation. This is especially applicable in the case of adult online learners facing many novel digital tasks, interfaces, and approaches to learning, which can challenge their preconceived notions of how learning occurs (Mezirow, 1996).

Despite being disruptive, such situations benefit adult learners by encouraging them to modify their habitual frames of reference, especially when confronted with complex or puzzling challenges. Consequently, adults challenge earlier ways of comprehending the environment, prompting them to reflect on prior assumptions (Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2019).

The theory of transformative learning provides valuable perspectives on the learning process of adults as they encounter situations of dissonance, particularly within the realm of digital education. The theory proposes that learning transpires when learners attribute novel significance to preceding experiences (Mezirow, 1990). In this way, learners reinterpret an

established meaning and commence to view it from a renewed perspective. According to Mezirow (1990), transformative learning involves three stages of learning:

- *Discovering a crisis:* Acknowledging the existence of incorrect beliefs or a knowledge gap can prompt an individual to seek more information and examine their cognitive and behavioral patterns. Failing to recognize or realize the presence of erroneous information can result in a critical situation that can be highly challenging. Instructors can generate interest in their lessons by highlighting areas of knowledge deficiency to stimulate learners' curiosity.
- *Establishing personal relevance:* The rationale or the response to the perennial "what's-in-it-for-me" inquiry motivates individuals and propels learning. This context can be personal, professional, or societal. Teachers or trainers should introduce this aspect at the outset of the lesson to pique learners' curiosity and reinforce it periodically to sustain their engagement. Adult learners often exhibit a higher level of motivation to acquire knowledge when they can visualize the outcomes or ramifications that may arise from their educational pursuits.
- *Critical thinking:* To prompt adult learners to reassess their beliefs and attitudes, they must actively pursue opportunities for critical reflection. By enabling learners to scrutinize their emotions and thoughts and identify areas for modification or abandonment, instructors can create a more beneficial setting for learners to accept and internalize new knowledge. (Mezirow, 1990)

Summary of Learning Theories

In research studies, learning theories are essential in comprehending the process of knowledge acquisition. Each approach offers distinct perspectives on the learning process and presents unique advantages in investigating specific research questions. These theories

encompass diverse perspectives, such as experimental learning, self-directed learning, constructivism, and social learning.

The researcher selected *Constructivism, Social Cognitive Theory, and Transformative Learning* as frameworks to comprehensively be familiar with learning processes and their outcomes. This approach thoroughly examines how learners construct knowledge, learn through observation and modeling, and transform their thinking and perspectives through challenging experiences.

Utilizing multiple frameworks can offer a more detailed examination of the learning process and add to the existing comprehension of SeD practices. This study intends to deliver an inclusive and nuanced comprehension of the challenges and opportunities of teaching SeD in Vietnam by building upon existing knowledge and deepening understanding of the application of these approaches in the cultural and societal context of Vietnam.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

Sexuality education (SeD) is vital for endorsing healthy sexual behavior, decreasing the likelihood of unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections, and empowering individuals to make informed choices about their sexual health (Carter et al., 2015; Leung et al., 2019; UNFPA, 2022). The literature on SeD offers an extensive variety of topics, including the significance of comprehensive SeD, effective teaching strategies, and the roles of parents and educators in SeD (Leung et al., 2019; Xiong et al., 2020). In the literature review on SeD for the current study, several key concepts are fundamental, such as the background of SeD, diverse types of SeD, stigmas surrounding SeD, the importance of collaboration between schools, families, and communities, and how SeD is approached in various Asian countries. Conducting a comprehensive review of the literature on these key concepts is crucial for developing effective SeD practices that cater to the diverse needs of adolescents and promote positive sexual health outcomes.

Background and History of Sexuality Education

The perceptions and interpretations of sexuality are complex and conceptualized by various social and sexology specialists (UNESCO, 2018; WHO, 2006). Sexuality is an essential component of human existence. Sexuality encompasses the comprehension and engagement with sexual orientation, intimacy, emotional relationship and affection, gender identity, and human reproduction, as demonstrated in previous research (Bailey et al., 2016; Diamond, 2009; Ramadugu et al., 2011). A diverse array of scientific investigations into sexuality persists to the present day, spanning multiple fields such as biology and psychology due to the interdisciplinary nature of the topic.

Alfred Kinsey, an American biologist who lived from 1894 to 1956, is frequently acknowledged as the pioneer of human sexuality research. He postulated that sexual knowledge was previously formed through speculation and that the subject matter had never undergone a comprehensive and impartial study (Brown & Fee, 2003; Kinsey et al., 1948).

Kinsey's seminal research on sexuality (Kinsey et al., 1948, 1998) has catalyzed numerous contemporary researchers to explore the intricacies of intimate human behavior that often occur in private settings. Even today, sexuality remains a complex and multifaceted topic, transcending multiple academic disciplines, including sociology, biology, and psychology. Consequently, the study of sexuality continues to encompass a diverse array of scientific inquiries.

The notion of sexuality is multifaceted and can be understood differently depending on the language, cultural context, and social settings (Parker, 2009). An individual's cultural, social, and historical contexts shape how sexuality is understood and experienced (Basen-Engquist & Parcel, 1992; Foucault, 1978; Ussher, 2016). For instance, some cultures view sexuality as a private matter that should be kept behind closed doors, while others may consider it a more open and public topic.

In the context of SeD, it is essential to analyze sexuality-related characteristics while considering variables and the fact that different languages have different connotations for exact

words (UNESCO, 2018). Sexuality is a social construct that encompasses beliefs, practices, behaviors, and identities (Spengen, 2014). Regarding a person's biological traits, *sexuality* may also refer to the personal and societal connotations attached to interpersonal and sexual interactions (UNESCO, 2018).

Individual behaviors, collective ideas, and social norms influence the formation of sexuality. Human sexuality is an enduring facet that intersects with cognitive, emotional, and physical maturation throughout life. Therefore, education is vital in endorsing sexual health and providing adolescents with knowledge about healthy and responsible relationships tailored to their developmental stage (UNESCO, 2018). The definition of SeD in schools has increasingly evolved and gained international attention (Miedema et al., 2020). SeD acknowledges the significance of teaching adolescents about their sexual health rights, valuing gender and diversity, promoting healthy relationships, and encouraging independent decisions (UNESCO, 2018).

The 1944 International Conference on Population and Development Program of Action is a critical resource for SeD programs that address adolescent needs (Shahbaz, 2018). To be effective, such programs should encompass educational and counseling interventions that emphasize the promotion of gender relations and equity, the prevention of violence against adolescents, the cultivation of responsible sexual behavior, and the coverage of topics such as reproductive health, family planning, sexually transmitted infections (Shahbaz, 2018). These components are vital for effective SeD programs for adolescents, as highlighted by the United Nations (2014).

UNESCO (2018) defined SeD as a curriculum-based approach for youths with the correct information and mindsets to make healthy sexual decisions. This includes understanding health, values, and well-being; building safe sexual and respectful social relations; investigating how their choices influence their and others' safety; and knowing and protecting their rights.

Bonjour and Vlugt (2018) described SeD as an ongoing educational process encompassing numerous aspects of sexuality, including emotional, social, and interactive components. SeD gradually equips and enables children and adolescents by providing them with information, instilling positive beliefs, values, and attitudes, and instructing youth on communicating and making independent decisions about sexual health, and well-being. The primary objectives of SeD are to facilitate adolescents in comprehending and embracing their sexuality, developing safe, mutually fulfilling, and loving relationships, and taking accountability for their sexual health and that of others to promote overall well-being (Bonjour & Vlugt, 2018).

The WHO Regional Office for Europe (2010) has defined SeD as a continuous process that begins in early childhood and extends through adolescence and into adulthood, aimed at accompanying and encouraging the healthy sexual maturity of young individuals. SeD equips adolescents with knowledge, skills, and a positive outlook to help them comprehend and accept their sexuality, form healthy and meaningful associations, and be accountable for their sexual health. Per the *Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States* (2004), obtaining knowledge and forming beliefs regarding critical aspects of sexuality, including relationships and identity, is a continuous process that extends throughout an individual's life. UNESCO's (2018) recommendation asserted that participation in SeD programs allowed adolescents to contemplate social norms, traditional views, and cultural values, leading to a better comprehension of their interactions with peers, parents, adults, and various communities.

Research has shown that teachers' competence and skill level are critical in accomplishing successful SeD programs (Santelli et al., 2003). Teachers who are confident and feel supported in their roles are more likely to implement effective teaching strategies and provide students with accurate information (Kohler et al., 2008). Providing ongoing support for educators is necessary to help them address concerns or challenges that may arise during the implementation of SeD programs.

Moreover, SeD programs should be provided in school settings by well-trained teachers (Rose et al., 2018). This is because schools have the opportunity and the resources to provide SeD to pre-sexually active adolescents before they become sexually active (WHO, 2017). The school is an ideal setting for SeD programs, as it provides a structured environment for learning and facilitates access to a large and diverse population of young people (UNESCO, 2022). Leung et al. (2019) suggested that the efficacy and caliber of SeD programs delivered within school settings rely on multiple factors, including the instructor's proficiency, the instructional techniques utilized, the quality of the materials employed, and the school environment.

SeD is a vital element of high-quality education, influencing the health and well-being of every student. Offering SeD in schools makes it more accessible to students, and the stigma around discussing sexuality can be reduced (Kohler et al., 2008). Additionally, the school setting allows for comprehensive SeD to be incorporated into the broader curriculum, including health education, science, and social studies (Kirby, 2002). This integration helps to reinforce the importance of SeD and promotes its incorporation into students' overall education.

Development of Sexuality Education Curricula

Sexuality education curricula originated in the early 20th century when a few sex educators started advocating for more transparent and extensive approaches to teaching about sex (Shah, 2017). In the 1960s and 1970s, due to social and cultural shifts, interest in sexual health and rights attracted broad attention to SeD in the United States and Europe (Hall et al., 2016; Mijatović, 2020). The social and cultural movements underscore the influence of social and cultural elements on learning and the role of witnessing and modeling the actions of others, such as seen in Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986).

In the United States, the 1960s saw a shift towards more progressive values, and the 1970s brought about the sexual revolution, which challenged traditional gender roles and encouraged greater sexual freedom (Hall et al., 2016). During this period, there was a growing emphasis on the need for comprehensive SeD curricula that provided accurate information on

sexual health and promoted positive attitudes towards sexuality. Understanding the principles of SCT, such as the use of cognition shaping an individual's learning and behavioral changes, can help educators design effective SeD programs that take into account the impact of societal and cultural influences on the learning process (Bandura, 1986).

The promotion of SeD on a global scale has been advanced by the United Nations (2018) through various international conferences and initiatives. The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo was a significant milestone event that brought delegates from more than 180 countries to deliberate on population, development, and reproductive health issues. Following the ICPD, several international initiatives aimed to promote SeD, including the UNESCO *International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education* (2018). This guidance emphasized the need for inclusive, evidence-based SeD that is age-appropriate, culturally relevant, and respectful of human rights.

Advocates hold diverging opinions on the appropriate time to introduce comprehensive SeD, with some arguing for early childhood education and others backing it to be introduced in middle or high school (Mijatović, 2020). In most nations, children aged 5 to 13 devote considerable time to educational activities (UNESCO, 2008). This provides the institution with a workable and sustainable way of reaching many young people from various backgrounds (UNESCO, 2008).

In addition, the structure of a classroom allows for the delivery of SeD in a sequence that is both ages- and developmentally appropriate throughout a student's time there, with new learner knowledge building on previously attained knowledge (UNESCO, 2008). This practice aligns with the principles of Constructivism by emphasizing the importance of a learner assembling their understanding of the world and providing a structure that supports active and interactive learning (Weinert & Helmke, 1998).

The start of puberty and the formation of first relationships, including sexual ones, occurs for many adolescents while they are still enrolled in school. Hence, providing structured

education to adolescents, delivered in age-appropriate stages, becomes imperative regarding their rights, relationships, and sexual health (UNESCO, 2018). Thus, UNESCO's (2018) *International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education* utilizes constructivist principles by emphasizing the importance of building on previous expertise and experiences, recognizing and valuing diversity, and promoting social justice and equity. By incorporating these principles into SeD programs, educators can help students construct their understanding of sexual health and develop lifelong learning skills.

The development of SeD curricula continues to evolve with ongoing debates over what information should be included (Santelli et al., 2017). Despite these debates, public health experts have a broad consensus that comprehensive SeD can be essential in promoting healthy sexual conduct. Healthy sexual behaviors can decrease STIs and unintended pregnancy rates and promote the overall well-being of young people (Santelli et al., 2017).

The Types of Sexuality Education

Sexuality education is essential to human development, endorsing healthy attitudes and behaviors toward sexuality. In the United States, SeD has conventionally aimed at mitigating the adverse outcomes of uninformed sexual conduct, such as STIs and teenage pregnancy, as stated by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCST, 2020). On the other hand, SeD can foster positive sexual behaviors and enhance relationships using open and honest communication between sexual partners (Ball et al., 2023; Satcher, 2001).

In the United States, SeD is typically concentrated on reducing undesirable consequences of sexual activity and has primarily aimed to mitigate adverse outcomes of adolescent sexual behavior. SeD curricula in the United States typically fall into three categories: Abstinence-Only, Abstinence-Plus, and Comprehensive curricula (Blanton, 2019).

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage or Abstinence-Only Programs. Programs including Abstinence-Only and Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage promote abstinence as adolescents' only ethically acceptable choice (Blanton, 2019). These programs typically omit any information

regarding the effectiveness of contraception or condoms in preventing sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancies (Kaiser Family Foundation [KFF], 2018). Since the 1980s, the U.S. government has begun supporting abstinence programs in schools and organizations (Santelli et al., 2017). According to Guttmacher (2022), from 1982 to 2017, the U.S. Federal government disbursed roughly \$2 billion on abstinence-based sex education.

However, the final authority on whether and how SeD is delivered rests with the states and local school districts individually (Hall et al., 2016). The provision of financing from the Federal government for programming that promotes abstinence alone has been a vital influence in the coverage of this method of SeD (KFF, 2018). Promoting Abstinence-Only education by government policy as a plan to improve adolescent sexual health is a source of concern. This concern is due to medical inaccuracies, ineffective programs that may pose risks to young individuals, and unethical practices involving the distortion and withholding of critical health information (Ott & Santelli, 2007).

In abstinence programs, contraceptive or condom use cannot be promoted in any way, nor can contraceptive methods be discussed other than to underline their failure rates (Hall et al., 2016). Santelli et al. (2017) noted that Abstinence-Only programs feature declarations advocating for the expectation of sexual activity within the confines of a committed relationship in the context of matrimony, while any sexual conduct outside of marriage is anticipated to yield adverse physiological and psychological consequences.

In 2017, Hoefer and Hoefer piloted a qualitative study to explore the influence of an Abstinence-Only SeD curriculum on a group of young adults in a U.S. southwestern state. The study recruited individuals from marginalized groups, including young women, youths of color, and those identifying as gay, bisexual, lesbian, transgender, or gender-nonconforming, who partaken in in-person interviews.

The respondents' perceptions revealed inadequate information and resources from their SeD. Moreover, the curriculum promoted sexist and heterosexist stereotypes. The study

showed that many respondents felt uncomfortable in their Abstinence-Only SeD classes due to the fear and shame emphasized by the course and the professors (Hoefer & Hoefer, 2017).

Abstinence Plus Programs. Abstinence-Plus programs place significant emphasis on promoting abstinence from sexual activity as the foremost approach for preventing the occurrence of both unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. Nevertheless, besides emphasizing abstinence, these programs offer education on contraception and condoms (Blanton, 2019). Empirical evidence indicated that compared to Abstinence-Only programs, Abstinence-Plus educational interventions are more efficacious in several domains, such as delaying sexual initiation, reducing the number of sex partners, increasing the uptake of condoms and other preventive methods, and fostering higher levels of attitudes favoring abstinence, social norms supporting abstinence, and self-efficacy for both abstinence and sexual decision-making among learners (Kirby, 2007).

Doskoch (2012) conducted a quantitative investigation utilizing data from the National Survey of Family Growth spanning 2006 to 2008 to examine the influence of diverse forms of sexual education on the sexual and reproductive health outcomes of individuals aged 15 to 24 years. Two thousand five hundred-five women and 2,186 men participants were categorized as having received abstinence education, abstinence-plus education, or neither. The research findings suggested that adolescents who received comprehensive sex education covering both abstinence and contraception demonstrated better sexual health outcomes compared to those who received solely abstinence-based instruction. Therefore, abstinence-plus programs can potentially promote adolescents' positive sexual health outcomes (Doskoch, 2012).

Comprehensive Sexuality Education. Several studies in SeD have revealed that abstinence-only programs are generally ineffective in postponing sexual activity among teenagers and do not prevent risks in sexual practices (Kohler et al., 2008; Santelli et al., 2017). On the other hand, comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) extends beyond addressing risk

behaviors and recognizes other crucial aspects. For instance, CSE encompasses topics that pertain to relationships, gender diversity, and rights (Lameiras-Fernández et al., 2021).

CSE can be fundamental in offering adolescents essential information, knowledge, and support to lead safe and fulfilling lives (UNESCO, 2018). Research findings indicate that providing CSE to adolescents is positively associated with postponing sexual debut and increased use of contraception during sexual encounters (UNESCO, 2018; UNFPA, 2014). CSE programs address the biological, psychological, and emotional aspects of sexual health, thereby equipping adolescents with knowledge and skills that facilitate pleasurable and safe sexual experiences (Lameiras-Fernández et al., 2021). CSE is holistic and seeks to offer accurate, age-appropriate knowledge of human sexuality (Leung et al., 2019). This type of SeD covers diverse topics, including anatomy, puberty, sexual health, relationships, gender, diversity, and consent. CSE integrates various contraceptive prevention methods to avoid sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancies, emphasizing the significance of practicing safe sex (UNFPA, 2014, 2021). Figure 1 shows some key concepts included in CSE:

Figure 1

Comprehensive Sexuality Education Concepts

1. Relationships
2. Values, Rights, Culture and Sexuality
3. Understanding Gender
4. Violence and Staying Safe
5. Skills for Health and Well-being
6. The Human Body and Development
7. Sexuality and Sexual Behaviour
8. Sexual and Reproductive Health

Source: International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education: An Evidence-Informed Approach. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2018.

The core concepts of CSE are essential and meant to be taught simultaneously as they reinforce one another. A spiral curriculum employs a pedagogical approach where subjects are revisited with augmented complexity, thereby boosting previous learning (Bassey, 2010; Bruner, 1960, 1966; Dowding, 1993). The core concepts are divided into three domains of learning: knowledge, attitude, and skill-based objectives, which are customized for specific age groups. The interplay between these three domains occurs cyclically and mutually reinforcing, enabling learners to repeatedly grasp, revisit, and consolidate fundamental concepts (UNESCO, 2018).

Successful CSE necessitates a careful balance of learning objectives within the three domains. As such, curriculum developers are advised to integrate these three learning areas, which can be adapted to conform with local, national, or regional standards and frameworks. The CSE guidelines draw upon universal evidence and practical knowledge while acknowledging the diversity of cultural contexts within SeD (UNESCO, 2018).

Tailored to specific age groups and reflective of their requirements and contextual factors, such as sociocultural norms and epidemiological trends, sexual education lessons aligned with learning objectives may be customized accordingly. Nevertheless, scholars agree that providing comprehensive sexual health and SeD to adolescents as early as possible is crucial, substantiated by developmental psychology and the *Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe* (WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2010).

Out of the 56 studies analyzed in Kirby's (2008) review, eight assessed the effectiveness of abstinence-only programs, while the remaining 48 assessed CSE. The findings showed that many abstinence programs did not defer the onset of sexual activity, with only three out of nine programs showing significant beneficial outcomes. Conversely, nearly 67% of comprehensive programs demonstrated compelling evidence of optimistic results on adolescents' sexual behavior, for instance, postponing sexual activities and promoting condoms and contraceptive usage. These findings suggest inadequate proof to advocate for the widespread implementation

of abstinence-only programs while endorsing the dissemination of specific comprehensive programs (Kirby, 2008).

The Stigma of Sexuality Education

SeD is a crucial aspect of a thorough adolescent education (Unis & Sällström, 2020; Leung et al., 2019). However, the stigma surrounding SeD is a persistent issue affecting its implementation and effectiveness (Kaljee et al., 2007; Santelli et al., 2017). The stigma arises from societal taboos and conservative attitudes toward discussing sexual matters, particularly in a formal educational setting (Flanders et al., 2018; Mueller et al., 2008).

The stigma of SeD is often attributed to cultural and religious beliefs that view sexuality as a private matter and discourage open discussion about sexual topics (Eisenberg et al., 2013). According to Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1986), individuals acquire knowledge from observation, modeling and imitation others' behaviors. In the context of SeD, these activities can influence what adolescents learn about sexuality.

However, by observing and modeling flawed behaviors, adolescents can acquire erroneous sexual information. Consequently, many adolescents are confronted with discordant, discomforting, and bewildering messages concerning sexuality as they transition into adulthood. The stigma is further compounded by the reluctance of adults, including parents and teachers, to discuss SeD-related matters openly (UNESCO, 2018). These attitudes can also contribute to the persistence of gender inequalities in sexual partnerships, family planning practices, and the adoption of contemporary contraceptive methods (UNESCO, 2018).

The lack of training and support for educators who teach SeD programs is another factor that contributes to the stigma surrounding SeD (National Conference of State Legislatures [NCSL], 2020; Vanwesenbeeck et al., 2015). The NCSL (2020) noted that only 20 states had mandated SeD be integrated into public schools' curricula. However, even in some states that stipulate SeD, parents can withdraw their children from the program.

Leung et al. (2019) found that many educators need more access to SeD-specific professional development opportunities and may need more skills and experience to teach sensitive and contentious topics. As a result, these educators may feel uncomfortable teaching such topics, limiting students' exposure to essential information and skills (Leung et al., 2019). This emphasizes the significance of offering adequate training and support for educators to facilitate effective SeD instruction.

Constructivism suggests that learners build knowledge upon their previous experience and that learning is most effective when active, meaningful, and situated in authentic contexts (Shah, 2019; Yilmaz, 2008). In SeD instruction, educators must have the knowledge and skills to construct a safe learning setting where students can build their comprehension of sexually-related health topics (Kirby, 2008; Shtarkshall et al., 2007).

Providing adequate training and support for educators can facilitate students' engagement in the learning process and create a more meaningful and authentic learning experience. If educators are adequately trained in SeD, they can support students in cultivating a more robust and accurate comprehension of sexuality topics, which is crucial for encouraging positive sexual health outcomes.

Addressing the stigma of SeD requires a multifaceted approach. Such a practice involves increased funding for and furtherance of comprehensive programs, training and support for educators, and addressing cultural and societal beliefs about sexuality. This approach is consistent with constructivism and social learning principles, which highlight the significance of building a supportive educational setting for learners to construct their understanding of sexual topics and learn from the consequences of their actions and the actions of others.

Constructivist-oriented professional development provides educators with ample time to articulate their understandings of learning, teaching, and their own professional growth (Fung, 2000). Constructivism used within professional development for SeD teachers can focus on the

sustainability of knowledge and the social component of knowledge acquisition (Osborne, 1996; Glasersfeld, 1996). These professional development opportunities enable educators to assess their comprehension and develop innovative classroom strategies for teaching sexual education. However, effective training in student-centered teaching cannot be achieved through one-day workshops alone. Systematic, long-term development, whether in-person or through a blended learning approach, facilitates practice and reflection on instructional methods over time.

Sexuality Education in Asian Countries

Asia has the same demand for SeD as the other world regions. According to research in the Journal of Adolescent Health, Asian adolescents attain sexual maturity earlier than their Western counterparts (Marshall & Tanner, 1969). In addition, teen marriage is still prevalent in some South Asian countries. For instance, In Bangladesh, nearly six out of ten girls (59%) get married before they reach the age of 18, and more than one in five girls (22%) get wedded before they are 15 (Ferdous et al., 2019). According to research, child marriage contributes to early sexual activity, increasing the risk of sexually transmitted infections and cervical cancer (Zhang et al., 1989).

According to a Vanwesenbeeck et al. (2015) study conducted in 11 African and Asian countries, inadequate training and support from schools were the primary reasons for teachers' lack of skills in delivering comprehensive SeD. The study found that teachers receiving extensive training were more self-assured and motivated in SeD. However, despite their confidence, many teachers reverted to their previous judgmental approach after returning to unsupportive school environments. The study suggested a need for more supportive cultural and educational structures and called for increased teacher training and support. SeD in Asian countries can vary widely concerning teacher training and relates to cultural, social, and political factors discussed below (UNESCO, 2021a).

Training for Teachers of Sexuality Education. Kay et al.'s (2010) quantitative study described how health education teachers in Thailand were willing to provide quality SeD. This

study utilized a questionnaire made available to 193 health educators. These teachers are critical in designing and implementing sex education courses in Thailand. However, none of the teacher training universities offered specialization in sex education. Thus, teacher preparation in Thailand is deficient by not offering more than one course in sex education. The SeD practices in Thailand emphasize the potential of constructivist approaches in tackling these challenges. Adolescents, with access to trustworthy sources of accurate SeD, whether online or from trusted teachers, can develop their critical thinking and collaboration skills while building upon and sharing their knowledge (Dada et al., 2022).

In the Philippines, a qualitative study discovered the insights of ten Filipino pre-service teachers through semi-structured interviews on SeD and its relationship with the Philippines' international recommendations on gender and power (Ohlstrom, 2016). The study found that pre-service educators reflected on their experiences of SeD and conveyed positive attitudes towards SeD yet held problem-focused perceptions of SeD content. The pre-service teachers perceived the most important challenges to implementing SeD as opposition from parents and the Catholic Church. The study highlighted the need for extended and improved Filipino teacher training on SeD to improve pre-service teachers' understanding and enable them to reflect on societal norms critically.

In a study in Japan, Hashimoto et al. (2012) directed quantitative research to examine the implementation of SeD in Japanese junior high schools using three questionnaires. In Study 1, responses from 703 principals revealed that a standard of 9.19 hours of teaching was allocated to SeD. Study 2 examined SeD knowledge among 9,492 students and found that boys (35%) and girls (39%) had low average correct response rates. Involving a sample of 5,374 parents, Study 3 revealed that they deemed schools to be a more fitting setting than homes for imparting education on the physiological elements of sexuality and supplying correct information. The study's results suggested that many Japanese junior high schools need more basic physiological and anatomical knowledge in their SeD programs.

In Indonesia, a study by Tsuda et al. (2017) aimed to investigate the attitudes of special school teachers toward providing SeD, focusing on gender differences. The study distributed questionnaires to 180 teachers, of which 72% responded, with most respondents identifying as Muslim. The study found that although the teachers considered SeD important, the contents of SeD were limited. Women teachers exhibited a more positive attitude toward teaching SeD and taught more SeD content than men. The study's findings suggested that while teachers in Indonesia accept SeD, further development of materials and tools for SeD is necessary (Tsuda et al., 2017).

In China, Xiong et al. (2020) piloted qualitative research examining novice teachers' perspectives on SeD, focusing on gender differences. The research comprised interviews with 30 inexperienced educators undergoing a pre-service educator training program in China. The findings indicated that differences in male and female teachers' ability to provide SeD were closely related to students' genders. To improve the quality of SeD delivered by teachers, future teacher education programs must pay closer attention to these gender differences. This social cognitive recommendation addressed personal factors related to the teacher's gender identity, including their beliefs, attitudes, and self-efficacy when delivering SeD to students of different genders. The study recommended various policy measures in the education sector to address these issues, such as

- reorienting the current examination-dominated culture;
- building an ecosystem that involves the students, parents, and the community;
- shifting teacher training curricula to focus on cross-curricular competencies; and
- addressing the influence of gender disparities on instructors' classroom methods through the adoption of a gender-aware approach (Xiong et al., 2020).

These environmental factors can influence novice teachers' personal and behavioral factors using social cognitive theory (SCT). The suggested policy measures are consistent with

the ideas of SCT, which emphasizes the significance of considering the interplay between personal, behavioral, and environmental variables in fostering learning and behavior change (Bandura, 1999).

Cultural Perceptions of Sexuality Education. Thianthai's (2018) qualitative study identified various impediments to SeD in Thailand. The data were collected through two instruments - focus group discussions and interviews - and included 99 individuals aged between 15 and 24. The study supported the view that Thai culture hinders the efficacy of SeD by limiting adolescent learning opportunities. Most sexual knowledge among adolescents is acquired from family, peers, teachers, and other community members, potentially leading to inaccurate information about sexuality. Nevertheless, online resources and social media platforms can overcome these inadequacies in SeD.

In Thailand, identified factors hindering effective SeD delivery and learning among adolescents were cultural values, gender expectations, outdated educational approaches, insufficiently trained sexuality educators, and irrelevant educational content (Thianthai, 2018). These findings were consistent with former research by Kay et al. (2010) and Vuttanont et al. (2006). However, there needs to be more research on how these barriers have influenced the shortcomings of official Thai SeD policies promoted by the Ministry of Education, which attempts to provide age-appropriate content. Despite these efforts, investigations have uncovered gaps, and there needs to be improvement in meeting the necessities of Thai youth (Thianthai, 2018).

In 2022, Chiba directed a qualitative study exploring effective strategies to increase parental and teacher support for school-based comprehensive SeD in Thailand. The study's primary objective was to identify successful approaches for improving local support for comprehensive SeD and highlight educators' crucial role in integrating SeD into school curricula. The research involved interviews with four school superintendents, nine SeD teachers, and group interviews with nine parents and 78 students (Chiba, 2022).

Chiba's (2022) study concluded that in regions of Thailand where cultural sensitivities resulted in opposition to comprehensive SeD, the critical factor in gaining broader support was subjective recognition by parents and teachers. Thus, the adolescents of Thailand would be the beneficiaries of the constructive influence that comprehensive SeD can have on their health and development. These findings align with social cognitive learning principles, highlighting the importance of subjective perceptions in shaping behavior (Bandura, 1989, 1999; Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Böhm & Pfister, 2014).

Specifically, the personal benefits of CSE on youth health and development can contribute to the acceptability and implementation of SeD in Thai schools where cultural sensitivity has led to opposition against comprehensive SeD. This process is consistent with the self-efficacy concept, which suggests that individuals' beliefs in their ability to produce desired outcomes influence their actions and decisions. Overall, social cognitive theory suggests that by increasing awareness and promoting positive perceptions of CSE, parents and teachers can be influential in institutionalizing CSE in regions where cultural sensitivity is a concern.

In Yang's (2014) study, Taiwanese SeD was identified as a health education component. However, the prevailing discourse in SeD focuses on "abstinence-only," which prioritizes biological knowledge and assumes heteronormative perspectives while ignoring non-normative sexualities, such as homosexuality. Yang's proposed analytical framework offered a way for teachers to comprehend how students' understanding of sexuality and gender is informed by popular culture (Liang, 2010).

This analytical framework encouraged a technique to SeD that integrated course content with practical experiences and prior knowledge. By adopting this approach, students can construct their understanding of sexuality and gender rather than passively accepting the heteronormative and biomedical perspective often present in "abstinence-only" methods. This constructivist approach to SeD can better accommodate students' needs and facilitate their exploration of multiple comprehensions of sexuality (Leung et al., 2019; Rose et al., 2018).

In Japan, SeD is considered a crucial component of the school curriculum as it promotes autonomy and informed decision-making among students as they mature (Sato et al., 2022). Despite the documented benefits of comprehensive SeD, schools in Japan frequently restrict and limit the extent of what needs to be taught, as Sato et al. (2022) noted. In the qualitative case study, the authors detailed the experiences of five in-service health educators in Japan while teaching SeD to secondary school students. The study revealed that Japanese health educators must be proficient in supporting learners from various cultural, social, and academic settings in their SeD lessons. The authors' findings align with the constructivist approach of training health education teachers to support students from diverse backgrounds by promoting a learner-centered and experiential approach to teaching and learning in SeD.

Conversely, conservative Islamic attitudes in Indonesia have led to a lack of significant support for comprehensive SeD (Shibuya et al., 2023). Sex is considered a taboo topic that should not be openly discussed, and this belief is deeply ingrained in the Islamic context of Indonesia and other Muslim countries (Roudsari et al., 2013). In their new research, Shibuya et al. (2023) highlighted the religious barriers to implementing comprehensive SeD in Indonesia, emphasizing its critical role in endorsing adolescent sexual health education. The authors underscored the significance of teachers in creating a secure and supportive environment that enables adolescents to explore and navigate their sexual development healthily and positively. Nonetheless, Indonesia's ongoing lack of commitment to SeD endures due to its conservative Islamic religious beliefs and values.

Social Perceptions of Sexuality Education. The social interaction inherent in the *jigsaw* approach provided opportunities for observation, modeling, and reinforcement of behavior and attitudes related to SeD instruction, such as is seen within SCT (Bandura, 1999). Gunji (2022) conducted a study with 282 pre-service educators registered in a private university in Tokyo. The participants completed a pre- and post-course questionnaire as part of the research inquiry. The curriculum of the course encompassed a perspective on SeD pedagogy.

Gunji's (2022) study examined the impact of a course on Japanese student teachers' acquisition of a specific perspective on SeD instruction using the jigsaw technique. The jigsaw classroom promotes cooperation by obliging individuals to depend on each other in their search for a common goal. The jigsaw technique has been modified over time and is used successfully by educators in various classrooms ranging from pre-K to graduate school (Tewksbury, 1995).

The findings revealed a positive shift in the pre-service educators' insights into sexuality and sexual education and development (SeD), as indicated by the altered occurrence of words such as embarrassed, different, and gender in the pre- and post-course questionnaires (Gunji, 2022). The collaborative jigsaw method aligns with social cognitive theory and transformative learning principles, as it promotes learning with peers and allows students to construct meaning through dialogue with others.

Likewise, in China, Sa et al. (2021) assessed the impact of SeD interferences delivered in school settings on altering sexual knowledge, including gender and sexual attitudes in adolescents. The study was conducted in Lanzhou, northwest China, and included over 1,000 tenth-grade students from two intervention and two assessment schools. Results disclosed that adolescents in the intervention group, regardless of gender, displayed correct sexual-related comprehension and more robust support for untraditional gender norms, with young women reporting a significant increase in sexual self-efficacy after the intervention. The study suggested that school-based authorized SeD interventions could enhance the sexual decision-making skills of Chinese adolescents by increasing sexual knowledge and gender awareness (Sa et al., 2021).

Political Perceptions of Sexuality Education. In the Philippines, upon passing the 2012 Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Law (RH Law), the government incorporated SeD into the primary curriculum of public schools for students aged ten to 19 (Cabral, 2013). The RH Law was enacted in response to the country's significant health challenges, such as pregnancy-related deaths, and increased HIV/AIDS cases. In its provisions,

RH indicated that age- and developmentally-appropriate reproductive health education should be mandated within formal and non-formal education systems from the 5th through 12th grades using life skills and other modalities and taught by teachers with adequate expertise (Cabral, 2013).

In Taiwan, since the 1990s, the Ministry of Education has authorized non-governmental groups to undertake SeD-related training programs and activities for schools, professionals, and the public (Leung et al., 2019). The government has implemented various initiatives to ensure teachers are adequately trained in SeD. Some of those initiatives include six months of field experience, theoretical knowledge, and practical skills training. As part of the four-year university teacher training for those individuals focusing on gender studies, the noted initiatives will be part of their curriculum (Leung et al., 2019).

A literature review of Chinese-speaking regions, comprising Hong Kong, China, and Taiwan, conducted by Leung et al. (2019), highlighted the importance of providing implementers, including parents, educators, and social workers, with the essential aptitude to improve the efficacy of SeD programs. Lameiras-Fernández et al. (2021) suggested that further efforts and actions are necessary to design SeD policies and programs grounded in scientific evidence and up-to-date adolescent development beliefs. Furthermore, Patterson et al. (2019) emphasized the importance of mandatory comprehensive, and skills-based education to help adolescents build healthy and positive relationships.

In Liang's (2010) study, the author examined the insights of sex education among teachers and students in Taiwan and England. The research employed surveys, focus groups, and interviews in four schools throughout the 2007/2008 academic year. All four schools recognized sex education as a valuable portion of the curriculum, and it was consistently taught. The study involved nearly 2100 participants, including eighth-grade students aged between 12 and 14 and volunteer teachers. In Taiwan, both schools shared consistent perceptions of sex education, which can be credited to the top-down policy method used in developing sex

education. Continuous and additional training was provided to teachers, enhancing educational ideologies, professionalism, and knowledge of sex education. The research findings guided government policy, shaping the approach to sex education.

In Indonesia, school health programs aim to promote adolescent health through a comprehensive approach consisting of three parts: health education, health services, and a healthy school environment (Ponzetti, 2016). The country has implemented a computer-based program named *DAKU!* which stands for "Dunia Remajaku Seru!" or "My Youth is Fascinating!" The program was launched in 2006 and is taught during one semester for students aged 15 to 17. However, the limited availability of computers has hindered student registration since only 20–60 students per school per year can enroll. This contrasts with the average of 500 students per high school (Ponzetti, 2016).

In China, introducing the country's birth control policy during the 1950s resulted in the requirement of SeD in schools (Aresu, 2009). In 1988, the State Education Commission and the State Family Planning Commission issued a joint *Notification on the Development of Adolescent Education in Middle Schools*, highlighting schools' critical role in delivering SeD to students (Aresu, 2009). As a result, SeD was officially incorporated into the middle-school curriculum throughout the country. Although some teachers had received training, most were uncomfortable with safe SeD because most Chinese training programs were abstinence-only. The author also noted that cultural sensitivity is a serious matter that needs to be tackled in Chinese SeD (Aresu, 2009).

According to Li et al. (2009), while Chinese youth have been granted some limited sexual rights and responsibilities, existing guidelines do not adequately address sexually transmitted infection prevention and the significance of contraception. Aside from policy deficiencies, the lack of evidence-based sexual education programs and relevant databases to inform SeD practice in China further compounds the problem. Consequently, the efficacy of current SeD in China is suboptimal.

Teacher Training, Cultural, Social and Political Perspectives. As noted, the perceptions of SeD are complex and interpreted in diverse ways depending on teacher training, cultural contexts and social settings, and the political climate of each Asian country. SeD in Asian countries varies extensively (UNESCO, 2021a). A country's cultural, social, and historical contexts shape how SeD is viewed and established in students' overall education.

Sexuality Education in Vietnam

The abortion rate in Vietnam is among the record in the world and can be linked to several factors, such as the lack of comprehensive SeD and a cultural preference toward male children (Le et al., 2023; Vinh & Tuan, 2015). With a population of approximately 82 million, Vietnamese women comprise 1.4 million who have had abortions conducted by medical professionals yearly (Binh, 2012). This figure is particularly noteworthy when compared to the United States, with a population of 335 million, wherein approximately 620,000 legally induced abortions were reported (CDC, 2022; United States Census Bureau, 2023).

Vietnam has made significant strides in enhancing sexual health services, information, education, and communication intended explicitly for adolescents and youth (Khanh Chi et al., 2021). However, adolescents' knowledge of sexual health remains inadequate even though the Vietnam Ministries of Health and Education and the Labor Unions have made significant efforts in the national strategy to offer information, education, communication, and service delivery (Khuat, 2003; Khanh Chi et al., 2021).

SeD has not been widely implemented in Vietnam, and information on sexually related health has not met the diverse requirements for youth (General Statistics Office in Vietnam [GSOV], 2008). Implementing sexual health programs is often slower than required. An evaluation revealed that actions and accomplishments needed to catch up with the increased need for adolescents and young adults (GSOV, 2008). Targets were defined for strategies, programs, and plans, but no monitoring or data collection system existed. Consequently, there

is minimal data to measure the outcomes of implementing the sexual health objectives of these policies, initiatives, and therapies for youths.

Social cognitive theory suggests that individuals learn from the consequences of their actions and the actions of others. This is relevant to the deficiencies in Vietnam's sexual and reproductive health policy identified in the research by Khanh Chi (et al., 2021). The inconsistencies in the policy documents may lead to confusion among educators, students, and parents and hinder the efficient application of SeD programs. In particular, the requirement for parental consent to provide abortion services to minors under 18 may discourage adolescents from seeking reproductive health services, which can negatively affect their health and well-being (Khanh Chi et al., 2021). Furthermore, the lack of comprehensive SeD in educational settings means that many adolescents may not have access to accurate and supportive information about sexual health. According to Bandura's (1999) SCT, individuals learn from observing the behavior of others, and inconsistent policies on sexual and reproductive health may perpetuate negative beliefs and attitudes toward sexual health among parents, teachers, and the broader community.

In Vietnam, the effectiveness of SeD in schools is impeded by several factors, one of which is the need for more training of teachers and counselors tasked with providing appropriate support to students. The shortage of well-trained personnel can be traced partly to resource constraints experienced by Vietnamese schools (Vanwesenbeeck et al., 2015). The lack of adequate teacher training was also highlighted by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2012, which stated concern about the low capacity of teachers in Vietnamese schools (United Nations, 2012). Additionally, the limited sources of SeD in Vietnam contribute to the inadequate knowledge of sexually transmitted infections and contraceptives among Vietnamese adolescents (Nguyen et al., 2006). The study revealed that educational institutions and families only provide basic SeD, which lacks detailed information on contraceptive methods and related issues.

According to a 2016 report jointly conducted by the *Vietnamese Ministry of Labor, Invalids, and Social Welfare* and the *United Nations Children's Fund* (UNICEF), while the student-teacher ratios had decreased in many areas of the country, numerous educators, particularly in the countryside regions, continued to be burdened with excessive responsibilities and inadequate training to perform various assigned duties (UNICEF, 2016). As per the report, Vietnam is taking active measures to lower the ratio of students to teachers, which would facilitate a personalized educational approach. Nevertheless, the implication of new pedagogical approaches is restricted because the curriculum for teacher training needs to emphasize education reform. Teachers who cannot give informative sessions due to a lack of pertinent knowledge cannot favorably influence student achievement (Knight, 2020).

Notably, lecturer Pham Thanh Nam, from Hanoi National University, claimed in *VietNamNet News* (2017) that adolescents are educated about the human reproductive organs in school instead of a healthy and holistic SeD. The Institute for Research on Educational Development director in Hanoi, Le Thi Lan Anh, also observed that SeD was typically given in biology classes, and teachers needed more training (VietNamNet News, 2017).

Teachers often experience embarrassment when discussing sexuality with their students. Due to a fractured curriculum, students could not grasp fundamental concepts such as the reason behind girls' menstrual cycles. According to the statement made by Nam Tu Liem's principal, integrating SeD into the school syllabus is implemented by incorporating SeD into morals, life skills, and recreational activities. Although numerous Vietnamese schools have yet to implement the new SeD program, the administration concurs that teachers should receive additional training in SeD (VietNamNet News, 2017).

Nguyen et al. (2006) conducted preliminary qualitative research to investigate contraceptive practices and knowledge of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) among adolescents in Vietnam. The study involved 12 female and four male youths using the interview technique. The findings discovered that although Vietnamese youth had some knowledge of

contraceptives, such as condoms and birth control pills, their understanding of the usage and efficacy of these methods remained limited.

Moreover, adolescents in Vietnam commonly feared the side effects of contraceptive medications and held rumors about condoms, which negatively impacted their use of contraceptives. The research further disclosed that unsuccessful contraceptive approaches, including periodic abstinence and withdrawal, were prevalent among Vietnamese youth with limited knowledge of these methods. The authors recommended that promoting open discussions on sexual issues and adequate SeD training is necessary to improve sexual health among Vietnamese adolescents (Nguyen et al., 2006).

A survey of Vietnamese 11th graders in Hanoi highlighted the limitations of traditional one-way communication sources like the internet, television, and magazines in providing accurate sexual knowledge (Watanabe et al., 2014). This relates to constructivist learning, highlighting the importance of active learning and critical thinking in creating knowledge. One-way communication sources, such as those mentioned in the study, do not allow for dialogue and interaction between learners and educators, limiting students' ability to ask questions and seek clarification.

In contrast, a constructivist approach to SeD would prioritize dialogue and active participation, allowing students to construct knowledge through interaction and critical thinking. Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of parents and teachers as primary resources for sexual education, highlighting the need for collaboration between educators, parents, and students in a constructivist learning environment.

A 2017 *EFE News Service* (2017) reported in-depth regarding a survey on how SeD organization varies throughout the country. The Truong To High School (TTHS) in Vietnam assembled roughly 50 female students to discuss the dangers of young pregnancy, abortion, sexual assault, puberty symptoms, and self-defense techniques. These sequences were considered an exception in Vietnam, where SeD is not part of the primary curriculum and is

generally mixed with other courses. These sexual education classes were not organized by the TTHS but by the anti-traffic organization Alliance Anti-Traffic (ATT) (EFE News Service, 2017).

ATT was created in 2008 in Vietnam as a pioneer in SeD. Since its founding, its programs have trained over 60,000 teenagers. This non-profit organization advocated for SeD to be required in schools by 2019 to minimize sexual abuse and unintended pregnancies. Ngan Ta, the program's leader, stated that development has been negligible due to a lack of resources, difficulty providing appropriate instructor training, and an outdated culture that fears children may learn about sex too early (EFE News Service, 2017).

However, the ATT received positive responses from parents who appreciate that schools are permitted to teach SeD (EFE News Service, 2017). The constructivist model of learning emphasizes the significance of active and social connections. In the case of ATT's programs in Vietnam, the organization's approach to SeD aligns with the principles of constructivism by encouraging teenagers to participate actively in their learning. By providing seminars and training programs, ATT allows learners to be involved with learning materials relevant to their experiences and backgrounds.

Additionally, according to SCT, individuals acquire knowledge through the process of observing the actions of others, and the rewards and punishments they receive for their actions can shape their behavior (Bandura, 1999). A positive response from parents indicates that teenagers may also be receiving reinforcement for their sexual understandings and behaviors, which could encourage them to continue seeking information and resources (Ball et al., 2023; Gesselman et al., 2021; Satcher, 2001). By incorporating the students' experiences and perspectives into their programs, ATT promotes a more effective and learner-centered approach to SeD.

Social cognitive theory can be applied to Van Hung et al.'s (2019) study as it investigated the effects of SeD extracurricular activities on the reproductive health knowledge of students belonging to ethnic minorities. The study was carried out at Dien Bien Dong High School with a

sample size of 400 students of the same age and academic standing. The student participants were segregated into two distinct cohorts: a control group, which abstained from any SeD extracurricular undertakings linked to reproductive health, and an experimental group, which partook in seminars addressing diverse reproductive health themes as a component of their extracurricular pursuits. These seminars were designed to provide comprehensive knowledge of reproductive health.

Van Hung et al. (2019) utilized multiple- and single-choice examinations to assess the retention of reproductive health knowledge in his study. The findings indicate that the control group's participants exhibited inadequate understanding, ranging from 35% to 84%, about puberty symptoms, understanding ovulation timing throughout the menstrual cycle, knowledge about sexually transmitted infections, and familiarity with contraceptive methods before engaging in SeD extracurricular activities. Nonetheless, after attending extracurricular SeD activities on reproductive health, there was a notable increase in the proportion of students who accurately comprehended the relevant topics, with a minimum of 90% demonstrating comprehensive knowledge. These improvements in knowledge may be attributed to the observation and learning from peers and educators during extracurricular activities.

The social cognitive theory also suggests that people learn from the outcomes of their behavior. The students who participated in the SeD extracurricular activities may have gained more confidence in discussing and seeking information about reproductive health, leading to more positive outcomes in their health knowledge and decision-making. Van Hung et al.'s findings (2019) implied that SeD extracurriculars significantly boosted their understanding of numerous reproductive health elements. Improving SeD for Vietnamese high school students, particularly in mountainous regions, is vital. SeD seminars are a practical and effective way to impart and retain reproductive health knowledge.

Literature Review Related to Methodologies and Instrumentations

The researcher discussed a variety of study methodologies, designs, and instrument types throughout this literature review, such as case studies, phenomenological approaches, and an assortment of instruments used to gather information about the construct of SeD, the interrelated factors of social learning, constructivist learning, transformative learning, and teacher training qualities.

Many of the established instruments garnered quantitative data supporting each study's purpose. Several studies revealed personal perspectives via qualitative or mixed methods approaches; however, few focused on SeD for adolescents in Vietnam. Thus, a gap in the present literature reveals that existing research has not focused on this topic and the ensuing detriments for youth in Vietnam.

Despite the existence of undeniable and persuasive evidence supporting the advantages of curriculum-driven SeD, a scant proportion of youths in Vietnam are prepared with the knowledge and skills that support them to assume autonomy and exercise informed judgment in their sexual and relational lives in a self-directed and conscientious manner. The sexual well-being of Vietnamese youth demands attention. It must not be disregarded, as it is essential to society's well-being, particularly during a global pandemic (Lindberg et al., 2020). The implementation and completion of this study filled a gap and equipped it with a sound literary and theoretical basis as it proceeded with thoroughness and diligence.

Chapter Summary

Research has revealed that higher levels of positive communication are related to more beneficial relationship satisfaction and can lead to improved decision-making about safe sex (Gesselman et al., 2021). These authors noted that sexual satisfaction and meaningful relationships increase with self-management on several measures, including open and honest communication, coping skills, social support, stress management, and overall health wellness.

Nevertheless, conversations about sexuality can be uniquely challenging, and specific instruction and practices may be necessary (Kelder et al., 2022). This current study explores

teachers' perceptions of challenges while teaching SeD, notably in Vietnamese high schools. Within constructivism – a learner-centered model – teaching SeD can result in more effective intimate connections for both learners and teachers (Cornelius-White, 2007). Moreover, through personal reflections, a deeper clarification of the SeD curricula can enable teachers to identify the challenges and characteristics within relationship communications (Lodge et al., 2022).

Chapter Three: Methodology

This qualitative phenomenological study explored the phenomenon of Vietnamese high-school teachers' knowledge and perceptions regarding implementing sexuality education (SeD) in secondary schools in Vietnam. The study provides comprehension of the beliefs of high-school educators concerning their lived experiences teaching SeD in Vietnam. It identifies the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing SeD in this context.

To achieve these aims, a snowball sampling method was used to select high-school teachers in Vietnam who have experience teaching SeD. The data were gathered using interviews and analyzed using an inductive and iterative coding method and theme identification process. The findings of this study will offer an understanding of the challenges and opportunities of SeD application in Vietnamese secondary schools from the assessment of high-school educators. The findings will contribute to developing effective strategies for improving SeD practices in this context.

Statement of the Problem

How Vietnamese high-school educators describe and explain their knowledge and perceptions of their training and practice of SeD was unknown. The severity of this problem is twofold: (a) Without comprehensive SeD, adolescents and youth are at risk for unplanned pregnancies, abortion, sexually transmitted infections, cervical cancer, HIV, and other diseases; and (b) Comprehensive SeD enables adolescents to make knowledgeable choices regarding their sexual well-being (Ott & Santelli, 2007; Zhang et al., 1989).

Research Questions

The research questions were formulated directly from the problem statement:

- RQ1. How do high school educators in Vietnam describe their teaching practices related to sexuality education?
- RQ2. What factors influence the experiences and perceptions of educators in

Vietnam regarding teaching sexuality education to high school students?

- RQ3. What recommendations do educators have for training/professional development and content delivery for teaching sexuality education to high school students?

To address the research questions, this author explored how teachers' knowledge and perceptions related to their SeD practice in Vietnam.

Research Design

Teherani et al. (2015) asserted that qualitative research involves an evaluation of social phenomena occurring within natural settings. Various experiences fall within the purview of these phenomena, such as the diverse experiences individuals encounter in various aspects of their lives, the behaviors of both groups and individuals, and the ways interactions contribute to forming connections (Teherani et al., 2015). Hence, qualitative research can enable the comprehension of individuals' perceptions, feelings, viewpoints, and actions.

The choice of a research methodology is contingent upon the nature of the problem being investigated and the research questions being pursued. A qualitative approach offers a framework to examine a multifaceted phenomenon from diverse and personal perspectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2020; Teherani et al., 2015).

In contrast, a quantitative method restricts the investigator's ability to measure a study's personal and human aspects (Yin & Campbell, 2018). The present study aims to furnish comprehension of distinct and unique viewpoints, provide rationales for the study's participants' conduct, and identify the undertakings within high-school environments in Vietnam related distinctly to SeD.

A qualitative framework offers a researcher multiple vantage points to comprehend better how meaning is constructed among this homogeneous group of participants, as highlighted by Lauckner et al. (2015). This study of high-school teachers in Vietnam employed a qualitative phenomenological design. This design aligned with the research objectives and was

appropriate for studying the study's unique and well-defined population, the Vietnamese teachers of this proposed investigation.

Research Design Approach

A commonly utilized qualitative research design in social and life sciences is the phenomenological study, as noted by Alhazmi and Kaufmann (2022). The main goal of such a design is to offer an account of the phenomenon under scrutiny and its accompanying features, prioritizing the "what" aspect over the "how" and "why" dimensions (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022; Nassaji, 2015).

Exploring the lived experiences of individuals includes complex phenomena. According to Alhazmi and Kaufmann, "annotating and clarifying human experience can be a challenging task not only because of the complexity of human nature, but also because an individual's experience is a multidimensional phenomenon, that is, psychologically oriented, culturally driven, and socially structured" (2022, para 2).

Such inquiries are associated with a specific research problem and its research questions. Phenomenological research is used to acquire information concerning the existing state of a phenomenon being explored (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2006). A phenomenological study design provides the outline for exploring a complex situation from individuals' varying viewpoints (Lauckner et al., 2015). This research framework offered a collection of views to understand how meaning is derived from the group of high-school teachers in Vietnam (Lauckner et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the phenomenological design explored existing experiences within their social environments and was used to explore various aspects of such experiences. A rigorous qualitative phenomenological approach can yield precision and accuracy, as the data obtained are constrained to the specific phenomenon under exploration (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022; Finlay, 2009). This study was led by the research questions to accurately explore high-school

educators' knowledge and insights of SeD and the effects this type of education has on their students.

Source of Data

This discussion of the source of data includes the target population, the sampling selection process, and the preferred sample size. Moreover, one data source was comprised of one-on-one interviews.

Target Population and Sample Selection

Target population individuals “are not interchangeable, and sample size is determined by data saturation, not by statistical power analysis” (Suen et al., 2014, para. 1). This phenomenological study balanced the need to recruit a large sample versus the need to capture rich details. This study's target population was approximately 145,000 Vietnamese teachers from upper-secondary education (Statista, 2023); the sample was 10 Vietnamese teachers who teach SeD from various high school campuses in Vietnam.

In this qualitative study, purposeful sampling was utilized to choose participants based on the study's objectives, anticipating that each candidate would offer distinctive and valuable materials pertinent to the study, as explained by the research methodology literature (Creswell & Creswell, 2020; Patton, 2015). The purposeful sampling enabled the researcher to choose participants who would best contribute to the study's research questions, leading to more in-depth and comprehensive findings (Patton, 2015).

For selecting secondary school educators in this qualitative study, a snowball sampling method was also utilized to identify potential contributors based on their relevance to the study's research questions. The sample size was initially targeted at 12-15 participants, as qualitative studies typically have a point of dwindling results with larger sample sizes (Berg & Lune, 2018; Marshall et al., 2022; Moser & Korstjens, 2017). The final sample comprised 10 individuals. However, it is essential to note that additional data may provide more insights and understanding of the phenomenon being researched as the qualitative study progresses;

“qualitative data are useful for understanding the nuances lying beyond those processes as they unfold” (Gilbert & Stoneman, 2016, p. 35).

This study focused on high-school teachers in Vietnam, and the research parameters were defined accordingly. The inclusion criteria for participants in this study were as follows: (a) individuals must be at least 22 years of age, (b) currently hold a position as a high-school teacher in Vietnam, (c) have served in their current position for a minimum of one year, (d) possess a minimum of one year of experience teaching sexuality education, and (e) demonstrate their willingness to provide informed consent to the university by completing the Informed Consent Form provided in either English or Vietnamese (see Appendix D). Furthermore, individuals were excluded from participating to ensure maximum variation if the following criteria are met: (a) participants possess prior experience teaching in only one grade level within the high school setting, and (b) participants have gained teaching experience in only one specific high school.

Study Participants and Recruitment

The researcher established contact with 31 members of the targeted population, from which 11 individuals proficient in Vietnamese were selected to participate and provide research data. Of the 11 individuals initially chosen, only 10 provided valid and worthy data. The participant whose data was excluded was unable to answer the interview questions directly and discussed topics unrelated to the study. The sample of 10 individuals provided sufficient data to allow for a thorough analysis while still being manageable within the scope of the study.

To ensure the study obtained qualified participants, the researcher utilized pre-existing professional contacts in Vietnam who were high school educators. Following acquiring the Institutional Review Board's (IRB's) approval, the researcher approached these contacts between June and July 2023. To ensure adequate preparation, interview questions (Appendix C) and the university's Informed Consent Form (Appendix D) were provided to each potential

participant in Vietnamese and English before scheduling each interview. Each participant's preference determined the language used during the interviews.

To boost participation rates and promote referrals, the researcher incentivized study participants. Those who completed the interview were qualified for a gift card worth \$10 or a cash payment of \$10. Furthermore, each participant who provided a qualified referral who completed the interview process received an additional \$5 incentive. It is vital to note that these incentives were provided only upon completion of the data collection, and any conditions or restrictions attached to the incentives were fully disclosed to the participants. The researcher also ensured that offering incentives to study participants and their referrals complied with guidelines and regulations regarding the university's IRB approval. These incentives were intended to recognize and reward individuals for their time and effort in contributing to the study and to encourage them to refer other qualified individuals interested in participating. The researcher discussed the incentives and ethical considerations related to their use in the methodology section and the informed consent document provided to participants.

The pivotal role played by the participants significantly contributed to the successful execution of the research study. The chosen participants, who met the inclusion criteria for this phenomenological qualitative research, were selected from diverse regions across Vietnam. These individuals shared commonalities as Vietnamese teachers, with Vietnamese being their native language. The spectrum of teaching experiences among the participants spanned 4 to 30 years. During their tenure, these individuals had consistently instructed Biology within 10th, 11th, and 12th-grade levels. All participants were women. For an overview of each participant's background information, please refer to Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant	School Location	Position	Years of Teaching Experience
P1	Ho Chi Minh City	Biology Teacher	4
P2	Ho Chi Minh City	Biology Teacher	14
P3	Ho Chi Minh City	Biology Department Head	18
P4	Ho Chi Minh City	Homeroom Teacher	22
P5	Ho Chi Minh City	Biology Teacher	14
P6	Ho Chi Minh City	Biology Teacher	20
P7	Vinh City	Biology Teacher	10
P8	Ho Chi Minh City	Biology Department Head	14
P9	Thanh Hoa City	Biology Teacher	30
P10	Ho Chi Minh City	Biology Department Head	15

Data Collection

In this phenomenological study, data collection used an interview process, enabling the researcher to inquire about participants regarding their perspectives, positions, and beliefs of their lived experiences teaching SeD in Vietnamese high schools (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022; Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The researcher acknowledged that each participant was sharing

their interpretation of their lived experience, which reflected their vision and what they believed to be correct.

The interviews were managed via *Zoom*, a commonly used meeting application. *Zoom* allowed the researcher to conduct the interviews remotely, overcoming the hurdles of long-distance travel and health safety concerns amid the COVID-19 pandemic (Archibald et al., 2019; Karl et al., 2021). *Zoom* is an internet-based video conferencing platform, provides a range of functionalities, including facilitating online meetings, and ensuring secure session recording (Wiederhold, 2020). Each remote interview lasted approximately 60 minutes, providing sufficient time for the participants to discuss their experiences and insights. The language preference of participants dictated that the interviews were conducted in Vietnamese.

Engaging with the participants using their native language was beneficial within the interview process (Santos et al., 2015). Welch and Piekkari (2006) described that language is critical to understanding interviews in qualitative research. They explained that “providing interviewees with the opportunity to express themselves in their native language [Vietnamese] produces more authentic answers that exhibit more subtle nuances” (Welch & Piekkari, 2006, p. 428). Additionally, Winchatz (2006) mentioned that researchers can discover more about a sample of study participants “through the ways people speak and the native terms and categories that they use” (p. 84).

The interviews were captured in audio format using a device protected by a password, with consent obtained from each participant. The rationale for opting to only audio record the interviews was to enhance the participant’ privacy by including their visual likenesses. The researcher took notes during the interviews to capture non-verbal communication and other observations.

Data collection was a pivotal undertaking within this study. A comprehensive recruitment strategy, known as purposive sampling, was used. In addition, snowball sampling is a type of purposive participant recruitment that involves securing qualified individuals through referrals

from existing participants (Kirchherr & Charles, 2018). The sample was initially targeted to be 12-15 individuals but ultimately totaled 11 participants.

This study centered on high-school teachers in Vietnam and their experiences teaching sexuality education (SeD). The inclusion criteria for participants in this study were as follows: (a) individuals must be at least 22 years of age, (b) currently hold a position as a high-school teacher in Vietnam, (c) have served in their current position for a minimum of one year, (d) possess a minimum of one year of experience teaching sexuality education, and (e) demonstrate their willingness to provide informed consent to the university by completing the Informed Consent Form (ICF) provided in Vietnamese (see Appendix D).

Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) documentation stated that operational procedures were executed and regulatory guidelines were meticulously followed. Data collection activities commenced after receiving formal IRB approval. The researcher then communicated with already-established professional connections in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, seeking recommendations for proficient high school sexuality educators.

Interview Protocol

The interview protocol was crucial in establishing rapport with the research participants (Horsfall et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2021). The interview questions aided in exploring participants' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes related to SeD. The interview protocol is provided here:

1. Please describe your background and experience in teaching sexuality education.
2. How does your school approach teaching sexuality education programs?
3. How do you approach teaching sexuality education programs in the classroom?
4. How does your school approach providing sexuality education training and professional development to educators? What improvements could be made to teacher professional development to better support student learning and understanding of sexuality education?

5. Which medium is more effective for teacher professional development (face-to-face, online, or blended)? Which medium is more effective for teaching sexuality education to students?
6. Can you describe some challenges you face when teaching sexuality education to your students? How do you overcome these challenges?
7. What factors influence your thoughts and perceptions about teaching sexuality education?
8. Do you have further insights or reflections about sexuality education training and instruction?

The researcher contacted eligible participants via *Zalo* or *Facebook Messenger*, providing a comprehensive overview of the study's procedures and details before scheduling the interviews. Each qualified and interested participant then received the ICF in Vietnamese, which the researcher had translated from English. These individuals returned the signed document to the researcher. The researcher and the individual participants then agreed upon a date for an online remote interview. On the given date, the interviewee and the researcher convened in a virtual meeting facilitated by the Zoom application. The researcher reiterated the study's purpose and conducted a preliminary discussion to address any concerns from the participants before the interview's commencement.

The interviews were conducted exclusively in Vietnamese and audio-recorded using a password-protected device. The duration of the interviews was approximately 60 minutes. After data collection, the researcher communicated with the interviewees, clarifying the forthcoming procedural steps and offering responses to any inquiries posed by the participants.

Data Processing

Data processing included:

1. Data collection via audio recording of the interviews in Vietnamese;
2. Transcription in Vietnamese, the primary data collected;

3. Member-checking of the primary data, which comprised participants' approval of the transcription;
4. The researcher translated the primary (Vietnamese) and approved (member-checked) transcriptions into English.

The transcription of the interview data began at the culmination of all interviews with the entire participant cohort. The researcher transcribed the audio recordings into typed form, resulting in transcripts in Vietnamese that were shared with the participants to ensure accuracy (member checking), thus establishing the dependability of the collected data (Creswell & Creswell, 2020; Cypress, 2017). During the subsequent phase of data review, the researcher examined the content of each interview transcript, wherein the researcher detected that one participant had misinterpreted and inadequately responded to the interview questions. This circumstance eliminated all data associated with the one participant. Following a thorough examination, the selection process yielded data from 10 participants deemed suitable for final coding and subsequent analysis.

After collecting the interview data, the researcher reviewed the transcripts several times and listened to the recordings. Handwritten notes on keywords and non-verbal expressions were documented throughout the interviews. Prominent keywords or phrases were identified using keywords-in-context, a process known as KWIC (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). This method aided in exploring and recognizing emergent keywords and codes in the collected data (Kronberger & Wagner, 2000). D'Andrade noted that the most direct sign of meaning in a naturalistic discourse – such as this study's interviews - is the repetition of words and their linkages (1995).

KWIC recommends that a researcher reflect on collected qualitative data, noting that interview transcript data are informative and beneficial to the research study, and words unearthed from the interview data guided the researcher to portions that contained meaningful information (Kuckartz, 2019). Using KWIC, keywords were sought and identified as codes to

address the research questions and the purpose of the study. This process also aided in sustaining the researcher's continuing reflection on the theoretical frameworks of *Constructivism*, *Social Cognitive Theory* (SGT), and *Transformative Learning*. For this phenomenological study, the researcher used inductive data analysis to transcribe data from the interviews (Azungah, 2018; Patton, 2015).

Memo Writing

For this current study, reflexive memos were employed to document various aspects, such as interview settings and the researcher's personal responses. Memo writing occurred in all study phases (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). After each interview, memos were written while reviewing documents, transcribing and retrieving the interview data, and reviewing keywords as patterns and themes emerged.

It was necessary to suspend the researcher's prior knowledge and preconceptions through *bracketing*, consciously disregarding preconceived ideas about the research topic and eliminating them from the research sphere (Chan et al., 2013). Using journaling - writing memos - throughout the research process, the researcher could record reactions to information garnered as the study proceeded (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Memos further helped determine why specific keywords emerged and increased the traceability and credibility of the research processes (Rogers, 2018).

Human Participants' Ethical Considerations

The research procedures for this study adhered to the ethical standards set by the IRB. After attaining approval from the IRB for the proposal, the researcher contacted prospective participants in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, utilizing pre-established professional connections. A recruitment email (Appendix B), drafted in Vietnamese and English, was used.

After selecting potential participants who met the inclusion criteria and agreed to partake in the research, all individuals were emailed the interview questions (Appendix C) and the university's ICF (Appendix D). These documents equipped the participants with a

comprehensive understanding of the study's aim, parameters, methodologies, involved risks, and rights as participants. The email also briefed each participant on the study's purpose, intent, and extent. Additionally, the interviewer's contact details were provided to the participants, enabling them to seek clarification or pose any additional inquiries regarding the study. Each participant's language preference dictated the language utilized during the meeting, with options for English or Vietnamese available.

This study's complex and sensitive subject of SeD could have revealed the participants' biases (either conscious or unconscious). As a result, participants may have experienced psychological distress or other types of emotional injury linked to introspecting on their attitudes and perceptions of SeD. This study was able to avert such emotional distress by allowing any participant to withdraw from the study at any time. In the event of participant attrition throughout the research, the data collected to that point was developed for analysis (Watson et al., 2015).

The data collection method for all interviews involved audio recording via a password-protected mobile device. The interviews were conducted remotely through the Zoom platform. The rationale behind opting for audio-only recordings was to ensure an additional layer of privacy, thereby precluding the recording of participants' visual likenesses.

Following each interview, audio recordings were subject to multiple reviews. Before the data analysis process began, the researcher transcribed the audio-recorded interview sessions in Vietnamese precisely and appropriately (McMullin, 2023; Sutton & Austin, 2015). The transcribed interview data provided the basis for the analysis of this study.

Participants received reassurance regarding the confidentiality of their information at the commencement and conclusion of each interview. To further safeguard the privacy of study participants, codes were used in place of their actual names. Any concerns or issues raised by participants during the interviews were promptly addressed and resolved.

Confidentiality, data protection, and prudent judgment were essential concerns throughout the data collection. The data were coded and stored on a private cloud drive to safeguard participants' confidentiality, protected with a password (Da Silva, 2021; Lin, 2009). The researcher assigned fictitious names to the participants to further protect their privacy, and identifiable information was eliminated from the data before analysis.

Data Analysis

Understanding the differentiation between inductive and deductive inquiry processes is pivotal in determining the approach to analyzing qualitative research data in phenomenology. Inductive reasoning involves deriving ideas from the data itself, while deductive reasoning starts with a theory or hypothesis and employs collected data to validate or invalidate the notion (Borgstede & Scholz, 2021; Hyde, 2000). In this study, an inductive approach was adopted for data analysis. This method commenced by gathering data pertinent to the phenomenon under investigation.

Braun et al. (2019) state that even a single piece of data can provide a sufficient foundation for data analysis. Phenomenological qualitative research is concerned with comprehending the significance of the lived experiences and human behaviors within the study participants' social contexts rather than producing generalized hypothesis statements; it processes individual cases rather than variables (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Austin & Sutton, 2014; Tenny et al., 2022).

Thematic Analysis

In phenomenological qualitative analysis, rather than relying on a passive emergence of themes, the researcher carried out thematic analysis by actively reviewing collected data and identifying emerging patterns, codes, and themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun et al., 2019; Creswell & Poth, 2013). The researcher utilized Braun et al.'s (2019) procedures for thematic analysis. The current research used Braun et al.'s (2019) procedures for thematic analysis, consisting of six stages:

1. Immersion in the collected information;
2. Initial coding;
3. Thematic classification;
4. Thematic reevaluation;
5. Thematic labeling; and
6. Thematic interpretation and synthesis reporting.

Using an inductive and iterative process, the researcher maintained perspective and gained insight into the realities of the participants' lived experiences within the phenomenological qualitative dialogues (Braun & Clark, 2006; Braun et al., 2019).

Means to Ensure Study Validity

In qualitative research, the notion of validity concerns to the ethical use and soundness of the study's methods, as well as the accuracy with which the findings faithfully reflect the collected data. Conversely, reliability, also known as dependability, was established by utilizing member checking as a tool for assessment (Creswell & Creswell, 2020; Cypress, 2017). In qualitative research, meticulous attention to validity and reliability is essential, as the researcher's biases can impede the identification of authentic and compelling interpretations of the data (Brink, 1993; Johnson et al., 2020). Within qualitative research, rigor "is best achieved through thoughtful and deliberate planning, diligent and ongoing application of researcher reflexivity, and honest communication between the researcher and the audience regarding the study and its results" (Johnson et al., 2020, p. 145).

To ensure qualitative research's quality, standards such as dependability and reflexivity were fundamental factors considered (Anney, 2014; Forero et al., 2017; Patton, 1999). To institute the Zoom interview data's trustworthiness, member checks offered valuable understanding and enabled the assessment of participants' comprehension of the study's objectives (Anney, 2014; Candela, 2019). Member checking is a quality assurance technique to enhance the precision and credibility of research interview transcripts (Candela, 2019; Yin &

Campbell, 2018). By allowing participants to review the interview data, member checking effectively transfers a degree of control to the participants themselves (Birt et al., 2016). Utilizing member checking, or participant validation, promotes transparency and reliability throughout the research journey, leading to participant responses that are perceived as more credible and precise (Anney, 2014; Birt et al., 2016).

Dependability refers to the extent of reliability and uniformity in the study's outcomes over an extended period (Creswell & Poth, 2013). The concept of dependability ensured that the study's results were reliable and replicable, focusing on ensuring that the findings aligned with the collected data. In addition, dependability suggests that if another researcher were to evaluate the same data, they would attain comparable conclusions and results (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). One method of contributing to dependability is member checking, where participants provide feedback on the study's transcript data and potential analyses.

Reflexivity is crucial in social and behavioral research, as it involves the investigator considering their own biases and how they might affect the research. It is a cornerstone of research credibility (Palaganas et al., 2017; Olmos-Vega et al., 2023). Reflexivity entails honest self-evaluation of the investigator's potential impact on the research and its outcomes (Dodgson, 2019; Palaganas et al., 2017). Researchers often maintain a reflective research diary to facilitate this process, documenting their thoughts, feelings, and observations after each interview session (Longhofer et al., 2017; Palaganas et al., 2017).

To ensure the requisite quality in qualitative research, it was imperative to engage in introspection and critical evaluation of the study's essence, coherence between research questions and the chosen methodology, and the suitability of the research design (Collins & Stockton, 2018). Methodological and epistemological appropriateness, relevance, and reflexivity were considered to synthesize prior contributions effectively. Collins and Stockton (2018) noted that "epistemological and ontological dispositions represent the architecture of how a researcher

sees the world and the production of knowledge. Qualitative methods bring clarity to the ways in which these dispositions influence the role of the researcher” (Collins & Stockton, 2018, p. 5).

Furthermore, qualitative researchers must remain cognizant of the significance of engaging in a dialogue with the study participants. This investigator concentrated on the collected data’s content and rhetorical aspects, including limitations inherent in the potential artificiality of the one-on-one interview (Gómez, 2009; Knott et al., 2022). To ensure the quality of this qualitative research project, the researcher adhered to appropriate standards, procedures, and record-keeping for all interviews conducted. Mutuality, rapport, and empathy between researchers and participants were crucial factors of excellence and merit of qualitative research (Horsfall et al., 2021; Naidu & Prose, 2018; Råheim et al., 2015).

To obtain content validity, comprehensive SeD was explored in several high schools located in Vietnam, supporting diverse study input (Brod et al., 2014). Content validity pertains to the extent to which a research instrument accurately measures the intended construct (Elangovan & Sundaravel, 2020). The analysis of the interview data served as a means of verifying the research findings and validating all conclusions and recommendations (Hycner, 1985). Every possible measure was taken to ensure that all significant issues were fairly addressed, guaranteeing both the accuracy and strength of the research process and its outcomes.

Chapter Summary

In the forthcoming Chapter 4, an in-depth analysis of the *Zoom* interview data will be presented. The researcher scrutinized the data to ensure valid and reliable conclusions. Lincoln and Guba (2006) established measures for ascertaining rigor within qualitative research, incorporating truthfulness and coherence. These concepts closely align with transferability and dependability discussed earlier in this chapter (Anney, 2014; Guba, 1981).

The researcher scrutinized the data, exploring relevant factors and conducting a comprehensive analysis to arrive at meaningful and insightful conclusions. To accomplish this

goal, the researcher used specific analytical techniques, including Braun et al.'s (2019) thematic analysis procedures, to categorize data patterns and emergent themes. These results are presented clearly and comprehensively, giving the reader a thorough understanding of the study's key results. Upcoming in Chapter 4, the researcher delivers the results accurately and objectively, and any potential biases or limitations are acknowledged and addressed.

Chapter 5 will serve as a critical element of this study, synthesizing the findings and recommendations for future studies. It will offer a comprehensive and nuanced perspective on teaching Vietnamese adolescents regarding SeD, shedding light on this complex and multifaceted topic and contributing to developing effective and appropriate interventions and policies.

Chapter Four: Presentation of The Results

Chapter four details the study's results, reiterating the research questions and the purpose of the study. A thorough data analysis followed Braun et al.'s (2019) method and steps. The chapter demonstrates how compelling themes emerged as keywords and key phrases led to codes and patterns from the participant data. Direct quotations and summaries bolster the findings while safeguarding the confidentiality of participants.

Context

This phenomenological qualitative study explored the experiences of 10 individuals teaching sexuality education (SeD) in various Vietnamese high schools. This study acquired participants' data about their personal experiences of teaching within the setting of secondary schools in Vietnam. The focus was on SeD teaching practices and professional training.

This study identified common themes in how Vietnamese high school educators described their teacher training related to SeD and their experiences in the classroom. This study collected data on SeD as the participants provided information about the most efficient ways to teach reproductive and sexual health within their current curricula. Moreover, participants described the need for professional development on SeD. This qualitative phenomenological study's research questions (RQs) were:

- RQ1: How do high school educators in Vietnam describe their teaching practices related to sexuality education?
- RQ2. What factors influence the experiences and perceptions of educators in Vietnam regarding teaching sexuality education to high school students?
- RQ3. What recommendations do educators have for training/professional development and content delivery for teaching sexuality education to high school students?

See Table 2, which demonstrates the association of RQs with the study interview questions.

Table 2*Association of RQs With Interview Questions*

Research Question	Interview Question
RQ1: How do high school educators in Vietnam describe their teaching practices related to sexuality education?	(IQ2) How does your school approach teaching sexuality education programs? (IQ3) How do you approach teaching sexuality education programs in the classroom? (IQ6). Can you describe some challenges you face when teaching sexuality education to your students? How do you overcome these challenges?
RQ2. What factors influence the experiences and perceptions of educators in Vietnam regarding teaching sexuality education to high school students?	(IQ4a) How does your school approach providing sexuality education training and professional development to educators? (IQ7) What factors influence your thoughts and perceptions about teaching sexuality education?
RQ3. What recommendations do educators have for training/professional development and content delivery for teaching sexuality education to high school students?	(IQ4b) What improvements could be made to teacher professional development to better to support student learning and understanding of sexuality education? (IQ5a) Which medium is more effective for teacher professional development (face-to-face, online, or blended)? (IQ5b) Which medium is more effective for teaching sexuality education to students? (IQ8) Do you have further insights or reflections about sexuality education training and instruction?

Results

This section includes a report of the results of this study based on the data collected from the participants and analyzed through the theoretical lenses of *Constructivism*, *Social Cognitive*

Theory (SGT), and *Transformative Learning*. The current study achieved saturation due to the numbers of participants involved. This saturation accumulated a comprehensive dataset comprising diverse insights and perspectives from the participants (Sechelski & Onwuegbuzie, 2019). Within these results, specific patterns, keywords, and phrases emerged and were identified as codes (Elliott, 2018). Thus, themes were attributed to the particular language of the data collected from the participants' lived experiences, addressing the study's purpose and the research questions.

Results Related to Research Question 1

RQ1 aimed to describe educators' teaching practices regarding SeD. The relevant interview questions were:

- (IQ2) How does your school approach teaching sexuality education programs?
- (IQ3) How do you approach teaching sexuality education programs in the classroom?
- (IQ6) Can you describe some challenges you face when teaching sexuality education to your students? How do you overcome these challenges?

When asked IQ2, most participants emphasized their schools' strict adherence to the guidelines set by *The Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training*. These guidelines identify Biology and Civics Education teachers who are integrating sex education into their curricula for high-school grade levels, specifically grades 10, 11, and 12. Furthermore, all participants agreed that their schools consistently organized annual extracurricular activities with a dedicated focus on SeD for the entire student body. These activities were strategically designed to supplement formal classroom teaching of SeD and provide a broader understanding of various aspects of sexual health, relationships, and responsible sexual behaviors. Such events often encompassed interactive workshops, informative sessions, guest speakers, peer discussions, awareness

campaigns, and creative projects to foster a well-rounded comprehension of sexual knowledge and well-being among all students.

Additionally, data related to RQ1 was obtained using IQ3 and IQ6. Derived from the codes identified in the data were Theme 1 – *Diverse Strategies Were Employed in the Classroom for Sexuality Education, With a Reliance on Presentation Activities*, Theme 2 – *Theme 2: Students Express Shyness from Lack of Knowledge and Fear of Peer Judgment When Learning Sexuality Education*, and Theme 3 – *Teachers Use Personable Approaches to Make Sexuality Education Less Intimidating*.

Theme 1: Diverse Strategies Were Employed in the Classroom for Sexuality Education, With a Reliance on Presentation Activities. While analyzing transcribed data, the researcher discovered recurring keywords and phrases, including the codes “presentations” (22 instances), “role-playing activities” (9 instances), and “scientific approach” (5 instances). These recurrent phrases became prominent expressions, reaching saturation and highlighting their significant role in shaping the teachers’ approach to teaching SeD. Supporting statements from participants in response to IQ3 are outlined below, starting with P1’s account:

I often allow my students to take charge of finding relevant materials, designing their own presentations, and preparing interactive activities, such as games [and] role-plays, that actively involve students in the learning process.

Also, P2, with 14 years experience, advocated student presentations and role-playing activities to foster increased classroom participation:

I frequently encourage student participation by allowing them to create their own presentations during sex education lessons. It’s not uncommon for students to bring visual aids such as bananas or condoms to demonstrate the proper usage of condoms. This hands-on approach allows students to learn actively and fosters a deeper understanding of the subject. To further enhance student engagement and understanding, I often incorporate role-playing activities into sex education lessons. For

instance, students may enact scenarios such as purchasing condoms ... [thus] students gain practical insights and develop essential skills in a realistic and engaging manner.

In order to promote student involvement with the lessons, P4, backed by their extensive 22-year career, supported the use of student presentations:

I also employ the presentation method to foster student engagement and ownership of their learning. I encourage students to take the initiative in seeking information on various birth control methods and present their findings to the class ... This promotes self-directed learning and encourages critical thinking and information literacy skills.

Using a scientific approach (Strickland, 2001), participants taught SeD, instilling confidence and engagement and fostering trust between students and teachers. The participants highlighted the significance of integrating a scientific approach into the teaching of SeD. By incorporating this approach, they aimed to demystify untruths or misconceptions, providing evidence-based information. Several participants employed this teaching approach in their classrooms. P4 commented on how they utilized a scientific and evidence-based approach to their SeD lesson:

I emphasize that sex education is a scientific subject, focusing on providing students with accurate and evidence-based information. By presenting sex education in this manner, I aim to instill confidence and trust in students to openly share their thoughts, concerns, and questions about relationships and sexuality.

Similarly, P3, an educator with 18 years of experience in Ho Chi Minh City, stated the use of human biology aided in making the content of their SeD lessons easier to talk about:

I consistently inform my students that sex education is a scientific subject pertaining to the human body. I encourage them to approach the topic with an open mind.

Also, P6, drawing from 20 years of experience, remarked that their use of an objective approach to their SeD lessons engendered a trusting classroom environment:

While maintaining a friendly and open environment, I clarify that sex education is a serious topic and should be treated with respect. I discourage gender-biased jokes or inappropriate teasing that may belittle or trivialize the subject matter. ... By combining a friendly and approachable teaching style with a serious and respectful attitude toward sex education, I strive to ensure that students feel trusted, engaged, and informed.

When discussing their method of teaching SeD, several participants noted the benefits of using group learning, role-playing, and presentation activities. These teachers aimed to instill confidence and trust in their students while avoiding gender biases and judgments among the study body. Furthermore, using an evidence-based and scientific approach toward teaching SeD generated trust and a respectful attitude from the students toward the teachers and the subject matter.

Theme 2: Students Express Shyness from Lack of Knowledge and Fear of Peer Judgment When Learning Sexuality Education. Keywords were continually sought and identified as codes to address the research questions (Saldaña, 2021). Within the data from IQ6, the researcher discovered frequent keywords and phrases, noted as the codes “students’ embarrassment” (9 instances), “fear of judgment from peers” (5 instances), “shyness” (10 instances), and “inconsistencies in students’ understanding” (3 instances). These codes were all related to sexuality and the impact on teachers’ capacity for delivering SeD. These codes underscored the saturation point reached in the data analysis and substantiated Theme 2, challenges encountered by most participants teaching SeD. For example, P1 articulated that students’ timidity and apprehension of their peers’ views prevented students from openly discussing concerns related to sexuality:

I have detected that many students hesitate to engage in these discussions due to feelings of fear, shame, and shyness...Fear of classmates’ judgments and societal taboos surrounding the topic of sexuality hinder students from openly discussing their

concerns and areas where they require additional knowledge. Consequently, it becomes arduous for me to identify the specific areas where students need support.

P3, with extensive 18-year in teaching, similarly stated that their students' awkwardness related to discussion of sexuality hindered class involvement:

Students often fear judgment from their peers out of shyness and embarrassment and worry about their parents finding out, inhibiting their willingness to participate in classroom discussions.

Likewise, P5 noted that students exhibited timidity when addressing sexuality lessons: Some students may exhibit extreme shyness and embarrassment when it comes to discussing topics related to sex education.

In another response, P9, drawing from over three decades of teaching experience in Thanh Hoa City, noticed students' embarrassment inhibited discussions on delicate sexuality matters:

When teaching sex education in class, I have seen that many students feel timid and embarrassed, which hinders their willingness to speak, exchange ideas, and engage in discussions on this sensitive topic.

Furthermore, P8 highlighted that their students' lack of knowledge about sexuality contributed to students' embarrassment when delivering SeD:

Students often lack knowledge or understanding in certain areas, particularly sex education. This lack of understanding can contribute to feelings of shyness and embarrassment, making it difficult for students to open and engage in discussions.

In addition to noting students' embarrassment and shyness related to sexuality, a few participants remarked on inconsistencies in students' understanding of human sexuality. For instance, P2, bringing 14 years worth of expertise, stated:

As an educator, I have observed a stark disparity in the level of comprehension among students, with some displaying a solid grasp of the subject matter while others remain largely uninformed.

In addition, P7 expressed the presence of varied sexuality knowledge among students: I have noticed a wide range of knowledge levels among students regarding sex education. While some students display a good understanding of the topic, some lack even the most basic knowledge.

Participants described the challenges in teaching SeD, noting their students' inhibitions and shyness about the topic of sexuality. The majority of the participants articulated their students' feelings of shame and awkwardness when discussing sex. Students' shyness in engaging in SeD instructions hindered participation in the class. Moreover, participants conveyed a wide range of students' understanding of the topic of sexuality, which also can inhibit the quality of their SeD lessons.

Theme 3: Teachers Use Personable Approaches to Make Sexuality Education Less Intimidating. Participants revealed their SeD teaching approaches to overcome challenges, including students' shyness related to discussing sexuality and their fear of judgment from their classmates. Those approaches included using individualized connections with their students, such as holding private one-on-one conversations and tailoring the class content to the specific needs of each student. Within the data, the researcher noted recurring keywords and phrases associated with overcoming challenges, such as having a "non-judgmental attitude" (5 instances), "sharing real-life experiences" (4 instances), and "private assistance" (10 instances). This repetition indicates saturation in the data regarding these concepts, reflecting how participants adapted their teaching methods with their students.

For example, P2 stated that incorporating personal experiences and real-life stories into the SeD lessons helped to gain students' attention:

By sharing my own experiences or those of others, I aim to create a safe and non-judgmental environment where students can engage with the subject matter more actively.

In another response, P3 explained how they share their own marital status to help students feel comfortable about approaching them with questions:

I share with my students that I am married, allowing me to relate to their experiences and provide informed answers to sensitive questions. I emphasize to my students that they can approach me privately after class or contact me through calls or texts if they require further assistance.

These teachers were willing to reveal their personal experiences related to sexuality with their students to encourage an open and non-judgmental classroom environment. By doing so, the participants felt they could overcome the challenges they faced teaching SeD. For example, P8, with two decades of hands-on experience, elaborated:

By discussing my own experiences, I aim to foster a sense of closeness and encourage open communication where students feel comfortable sharing their concerns and asking me private questions.

The participants shared their methods of facilitating one-on-one conversations with their students, encouraging the students to feel more at ease talking about sensitive topics related to sexuality. For instance, P4 said:

I encourage them to approach the topic with an open mind and assure them that any questions they may have, even those they are hesitant to ask in front of the whole class, can be discussed with me privately. I assure them that I am readily available to engage in one-on-one exchanges to address their inquiries and concerns.

Likewise, P6, with two decades of teaching in Ho Chi Minh City, emphasized they made available to their students a variety of private communication means to encourage open discussion related to sexuality:

I provide multiple channels for students to share their thoughts and seek guidance.

Whether through phone conversations or utilizing a private room in the school, I ensure that students can discuss sensitive topics in a confidential setting. This allows them to express their concerns openly, knowing their privacy will be respected.

Likewise, P10 offered their personal contact information, encouraging students to reach out for guidance on matters they might be hesitant to share in a classroom setting:

I have made my personal contact information available to students. This includes sharing my phone number, *Zalo*, and *Facebook* account so that students feel comfortable contacting me privately for advice and guidance on delicate matters they may not feel comfortable discussing in class.

Most participants expressed the need for differentiated SeD learning within their classrooms to overcome various challenges. The codes informed the researcher of comparable adversities the participants underwent as they taught SeD. Each participant found that engaging in personal conversations with their students facilitated a comfortable learning environment to discuss sexuality.

Results Related to Research Question 2

RQ2 sought to understand factors influencing personal experiences and perceptions of educators in Vietnam regarding teaching sexuality education to high school students. The related interview questions were IQ4a, which asked: How does your school approach providing sexuality education training and professional development to educators? Eighty percent of the participants reacted to this question by stating that no training was provided for SeD.

Also related to RQ2 was IQ7, which inquired: What factors influence your thoughts and perceptions about teaching sexuality education? Emerging from the identified keywords in the

responses to IQ7 were Theme 4 - *Conflicting Information on Sexuality from Media, the Internet, and Students' Families Influences Teachers' Approaches to Sexuality Education* - and Theme 5 - *Lack of Standardized Curricula and Policies Impacts Teachers' Ability to Teach Sexuality Education*.

Theme 4: Conflicting Information on Sexuality from Media, the Internet, and Students' Families Influences Teachers' Approaches to Sexuality Education. When reviewing the transcribed data, the researcher identified keywords or repeated phrases, such as “societal perspectives” (3 instances), “social influences” (13 instances), “outdated ways of thinking regarding SeD” (4 instances), “social media’s impact on sexuality information dissemination” (4 instances), and “embarrassment related to SeD” (6 instances). This saturation of social factors emerged as a predominant theme, highlighted by 9 out of 10 participants, influencing their approaches to teaching SeD. Supporting statements from the participants when responding to IQ7 are noted below. P3 noted that outdated societal perspectives hindered their approach to SeD:

... many teachers, including myself, particularly those with families, face challenges in delivering this essential knowledge.

Likewise, P4 noted that societal views in Vietnam related to sexuality are evolving: Societal perspectives on cohabitation and pregnancy before marriage have undergone significant changes. What was once considered a highly challenging and socially unacceptable situation has now evolved to a point where sex education is crucially important.

Contributing factors identified by P4 encompassed social perspectives, the experiences of peers and acquaintances, and shifting viewpoints on cohabitating before marriage. Several participants observed that the increase in social media and internet usage created difficulties in the classroom, as there is not one official unified source of sexual information for young

adolescents within the country. P7, with 10 years of experience from Vinh City, noted the lack of standardized knowledge on social networks created obstacles for SeD teachers:

The proliferation of information on social networks, often without proper regulation or quality control, makes it difficult for teachers to navigate and provide accurate guidance to their students. The lack of a centralized, authoritative source of information further compounds the challenge, leaving teachers to rely on their own resources and expertise.

P5, with 14 years of professional tenure, and P9, with 20 years of practical insight, remarked about the power of the media (internet, television, etc.) in distributing inconsistent or sometimes improper information regarding sexuality, explaining:

P5: The pervasive influence of the internet, television, and the broader environment can expose students to inappropriate or inaccurate information that may not align with their age and level of maturity. This highlights the importance of a comprehensive ... education curriculum to counteract potential misinformation.

P9: The widespread presence of information on social networks adds another layer of challenges. Students, especially those in high school, are exposed to various online content that may not be suitable or accurate. The lack of sufficient knowledge and guidance makes it challenging for them to discern reliable sources from misinformation. When considering societal factors related to sexuality, gender identities are intertwined within a given society. P1 articulated as much by stating:

In today's society, discussions surrounding sex education undergo significant changes, requiring teachers to examine and enhance their understanding of gender differences critically. Teachers must stay informed about diverse gender identities, such as non-binary, transgender, and genderqueer individuals.

Several participants articulated that the outdated way parents view sexuality as a challenge. The parents' old-fashioned beliefs, values, and expectations regarding what should

be taught at what age the parents felt SeD would be appropriate influenced the content and approach to SeD within a school. Within this context, P8, drawing from 14 years experience and P9, equipped with a deep reservoir of 30 years' knowledge, expressed that family persuasions impacted teaching sex education considerably:

P8: Many families adhere to old traditional beliefs and thus restrict their children's learning and exploration of sexuality, which can create fear, embarrassment, and hesitancy in students when it comes to discussing these topics with their teachers.

P9: Parents play a significant role in shaping attitudes toward sex education. Many parents still hold traditional beliefs and are hesitant to discuss sex and sexuality with their children openly. This reluctance stems from a lack of understanding, embarrassment, discomfort, or simply not knowing how to communicate age-appropriate information effectively.

These teachers concluded that schools and families should cooperate and share information, as noted by P10, a biology teacher with 15 years of experience:

It is essential to move away from the outdated mindset of avoiding discussions about sex and instead prioritize disseminating accurate and comprehensive sex education. Schools can work hand in hand with families to provide guidance and support to children, ensuring that they are equipped with the necessary knowledge to navigate their sexual and emotional well-being.

Participants of this study described the social dynamics underlying teaching SeD. Most participants articulated social factors influencing their experiences and perceptions regarding teaching sexuality education to Vietnamese high school students. Factors included in Theme 4 were cultural and social norms, social media influences on adolescents, and sexual orientation, all of which impacted the approach to teaching SeD.

Theme 5: Lack of Standardized Curricula and Policies Impact Teachers' Ability to Teach Sexuality Education. As noted, RQ2 sought to understand factors influencing personal

experiences and perceptions of educators in Vietnam regarding teaching sexuality education to high school students. In determining Theme 5, IQ7 addressed the policy factors influencing educators' thoughts and perceptions about teaching sexuality education. When reviewing the transcribed interview data, the researcher identified keywords or recurrent phrases, such as "current policy constraints" (5 instances) related to SeD. An educational policy framework had reach saturation as a vital thematic component, acknowledged by several of the participants, as noted by P2 and P3, seasoned educators with over a decade of experience in Ho Chi Minh City:

P2: Educational policies play a vital role in supporting teachers in delivering quality sex education ... Providing teachers with access to up-to-date resources, training programs, and professional development opportunities is also crucial in equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively deliver sex education to students.

P3: ... challenges stem from ... constraints imposed by the current educational policy structure.

Likewise, P7, drawing conclusions from a decade of teaching experience, mentioned that current policies related to SeD lack an emphasis on mandatory sexuality education teaching:

The absence of a comprehensive and officially sanctioned curriculum hinders teachers from delivering consistent and standardized sex education. Without clear guidelines and support from official documents, teachers may struggle to address the diverse needs of their students effectively.

The participants offered valuable insights into the policy factors that influence the pedagogy of SeD. Most participants emphasized the profound impact of educational policy factors on their experiences and perspectives on delivering sexuality education to high school students in Vietnam. Theme 5 encompassed critical aspects such as the imperative need for unambiguous guidelines and standardized curricula, accompanied by comprehensive and

officially authorized documents. Collectively, these factors significantly influenced the participants' instructional approaches to SeD.

Results Related to Research Question 3

RQ3 inquired: What recommendations do educators have for training/professional development and content delivery for teaching sexuality education to high school students? Arising from the discovery of keywords and codes within the interview data, two themes were identified: Theme 6 - *Preference for a Blended Method Related to Professional Development, but Teaching Students is Divided Evenly for Face-to-Face and Blended Methods*, and Theme 7 - *Expressed Need for Compulsory Professional Development to Deliver High-Quality Sexuality Education*.

Theme 6: Preference for a Blended Method Related to Professional Development, but Teaching Students is Divided Evenly for Face-to-Face and Blended Methods. RQ3 relates to Vietnamese educators' perceptions of the quality and method of receiving professional development. Likewise, RQ3 was addressed in relationship to the teacher-participants' preferred approaches for teaching SeD content to their high-school students.

- (IQ5a) Which medium is more effective for teacher professional development (face-to-face, online, or blended)?
- (IQ5b) Which medium is more effective for teaching sexuality education to students?

Blended learning has gained popularity due to its ability to accelerate learning while maintaining high efficiency. Also known as hybrid learning, blended learning can be used in teacher professional development as an educational method that merges online technology and face-to-face practices (Bernard et al., 2014). Participants noted they can access professional development course materials, lectures, and assignments from virtually anywhere, allowing them to tailor their learning schedules to their needs. "Blended learning" emerged as a primary

code, reaching saturation with 9 occurrences, and the preferred mode of professional training, earning the endorsement of nine out of ten participants (see Table 3).

Table 3

Teachers' Preferred Mode of Delivery of Professional Development

Participant	Professional Training
P1	Blended delivery
P2	Blended delivery
P3	Blended delivery
P4	Blended delivery
P5	Blended delivery
P6	Blended delivery
P7	Blended delivery
P8	Face-to-face delivery
P9	Blended delivery
P10	Blended delivery

The data indicated that adaptability and reduced time and location constraints when using blended learning fostered a sense of autonomy among professional learners. P4, a Ho Chi Minh City participant with 22 years of experience, described that blended learning afforded teachers opportunities to access professional development courses from anywhere, allowing them to modify learning schedules to their personal schedules:

Online sessions offer convenience and flexibility for teachers, allowing us to access the training materials and participate at our own pace and preferred time. I also recognize the effectiveness of face-to-face interactions in certain scenarios ... blended sessions

provide a more immersive and engaging learning experience, allowing for direct interaction, discussions, and immediate clarifications.

Another participant, P3, articulated the extensive possibilities for a blended learning approach, which could include online collaboration and meeting groups while also working together within in-person sessions:

Face-to-face training sessions provide opportunities for interactive discussions, practical demonstrations, and in-person support from experts. Online platforms serve as valuable resources for continuous learning and support. They can provide teachers with access to teaching materials, instructional videos, and online forums for collaboration and knowledge-sharing.

P5, drawing from 14 years of professional experience, articulated that online courses might add to in-person learning (blended learning), allowing individuals to explore topics and reexamine professional development materials:

Face-to-face training and workshops offer valuable occasions for teachers to interact with experts in the field, ask questions, and engage in discussions ... specific website addresses dedicated to sex education can serve as centralized platforms where teachers and students can access a range of resources, such as lesson plans, educational videos, interactive quizzes, and informative articles.

Thoughtfulness was expressed by P10, an educator based in Ho Chi Minh City with 15 years of experience, noting that online learning alone was not sufficient as they supported blending learning for professional development:

Online training allows teachers to access professional development opportunities from the comfort of their own homes or classrooms, eliminating the need for travel and saving valuable time. However, while online training offers significant benefits, it should be combined with face-to-face training to maximize its effectiveness ... it also fosters

collaboration and networking among teachers, creating a supportive professional community.

Related to teacher-to-student SeD content delivery, half of the participants remarked that blended learning while the other half stated that in-person (5 instances) was more appropriate. (See Table 4.)

Table 4

Teachers' Preferred Mode of Sexuality Education Content Delivery to Students

Participant	SeD Content Delivery to Students
P1	Face-to-face delivery
P2	Face-to-face delivery
P3	Blended delivery
P4	Face-to-face delivery
P5	Face-to-face delivery
P6	Face-to-face delivery
P7	Blended delivery
P8	Blended delivery
P9	Blended delivery
P10	Blended delivery

Regarding the face-to-face preference for SeD content delivery to students, P4 observed that one of its vital benefits was the ability to monitor students' engagement in-person:

Being physically present in the classroom allows me to gauge students' interest, identify any areas of confusion, and adapt my teaching approach accordingly. This level of immediate feedback is invaluable in ensuring that the content is engaging and tailored to the specific needs of the students.

P1, leveraging 4 years of professional experience, agreed, expressing the advantage of seeing the students' direct reactions within face-to-face SeD sessions:

Face-to-face lessons enable teachers to directly observe students' attitudes and behaviors, offering a deeper understanding of their engagement and comprehension.

The in-person approach allows for real-time interaction and immediate feedback.

In contrast, several participants preferred the blended approach to delivering SeD content to their students. For example, P3, an educator with 18 years of experience, and P10, a teacher with 15 years of teaching experience, stated that while the benefits of face-to-face lessons were significant, the online elements afforded opportunities for the enrichment of in-person lessons:

P3: Face-to-face teaching allows for immediate interaction, fostering student engagement and receptiveness. In addition, online mediums provide an excellent platform for sharing visual aids, such as images and videos, which can enhance the delivery of sex education content.

P10: When I engage with students face-to-face, I focus on interactive discussions, hands-on activities, and providing immediate feedback. However, I recognize the value of utilizing technology to enhance the learning experience ... These resources can be shared with students to explore at their own pace, allowing them to review concepts, conduct further research, or delve into related topics.

For professional development, the participants overwhelmingly preferred a blended learning approach. The online segment has the benefits of not having to travel long distances, flexibility in learning at one's own pace, and promotes self-directed learning. The face-to-face portion encourages peer interaction and collaboration. For the participants, when delivering SeD content to their students, the preferred method of blended learning versus face-to-face was divided 50/50. Half the participants commented that blended learning of content delivery for SeD to their students was constructive to their student population. However, the other half stated that

in-person (face-to-face) was more suitable for providing immediate clarification or answering questions.

Theme 7: Expressed Need for Compulsory Professional Development to Deliver High-Quality Sexuality Education. The interview questions related to Theme 7 - *Expressed Need for Compulsory Professional Development to Deliver High-Quality Sexuality Education* - were:

- (IQ4b) What improvements could be made to teacher professional development to better to support student learning and understanding of sexuality education?
- (IQ8) Do you have further insights or reflections about sexuality education training and instruction?

The researcher identified keywords or repeated phrases, such as “standardized policies set by The Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training and school districts” (10 instances), “unified SeD curriculum and documentation” (5 instances), “authorized resources” (2 instances), “age-appropriate content” (14 instances), “psychological expertise” (7 instances) and “mandatory professional training” (7 instances). These codes informed Theme 7: *Expressed Need for Compulsory Professional Development to Deliver High-Quality Sexuality Education*. Statements from the participants when responding to IQ4b included that from P5, a seasoned Ho Chi minh City educator with 14 years of practical observation, who expressed that compulsory professional development was needed for SeD teachers:

I strongly believe that mandatory professional training for teachers organized by *The Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training* is crucial in equipping teachers with the necessary skills and expertise to teach sex education effectively. It is essential to prioritize the professional development of teachers in this field to ensure they are well-prepared and confident in addressing sensitive topics with their students. Many teachers may initially feel shy or hesitant when teaching about sex education. However, we can

confidently overcome these barriers and approach SeD-related topics with the proper training and support.

Also, in relation to discussing a standardized SeD curriculum citing goals and outcomes for each grade level, P4, with a deep understanding from 22 years of practical insight, stated:

Only when *The Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training* mandates the formal implementation of sex education will there be investments in essential resources such as materials, programs, lesson plans, and qualified lecturers. This investment ensures an official professional training process for teachers, enabling them to deliver high-quality instruction to students.

Likewise, P2, tapping into 14 years of expertise, articulated the need for uniform SeD curricula and required professional development:

The Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training should develop and standardize these [SeD] materials and mandate professional teacher training to ensure consistency and quality across educational institutions.

In addition to mandatory training specifically related to SeD, participants expressed a need for training to encompass psychological knowledge and skills to aid them during complex situations within the classroom. For example, P3, with 18 years of experience, stated:

Recognizing that teachers may encounter questions or topics that go beyond their expertise in Biology and Civic Education, it is essential to provide additional support to us. For instance, providing approved resources that connect teachers with medical and psychological expertise can offer proper guidance and advice when addressing more complex or sensitive issues for our students.

Likewise, P7, enriched by 10 years of teaching, noted that professional development should incorporate disciplines outside of SeD to include, for example, psychological approaches to teaching adolescents:

The teacher professional development program should cover various aspects such as psychology, physiology, and effective teaching methods, ensuring teachers have the necessary knowledge and skills to educate their students effectively.

Moreover, there were supporting statements from the participants when responding to IQ8, which asked for spontaneous recommendations for teaching SeD in Vietnam. Several responses are noted below with a focus on age-appropriate SeD content. For instance, P3 articulated that it was vital to have approved documents and textbooks appropriate to each age group:

I believe initiating pregnancy prevention education in grade 11 at the high school level is too late. I advocate for early education starting as early as primary school that provide age-appropriate sex education ... This comprehensive approach will help children develop a natural reflex to protect themselves and alleviate their fear of discussing the topic.

Likewise, P5, drawing from 14 years of experience, commented regarding the necessity for teachers to be provided with consistent age-appropriate SeD content:

... materials should be tailored to the different age groups, including preschools and primary and secondary schools. By implementing a consistent and sequential approach to sex education, children can develop a clear understanding of their bodies, relationships, and how to protect themselves.

In another response, P7 agreed that age-appropriate SeD content was necessary and further noted all materials should be reviewed and revised on a regular basis:

By having a well-designed and age-appropriate curriculum, educators can ensure that students receive the appropriate level of education at each stage of their schooling, be it preschool, primary, secondary, or high school. This curriculum should be continuously

updated and refined to align with the evolving needs and challenges faced by students in today's society.

Furthermore, P8, with 14 years of experience, informed what the majority of participants articulated regarding students having a solid SeD foundation of knowledge could ensure their safety and protection when handling sexual situations:

... it is crucial for sex education to be systematically taught, implemented, and standardized by *The Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training*, starting from preschool and kindergarten and extending throughout the different grade levels. By introducing age-appropriate content, children can learn how to protect themselves and develop a solid foundation of knowledge.

Within Theme 7, participants referred to *The Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training* as a possible hindrance to delivering thorough and pertinent SeD to their students. In addition to a need for unified age-appropriate SeD content and mandatory professional training, many teachers conveyed the need for consistent, quality, and updated SeD materials for their classrooms.

Chapter Summary

This chapter began with a discussion of the phenomenological study's context and the data collection and processing procedures, leading to emergent themes and an analysis of the results. Also included in Chapter 4 were descriptions of the participants and an elaboration on how the method of data analysis was applied to the data collected. Seven themes were generated via thematic analysis:

- Theme 1: Diverse Strategies Were Employed in the Classroom for Sexuality Education, With a Reliance on Presentation Activities
- Theme 2: Students Express Shyness from Lack of Knowledge and Fear of Peer Judgment When Learning Sexuality Education

- Theme 3: Teachers Use Personable Approaches to Make Sexuality Education Less Intimidating
- Theme 4: Conflicting Information on Sexuality from Media, the Internet, and Students' Families Influences Teachers' Approaches to Sexuality Education
- Theme 5: Lack of Standardized Curricula and Policies Impacts Teachers' Ability to Teach Sexuality Education
- Theme 6: Preference for a Blended Method Related to Professional Development, but Teaching Students is Divided Evenly for Face-to-Face and Blended Methods
- Theme 7: Expressed Need for Compulsory Professional Development to Deliver High-Quality Sexuality Education

The discussion of seven themes will be examined and interpreted in Chapter 5.

Chapter Five: Discussion Of The Results

Chapter 5 of this qualitative phenomenological study brings together the study's purpose and research questions, details the methodology utilized, and considers and analyzes the themes. This chapter also submits the themes' connection to the theoretical frameworks and current literature. This chapter concludes the research study, offering insights into its themes, recommendations for future scholars and practitioners, and reflective analysis encompassing both the outcomes and potential future research directions. The primary aim of this study was to gain insights into educators' lived experiences, teaching practices, and challenges related to sexuality education (SeD) in Vietnamese high schools.

Study Overview

This qualitative phenomenological study explored participants' experiences teaching sexuality education (SeD) within Vietnamese high schools. The study discovered teacher preferences for SeD professional development and training. This study elicited participants' perspectives regarding SeD teaching to secondary school adolescents in Vietnam to address the purpose of the study and its research questions (RQs):

- RQ1. How do high school educators in Vietnam describe their teaching practices related to sexuality education?
- RQ2. What factors influence the experiences and perceptions of educators in Vietnam regarding teaching sexuality education to high school students?
- RQ3. What recommendations do educators have for training/professional development and content delivery for teaching sexuality education to high school students?

Qualitative research involves the evaluation of social phenomena occurring within natural settings (Teherani et al., 2015). Various experiences fall within subjective opinions of these phenomena, including how individuals undergo diverse facets of their lives and how

groups and individuals act and formulate connections (Teherani et al., 2015). Qualitative research enabled the researcher to comprehend individuals' perceptions, feelings, viewpoints, and actions.

This study of high-school teachers in Vietnam employed a qualitative phenomenological design aligned with the research objectives (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022). The main goal of this design was to offer an account of the phenomenon under scrutiny and its accompanying features, prioritizing the “what” aspect over the “how” and “why” dimensions (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022; Nassaji, 2015). A phenomenological study design provides an outline for exploring a complex situation from individuals' varying viewpoints (Lauckner et al., 2015). This research framework offered various views on understanding how meaning was derived from the participant group of high-school teachers in Vietnam (Lauckner et al., 2015). This meticulous qualitative phenomenological approach yielded precision and accuracy, as the data obtained were constrained to the specific phenomenon under exploration (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022; Finlay, 2009). This phenomenological study was guided by its research questions and overall purpose. The study thoroughly explored high-school educators' knowledge and insights into SeD teaching and professional development and how this type of education affects their students.

Discussion of Themes

This phenomenological qualitative study focused on exploring the essence of human experiences and understanding the meaning people attribute to those experiences. It sought to capture the core aspects of the lived experiences. This study considered the frameworks of constructivism, social cognitive theory, and transformative theory as they aligned with the study's results (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). The results are related to SeD teachers' preparedness, development, and strategies framed by the following three learning theories:

- *Constructivism*: A learner-centered teaching model (Piaget, 1973; Glasersfeld, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978), constructivism allows for the professional training and delivery of

SeD, resulting in more effective intimate connections for both learners and teachers (Cornelius-White, 2007). Through personal reflections, a deeper clarification of the articulated SeD curricula can enable teachers to identify the divergences lacking when standardized curricula are absent (Lodge et al., 2022).

- *Social Cognitive Theory*: Within Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), there is an ongoing interaction among an individual's social realm, their personal and primary motivators, and, ultimately, their resultant behaviors - such as those related to the teachers who participated in this study (Swearer et al., 2014). Cognitive processes control learning behaviors as individuals transform themselves through imitation, modeling, and feedback (Bandura, 1989, 1999; Romiro, 2013). Numerous environmental, individual, and social factors influence cognitive processes, leading to changes in an individual's learning and behavior.
- *Transformative Learning*: Learners actively make sense of situations based on their reflections on events and experiences. Meaning-making includes acquiring knowledge based on individuality and emotions (Zittoun & Brinkmann, 2012). Transformative learning approaches have proven beneficial in illustrating practices in diverse adult learning settings. Transformative learning theory is particularly relevant to this study's results as it highlights the significance of task-oriented learning, aligning with the learning needs of adults, such as the participants (Knowles, 1984).

The themes have highlighted Vietnam's fundamental need for standardized SeD curricula and continuous and mandatory teacher professional development. Moreover, the results indicated a preference for blended learning as the professional development delivery method. Blended learning is an instructional strategy that combines online learning with face-to-

face practices (Bernard et al., 2014). Based on the results and considering the study's theoretical frameworks, the seven themes are expounded below.

Theme 1: Diverse Strategies Were Employed in the Classroom for Sexuality Education, With a Reliance on Presentation Activities

The participants in the study placed substantial emphasis on the effectiveness of specific teaching strategies employed in the domain of SeD. They highlighted the distinct advantages associated with the utilization of an evidence-based approach toward teaching sexuality to their high school students. This approach was distinguished by its structured and objective presentation of information and factual content (UNESCO, 2018). Within the literature, one study suggested that it is recommended that SeD policies and programs are grounded in scientific evidence (Lameiras-Fernández et al., 2021). As corroborated in this study's data, a commitment to reliable, evidence-based SeD content is paramount, as P7 elaborated:

I explore trusted websites, scientific articles, and educational materials such as textbooks to ensure the information I share is reliable, evidence-based, and appropriate for their age and level of understanding.

(In native language, Vietnamese:)

Cô tự tìm tài liệu trên những website đáng tin cậy, những bài báo khoa học, và các tài liệu giáo dục như sách giáo khoa để đảm bảo những thông tin cô chia sẻ với học sinh là đáng tin cậy, dựa trên bằng chứng và phù hợp với độ tuổi và trình độ hiểu biết của học sinh mình.

Furthermore, proactive efforts to enhance the learning experience were evident in formulating engaging and scientifically rigorous lesson plans. These lesson plans were thoughtfully crafted to encourage active student participation. P3 articulated:

I take the initiative to develop engaging and scientifically sound lesson plans to facilitate student participation.

(In native language, Vietnamese:)

Cô chủ động tự mình lập kế hoạch bài dạy để bài học có sự hấp dẫn, theo khoa học, nhằm tạo ra điều kiện cho học sinh tham gia trong lớp.

Moreover, students' mature and responsible approach to sexuality education in the classroom was consistently promoted, underscoring the importance of scientific accuracy and ensuring a sense of maturity among students in such discussions. The literature noted the importance of mandatory comprehensive, positive, inclusive, and skills-based education to help adolescents build healthy and positive relationships (Lameiras-Fernández et al., 2021; Patterson et al., 2019; UNESCO, 2022, 2023). P6 highlighted how vital scientific accuracy was, as they commented:

I emphasize the importance of scientific accuracy and promote a responsible and mature approach to discussing sex education.

(In native language, Vietnamese:)

Cô nhấn mạnh tầm quan trọng khi truyền đạt thông tin về giáo dục giới tính bằng những từ ngữ khoa học để khuyến khích các em có thái độ đúng đắn và trưởng thành khi bàn luận về vấn đề này.

This noteworthy observation implied that implementing such a pedagogical method could significantly boost student trust and nurture respect toward educators and the subject matter of sexuality.

Evidence-based sexual health education should be accessible to all students as part of a comprehensive school health education program (Breuner & Mattson, 2016; National Association of School Nurses [NASN], 2017). The literature consistently highlighted the importance of children and adolescents learning age-appropriate sexual health education to help youngsters develop a safe and positive view of sexuality (Bassey, 2010; Bruner, 1960, 1966; Dowding, 1993; Leung et al., 2019; UNESCO, 2022, 2023). Consequently, adopting

effective, evidence-based teaching techniques and cultivating a supportive educational environment positively connect with students' inclination to engage with SeD constructively and respectfully.

Theme 2: Students Express Shyness from Lack of Knowledge and Fear of Peer

Judgment When Learning Sexuality Education

The study shed light on the prominent challenge reported by participants in teaching SeD, explicitly focusing on the inhibitions and shyness observed in their students concerning discussion of sexuality. The participants consistently highlighted their students' struggle with shame and fear of peer judgment related to conversations about sexuality. The students' self-consciousness profoundly hindered active participation within the classroom during SeD instructions. Moreover, P9 presented empathy for their students related to their timidity when talking about sexuality:

In the context of Vietnamese customs, where discussions about sexuality may be considered taboo or sensitive, it is understandable that students may exhibit shyness and hesitancy to talk about these topics in class.

(In native language, Vietnamese:)

Có thể vì với phong tục tập quán của người Việt Nam, các cuộc thảo luận về giới tính có thể xem là điều cấm kỵ hoặc nhạy cảm, cô hiểu và nhận thấy phần lớn học sinh vẫn rất rụt rè và lưỡng lự không dám phát biểu, trao đổi về vấn đề này.

Within the literature, the manifestation of words related to sexuality, such as *embarrassed*, was noted in a quantitative study (Gunji, 2022). This study supported social cognitive theory (SCT) and transformative learning principles, promoting collaborative learning environments (Bandura, 1999; Mezirow, 1990). Transformative learning would be most appropriate, addressing teachers' SeD literacy needs and competencies for teaching their students. While SCT supports the education of both adults and youngsters, underscoring such

factors as collaboration and feedback, transformative learning is more specific to adult learning (Mezirow, 2009).

Transformative learning involves two kinds of knowledge acquisition: (a) instrumental learning, which focuses on learning through task-oriented problem-solving, and (b) communicative learning, which affects how individuals communicate their feelings and desires (Mezirow, 2009). Thus, the desired transformation outcome is an individual's development of autonomy through a greater sense of self-sufficiency, self-efficacy, and independence, which aids teachers in the SeD classroom.

However, the study's results suggest that challenges may affect many SeD teachers in Vietnam. Furthermore, these challenges will likely continue to shape people's behaviors in the coming years as future generations continue to be affected by the restrictive cultural environment within Vietnam. Overcoming cultural limitations related to adolescent sexuality should be prioritized with increased awareness by organizations serving communities, schools, and policymakers not just in Vietnam but across the globe. The participants endeavored to rise above these challenges, as detailed in Theme 3.

Theme 3: Teachers Use Personable Approaches to Make Sexuality Education Less Intimidating

The critical challenge when teaching SeD centered on the participants' students' modesty and shyness when reviewing topics related to sexuality in the classroom. As noted, the participants frequently emphasized their students' resistance to discussing sexuality, having feelings of shame and distress. The students' uneasiness hampered genuine involvement within classroom SeD lessons, as noted by P2:

I advise my students to approach me privately if they feel shy or uncomfortable discussing sensitive topics in class. I encourage one-on-one conversations to provide a more personalized and supportive space for students to ask questions related to sexuality.

(In native language, Vietnamese:)

Cô khuyên các bạn rằng nếu cảm thấy ngại ngùng hoặc không thoải mái khi thảo luận về những vấn đề nhạy cảm này trong lớp thì có thể gặp riêng cô. Cô khuyến khích những cuộc trò chuyện riêng này để các bạn có một không gian riêng tư và được hỗ trợ hơn khi các bạn đặt những ra câu hỏi liên quan đến giới tính.

According to one of the tenets of transformative learning, there is a need to establish personal relevance when teaching (Mezirow, 1990). One of the participants, P7, focused on connecting to their students, saying:

By addressing these topics openly and with a positive attitude, I aim to create a safe space where students feel comfortable sharing their questions, concerns, and personal experiences.

(In native language, Vietnamese:)

Khi tiếp cận học sinh về những vấn đề này một cách cởi mở và bằng thái độ vui vẻ, cô mong muốn tạo ra một nơi an toàn để giúp các em cảm thấy thoải mái chia sẻ với cô về những câu hỏi, vướng mắc của mình, cũng như là trải nghiệm cá nhân của các em.

SeD teachers can introduce personal relevance by sharing their stories in a one-on-one setting and at the outset of the lesson to motivate their students' curiosity to sustain engagement. One issue of mixed-gender classrooms resonated and upheld the challenge of teaching SeD within Vietnamese high schools where mixed-gender classrooms are the norm, as noted by P2:

... teaching in a mixed-gender classroom presents a big challenge of student hesitance and shyness. Students may find it difficult to discuss sensitive topics with their peers openly in class.

(In native language, Vietnamese:)

...dạy trong lớp có cả nam và nữ dẫn đến một thách thức lớn là học sinh rất lưỡng lự và ngại ngùng chia sẻ. Các em cảm thấy khó có thể thảo luận về những chủ đề nhạy cảm này với các bạn cùng trang lứa một cách cởi mở trong lớp học.

However, a degree of transparency, openness, and personalization in the teaching of SeD is necessary to avoid misunderstandings and overcome students' modesty.

Theme 4: Conflicting Information on Sexuality From Media, the Internet, and Students' Families Influences Teachers' Approaches to Sexuality Education

The participants in this study provided in-depth insights into social dynamics and cultural influences that significantly shaped their approach to teaching SeD. One theoretical framework within this study, the constructivist learning model, emphasizes the significance of community influences on teaching and learning (Piaget, 1973; Vygotsky, 1978). Constructivism informs that teachers bring perspectives and experiences to their learning and teaching processes, including their personal beliefs and cultural values related to sexuality.

Moreover, fundamental beliefs contained in (a) life course theory (Elder, 1998; Satcher, 2001), (b) socioecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), (c) systems theory (Jurich & Myers-Bowman, 1998), and (d) intersectionality theory (Crenshaw, 1989) hold that the associations between an individual and their family within social, cultural, and historical contexts shape their development. Suppose theories such as these are included in the lens of human sexuality. In that case, it becomes apparent how significant people's negotiation of their sexuality and sexual experiences impact their ongoing rapport of relationships and socio-cultural contexts (Russell et al., 2020).

A predominant factor discussed by participants was the influence of Vietnamese cultural norms on teaching SeD (Le et al., 2023; Vinh & Tuan, 2015). These customs dictate societal expectations, attitudes, and behaviors related to sexuality, affecting the content, delivery, and reception of SeD in high schools. Adhering to cultural norms while imparting SeD was essential to navigating societal sensitivities and fostering a more receptive learning environment. Most

participants also discussed the effects of the Internet and social media on teachers and students (Watanabe et al., 2014). These dynamics are pivotal in the experiences and perceptions concerning SeD within Vietnamese high schools. For example, access to social media for adolescent students brought the possibility of misinformation, as expressed by P8:

Despite the benefits of social media networks in providing lots of information, students' understanding of sex education is still limited due to a lack of awareness and reliable sources.

(In native language, Vietnamese:)

Mặc dù mạng xã hội có những lợi ích về cung cấp hỗ trợ cho các bạn thêm rất nhiều thông tin, nhưng hiểu biết của các bạn về giáo dục giới tính vẫn còn hạn hẹp vì vẫn còn thiếu ý thức và thiếu những nguồn thông tin đáng tin cậy.

The widespread impact of social platforms and online content was recognized as a significant factor in shaping students' understanding of sex, relationships, and body image. This knowledge acquisition aligns with one of the study's frameworks, social cognitive theory (SCT). This theory explains that people attain knowledge and skills by observing and imitating others, such as via social media (Bandura, 1999). Educators acknowledged the need to address and contextualize these digital influences within the realm of SeD to ensure a comprehensive and accurate understanding of sexuality for their students.

Moreover, sexuality comprises the comprehension and engagement with sexual orientation, intimacy, emotional relationships and affection, gender identity, and human reproduction, as demonstrated in the literature (Bailey et al., 2016; Diamond, 2009; Ramadugu et al., 2011). Participants emphasized the importance of acknowledging and addressing the diverse spectrum of sexual orientations among their students. Xiong et al. (2020) recommended addressing the impact of gender differences on teachers' classroom practices by adopting a gender-sensitive approach.

Recognizing and respecting the LGBTQ+ communities' unique needs within the SeD curriculum was crucial for an inclusive and equitable approach to SeD. However, participants discussed the significance of their inability to foster an environment where all students, regardless of sexual orientation, feel represented, respected, and supported. For instance, P4 and P5 both noted there was an apparent lack of accommodations within the SeD classroom for the LGBT community:

P4: It is essential to cover various topics, such as reproductive health, contraceptives, sexually transmitted infections, gender identity, and LGBTQ+ inclusivity.

(In native language, Vietnamese:)

P4: Giáo dục giới tính cần phải bao gồm các chuyên đề khác nhau, ví dụ như sức khỏe sinh sản, các biện pháp phòng tránh thai, những bệnh liên quan đến tình dục, bình đẳng giới, và bao gồm thể giới thứ ba.

P5: Often, the available information predominantly focuses on heterosexual relationships, leaving little attention to individuals identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. It is important to acknowledge that the LGBT community in Vietnam is significant, and it is crucial to address their unique needs and concerns within sex education.

(In native language, Vietnamese:)

P5: Thông thường những thông tin hiện nay chủ yếu tập trung nhiều vào giáo dục giới tính trong quan hệ khác giới giữa nam và nữ, rất ít để ý đến giáo dục giới tính để trang bị và giúp đỡ cho những cá nhân là giới tính thứ ba, lưỡng tính hoặc chuyển giới. Cô thấy cần có sự chú trọng đáng kể đến cộng đồng LGBT ở Vietnam, và giáo dục giới tính cần giúp giải quyết những thắc mắc của họ nữa.

Individuals are sheltered in a particular social ecology, and their interactions with their environment shape their experiences (Bandura, 1986; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This current study has promoted an understanding of human behaviors by exploring deficit perspectives

instituted in the cultural norms of Vietnam and many other Asian countries (Khanh Chi et al., 2021; Khuat, 2003; Le et al., 2023). The results shed light on the intricate interplay of cultural norms, Internet and social media influences, and considerations of sexual orientation in teaching SeD in Vietnamese high schools. These factors emphasize the importance of tailoring SeD approaches within the socio-cultural context (Bandura, 1986, 1989). In overcoming such influences, teachers of SeD can acknowledge the diversity of perspectives as they promote an inclusive and informed understanding of sexuality among high school students.

Theme 5: Lack of Standardized Curricula and Policies Impacts Teachers' Ability to Teach Sexuality Education

Participants stressed the importance of explicit and unambiguous guidelines in the SeD educational policy framework. Precision in guidelines ensures a standardized approach to SeD delivery, leaving no room for vague content. UNESCO (2015) stated that more clarity is needed when applying a comprehensive SeD program. Within Vietnam, this transparency can enable educators to align their teaching strategies with the *Ministry of Education and Training's* stipulated objectives, ensuring students' cohesive and consistent educational experience.

The participants emphasized the necessity for standardized curricula as an essential component of their SeD teaching strategies. Uniform curricula set a consistent baseline of SeD knowledge and topics to be covered within the classroom, enhancing the comprehensiveness and consistency of SeD across various educational institutions. A standardized curriculum provides a structured pathway for educators to impart knowledge effectively and enables students to receive a consistent level of education in the domain of sexual health. P2 articulated that thorough SeD lesson plans and curricula that are designed and developed to be age-appropriate are imperative, stating that will allow:

... for a progressive and systematic approach, building upon previous knowledge and introducing new concepts in a manner that is easily understandable and engaging for

students ... bridging the knowledge gap and promoting a more inclusive learning environment.

(In native language, Vietnamese:)

... cho một cách tiếp cận tiên bộ và có hệ thống, xây dựng trên nền tảng kiến thức đã được học trước đó và giới thiệu các khái niệm mới theo cách dễ hiểu và thu hút các em... thu hẹp khoảng cách kiến thức giữa các học sinh và thúc đẩy một môi trường học tập toàn diện hơn.

Within this context of being provided uniform SeD curricula, P8 noted:

Standardizing sex education curricula across different grade levels guarantees that every student receives reliable and precise information, fostering a comprehensive understanding of their bodies, diverse viewpoints about relationships, and sexual well-being to be able to protect themselves.

(In native language, Vietnamese:)

Giáo dục giới tính nên được chuẩn hoá cho các cấp độ tuổi để đảm bảo rằng mỗi em học sinh đều nhận được thông tin chuẩn và chính xác, thúc đẩy sự hiểu biết toàn diện về cơ thể của mình, mở rộng quan niệm về những mối quan hệ của mình, cũng như hiểu về sức khoẻ giới tính để các em biết cách thức bảo vệ được bản thân mình.

One of this study's theoretical frameworks, constructivism, informs that learning occurs recursively, primarily based on prior knowledge (Knowles, 1990). Piaget (1973) illustrated how knowledge concerning a particular subject or experience could be accessed to guide present comprehension or behavior. Understanding constructivism allowed the researcher to recognize how teachers construct knowledge and meaning regarding SeD.

The participants highlighted the significance of the need for officially authorized documents from the *Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training* policy. Participants stressed the need for age-appropriate SeD content and consistent, quality materials to teach the subject effectively. The need for standardized, up-to-date SeD materials was considered a challenge.

Official authorization lends credibility and legitimacy to the SeD curriculum and materials. It provides a reliable source of information for both educators and students, reinforcing the trust and reliability associated with the content being taught. As noted by P2, official documents were viewed as fundamental references that guide the instructional approach to SeD:

To support teachers in delivering effective sex education, it is crucial to provide them with well-designed and comprehensive support, including clear documents, teaching methods, curricula, and lesson plans.

(In native language, Vietnamese:)

Để hỗ trợ giáo viên thực hiện công việc giáo dục giới tính hiệu quả, điều quan trọng là phải cung cấp cho giáo viên những hỗ trợ có thiết kế hay và toàn diện, bao gồm tài liệu, phương pháp, chương trình giảng dạy và giáo án rõ ràng.

These educators frequently mentioned that *The Ministry of Education and Training* should develop and standardize SeD materials to assure consistency and quality across all institutions, as P9 noted:

The development of official documents on sex education, tailored to the needs and maturity levels of each age group, is essential ... regardless of their geographical location or the school they attend.

(In native language, Vietnamese:)

Việc xây dựng tài liệu chính thức về giáo dục giới tính, phù hợp với nhu cầu và mức độ trưởng thành cho từng độ tuổi, thống nhất trong cả nước là điều cần thiết... bất kể vị trí địa lý trường học mà các em đang theo học.

In Vietnam, teachers in rural areas have limited access to the Internet to garner up-to-date information related to SeD. The theme of policy factors underlines the pivotal role of educational policies in shaping the pedagogical approach to SeD. The emphasis on unambiguous guidelines, standardized curricula, and officially authorized documents signifies

the necessity for a well-structured policy framework that guides educators in delivering accurate, reliable, and consistent sexual education to high school students.

Work environments and policy leadership sensitive to the practical needs of SeD teachers promote collaboration and respect rather than “hit-or-miss” approaches that under-support teachers and their students. The *Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training* should provide opportunities for SeD teachers to be exposed to training on a standardized curriculum nationwide. Such opportunities would allow teachers to learn about additional aspects needed in their classrooms, including psychological skills and knowledge, as they collaborate with their peers.

Theme 6: Preference for a Blended Method Related to Professional Development, But Teaching Students is Divided Evenly for Face-to-Face and Blended Methods

In keeping with the needed professional development for SeD educators, the results suggested that professional development should be mandatory, regularly scheduled, and delivered in the form of blended learning. Blended learning can be used in teacher professional development as an educational method that combines online technology lessons with face-to-face instruction (Bernard et al., 2014). By doing so, these teachers would be better equipped to manage their high-school classrooms and better enable their students to thrive in the fast-paced world of the 21st century.

The study delved into participants’ experiences regarding the preferred method of receiving professional development associated with SeD. The overwhelming consensus among participants favored a blended learning approach for professional development. The blended learning approach was advantageous due to its flexibility, allowing SeD educators to engage in learning without the constraints of physical travel and promoting self-directed learning. One of the participants, P1, articulated their preference for blended learning, stating:

While the face-to-face approach is effective, it is also time-consuming and involves expenses such as travel and accommodation. While online training may lack the

immediate impact on teacher motivation that face-to-face sessions provide, it still offers numerous advantages. It ensures accessibility, saves time and costs associated with travel, and enables teachers to access the necessary resources whenever required.

(In native language, Vietnamese:)

Mặc dù phương pháp đào tạo chuyên môn cho giáo viên trực tiếp có hiệu quả cao, nhưng nó tốn thời gian và chi phí chẳng hạn như là phí đi lại, mượn phòng ốc và chuyên viên. Phương pháp đào tạo trực tuyến thì lại không tác động đến động lực cho giáo viên nhiều như các buổi đào tạo trực tiếp mang lại, nhưng nó vẫn mang lại nhiều lợi ích, chẳng hạn như khả năng tiếp cận nhanh, tiết kiệm thời gian, bớt chi phí liên quan đến việc đi lại và cho phép giáo viên truy cập những nguồn kiến thức cần thiết bất cứ khi nào họ cần.

The online component of blended learning was recognized for its practical advantages, notably eliminating the need for extensive travel, enabling personalized learning at an individual pace, and fostering a culture of self-directed learning. The participants perceived these benefits as conducive to professional development, accommodating educators' varied schedules and preferences. Blended learning includes elements of education that transcend the addition of knowledge and skill to broaden reasoning, perspective, practice, and outlook (Ziegler et al., 2006).

On the other hand, the face-to-face segment of blended learning was acknowledged for its unique benefits. Participants noted that in-person interactions encourage peer engagement, collaboration, and the immediate clarification of doubts and questions. Constructivist teacher professional development is a collaborative training that enables teachers to reassess and reflect on the implicit beliefs they bring to their teaching (Richardson, 1997). Collaborative face-to-face teacher professional development is a learner-friendly social environment as teachers study and learn in cooperative or discourse groups while assessing their firsthand experiences

to inform their teaching (Hausfather, 2001). The personal touch of face-to-face interaction was valuable in fostering a conducive learning environment.

This result consisted of having compulsory and regularly scheduled professional development delivered as blended learning. As such, it highlighted the importance of tailoring professional development approaches to educators' preferences and needs, particularly in the context of SeD. A blended learning approach was favored by this study's participants for its flexibility and ability to cater to various learning styles. Moreover, self-reflection, critical discourse, and problem-solving encourage transformative learning within a blended learning environment (Karaoğlu et al., 2023; Mezirow, 1990).

Theme 7: Expressed Need for Compulsory Professional Development to Deliver High-Quality Sexuality Education

Participants in this study highlighted challenges related to specific guidance in delivering SeD to high school students. The participants stressed the critical need for obligatory professional training for SeD educators. Advocating strongly for mandatory professional training and underscoring its paramount importance in adequately preparing educators to deliver SeD responsibly and informatively, P5 stated:

By investing in mandatory training opportunities, teachers can develop the confidence and expertise needed to navigate discussions about sex education and guide their students effectively. This training should not only focus on the theoretical aspects but also provide practical guidance on creating a safe and inclusive classroom environment where students feel comfortable discussing sensitive topics.

(In native language, Vietnamese:)

Bằng cách đầu tư vào các đào tạo chuyên môn bắt buộc, giáo viên sẽ phát triển được sự tự tin và kiến thức chuyên môn cần thiết để điều hướng các cuộc thảo luận về giáo dục giới tính và hướng dẫn học sinh của mình một cách hiệu quả. Khóa đào tạo chuyên

môn này không chỉ tập trung vào các khía cạnh lý thuyết mà còn cung cấp hướng dẫn thực tế để tạo ra một môi trường lớp học an toàn và hòa nhập, nơi học sinh cảm thấy thoải mái khi thảo luận các chủ đề nhạy cảm này.

Likewise, P6 strongly expressed the need for regularly scheduled SeD professional development:

There is a pressing need for compulsory training programs that focus on developing teachers' skills in sex education. This need arises from the fact that sex education is currently integrated into various subjects rather than being taught as a standalone subject. However, not all teachers have the necessary skills, teaching methods, and communication abilities to address this topic and effectively connect with their students.

(In native language, Vietnamese:)

Cô nghĩ là nhu cầu rất cấp bách về các chương trình đào tạo chuyên môn bắt buộc tập trung vào phát triển kỹ năng giáo dục giới tính cho giáo viên. Nhu cầu này xuất phát từ thực tế là giáo dục giới tính hiện nay được lồng ghép vào nhiều môn học khác nhau thay vì được giảng dạy như một môn học độc lập. Tuy nhiên, không phải giáo viên nào cũng có những kỹ năng, phương pháp giảng dạy và khả năng giao tiếp đúng chuẩn để giải quyết những chủ đề này và kết nối hiệu quả với học sinh của mình.

As the participants noted, they require mandatory professional development to enhance their skills and knowledge to teach the potentially sensitive topic of sexuality and to learn psychological approaches for classroom management. One of the participants, P2, revealed that due to a lack of professional training, they:

[reflected] on an experience, [when] a student confided in me about her engagement in sexual activities with her boyfriend. However, due to my lack of psychological preparedness at the time, I missed an opportunity to provide her with valuable guidance on how to prevent unwanted pregnancy and engage in safe sexual practices ...

(In native language, Vietnamese:)

[kể] về một trải nghiệm, [khi] một học sinh tâm sự với cô về việc em ấy có quan hệ với bạn trai. Tuy nhiên, do chưa chuẩn bị tâm lý sẵn sàng vào thời điểm đó nên cô đã bỏ lỡ cơ hội cung cấp cho em ấy những hướng dẫn quý giá về những cách tránh thai và biện pháp quan hệ tình dục an toàn...

Participants referred to *The Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training* as a possible hindrance to delivering thorough and pertinent SeD to their students. In addition to unified age-appropriate SeD content and mandatory professional training, many teachers conveyed the need for consistent, quality, and updated SeD materials for their classrooms. These educators expressed a need for a broader approach to SeD professional development that includes psychology, aiding them in attending to the sensibilities of their high-school students.

SeD is a school subject purporting to provide adolescents with the information and skills they need to navigate relationships, understand sex and sexuality, and find the resources they need for obtaining additional information and relevant health services (O'Brien & Burns, 2020; UNESCO, 2015). For instance, comprehensive sex education (CSE) encompasses topics that pertain to relationships, gender diversity, and rights (Lameiras-Fernández et al., 2021). Often being framed as a tool for risk reduction, CSE needs to be guided by the more extensive goals of supporting youngsters' sexual health and well-being, facilitating their growth into sexually healthy adults.

Summary of Discussion

SeD educators need professional development opportunities (Leung et al., 2019). Constructivism posits that learners construct knowledge based on prior experiences and that learning is most effective when active, meaningful, and situated in authentic contexts (Shah, 2019). In SeD instruction, educators must have the knowledge and skills to construct a safe learning setting where their students can build their comprehension of sexually related health topics (Kirby, 2008).

Providing adequate training and support for educators can facilitate students' engagement in the learning process and create more meaningful and authentic learning experiences. If educators are adequately trained in SeD, they can support students in cultivating a more robust and accurate comprehension of sexuality topics, which is crucial for encouraging positive sexual health outcomes.

The themes strongly emphasize the pivotal role of regulatory compliance and continuous professional development in shaping the effective delivery of SeD in Vietnamese high schools. A more stringent regulatory environment, coupled with comprehensive training and access to updated, quality materials, was deemed essential to improve the overall quality of SeD delivery.

Youth worldwide deserve attention and guidance for various sexual health topics, scaffolded across grades – even beginning in kindergarten (Goldfarb & Lieberman, 2021). Such foundational sexuality education, embedded in supportive school environments and across subject areas, has the potential to improve sexual, social, and emotional health and academic outcomes for all young people. A critical area that emerged from the results is that discussions of sexuality are appropriate in many aspects of society, including education, family life, and community engagement (Leung et al., 2019; Russell et al., 2020).

Limitations

One limitation of this phenomenological qualitative study was a constraint of the sample. The absence of male participants might be attributed to cultural constraints, particularly concerning discussions of sexuality education with a female researcher. Such cultural barriers may have led men to perceive participation in the study as socially undesirable. Furthermore, the absence of male perspectives limited the comprehensiveness of the study's findings, potentially overlooking essential insights and experiences related to sexuality education. This limitation underscores the need for future research to employ strategies that effectively engage male participants while navigating cultural sensitivities surrounding discussions of sexuality.

Furthermore, the study predominantly included individuals from urban areas, thereby potentially overlooking the intricate cultural nuances and distinct challenges prevalent in rural communities. This geographical bias limited the study's scope, as it failed to capture the perspectives and experiences that may exist in rural settings. Rural communities often face unique socio-economic factors, limited access to resources, and differing cultural norms surrounding sexuality education, all of which could significantly impact individuals' perspectives and experiences. By excluding participants from rural areas, the study missed an opportunity to comprehensively explore these crucial dynamics and their implications for sexuality education. Therefore, future research should incorporate diverse samples from urban and rural contexts to comprehensively understand this complex issue.

These limitations significantly constrained the generalizability of the study's findings due to the potential variation in participants' backgrounds. Age, socioeconomic status, cultural beliefs, and geographic location influence individuals' perceptions and experiences regarding sexuality education. Therefore, while the study provides valuable insights into the experiences of its specific participant group, caution must be exercised when extrapolating these findings to other populations with differing demographics and socio-cultural contexts. Future research should address these limitations by incorporating more diverse participant samples to enhance the applicability and generalizability of the study's conclusions.

Recommendations for Future Research and Practice

This qualitative phenomenological study advocates for researchers and practitioners to explore sexuality education in their professions and communities. It suggests that high school policymakers worldwide engage with SeD research and practice. SeD seeks to address both the functional knowledge related to sexuality and the specific skills necessary to adopt healthy behaviors.

Future Research Recommendations

The recommendations for future research aim to advance insights into the implementation of comprehensive sex education in Vietnam and worldwide. Such research initiatives endeavor to expand across regional boundaries, fostering awareness, knowledge, and sensitivity for adolescent sexuality education. The goal is to advocate for sex education policy reforms that are evidence-based and elevate the overall quality of sexual education. Such research can promote inclusivity, ensuring that diverse cultural perspectives are adequately represented and addressed. These multifaceted approaches seek to pave the way for a more nuanced, adaptable, and globally relevant sexual education framework.

Recommendation 1: Cross-Cultural Comparative Research Within Vietnam. Cross-cultural comparative research in the SeD field can significantly enhance comprehension of this critical area of education (Broesch et al., 2020). Cross-cultural comparative studies use a community-centered approach focusing on the research approach and methodology, community and cultural factors, and data transparency. This recommended research should specifically center on examining the experiences of SeD teachers within the Vietnamese context and its varying cultural practices. By comparing the experiences of teachers across Vietnam, researchers can reveal the profound impact cultural factors have on various aspects of SeD, such as rural versus urban approaches toward discussions of adolescent sexuality.

This type of research should explore how cultural elements shape pedagogical approaches, curriculum design, and teacher-student interactions within the SeD classroom. It should also examine the unique challenges and opportunities faced by sexuality education teachers, whether they work within well-established educational systems or less-developed contexts. A cross-cultural study involves the systematic comparisons of different cultures that aim to understand variations of human behavior as it is influenced by cultural context (Matsumoto & Juang, 2003). This research approach is primarily concerned with examining how our knowledge about people and their behaviors from one culture may or may not hold for people from another culture.

Furthermore, cross-cultural comparative research can provide valuable insights into the adaptability and transferability of SeD teaching methodologies across different cultural and educational settings in Vietnam. By comparing the practices and outcomes of SeD programs in various regions and contexts, researchers can identify effective strategies and best practices that can be implemented nationwide. Overall, cross-cultural comparative research in sex education has the potential to improve sex education programs in Vietnam significantly. By examining the experiences of sexuality education teachers within the Vietnamese context and comparing them with those in other regions and contexts, researchers can uncover valuable insights that can inform the development of more effective and culturally sensitive sexuality education initiatives across the country.

Recommendation 2: Cross-Cultural Comparative Research Among Countries.

Cross-cultural comparative research within the realm of SeD can also be used to compare practices and approaches between two or more countries, for example, China and the Philippines, or any countries in Asia and beyond, such as Germany, the United States, and Japan. By performing this type of study, researchers can explore cultural interrelations and diversity factors related to SeD practices and professional development. These studies may explore measures such as ethnic identities, biases, and the cultural competence of policymakers, administrators, and teachers (Genkova et al., 2022).

For instance, in China, Leung et al. (2019) highlighted the crucial necessity of providing essential skills to diverse implementers, including parents, educators, and social workers, to enhance the effectiveness of SeD programs. Conversely, the Philippines frequently incorporates religious teachings into its sex education curriculum, indicative of the considerable influence of Catholicism (Ohlstrom, 2016). Comparing these divergent approaches with those of other countries can offer valuable insights into the influence of cultural contexts on SeD practices and can inform strategies for enhancement and adaptation.

However, researchers examining SeD worldwide need to know the beliefs and behaviors of various cultures, a concept known as cultural competence (Solomon & Steyn, 2017). Cultural competence is the ability to understand and respect values, attitudes, beliefs, and morals that differ across cultures and to consider and respond appropriately to these differences in planning, implementing, and evaluating SeD research and promoting effective programs (Solomon & Steyn, 2017). This improvement in knowledge of cultural beliefs and behaviors is also known as cultural intelligence, and the terms *cultural competence* and *cultural intelligence* may be used interchangeably (Adair et al., 2013).

By integrating cultural competence into SeD, cross-cultural research, researchers foster a deeper understanding of the intricate nuances present within diverse cultural contexts. This understanding enables the formulation of inclusive strategies for researching SeD tailored to meet the varied needs of learners worldwide. By acknowledging and respecting cultural differences, SeD initiatives become more than just standardized approaches; they become culturally relevant, sensitive, and impactful (Leung et al., 2019). This approach enhances the effectiveness of SeD interventions and promotes mutual respect and understanding across cultural boundaries, fostering a comprehensive and interconnected global community of learners and educators.

Recommendation 3: Policy Research and Advocacy. Policy research and advocacy constitute fundamental components in improving sexuality education programs. Researchers should analyze each country's sex educational policies to effectively assess their quality and effectiveness worldwide. Such assessments would include evaluating sexuality education's practical implementations and scrutinizing the alignment between policy intent and the current execution of the policy.

Identifying areas where policy enhancements are necessary within each country's existing protocols and methods is essential. Researchers should employ evidence-based studies to advocate for policy changes that provide robust support to sexuality education

teachers and their students. The focus of this advocacy could foster more responsive and inclusive policies tailored to address the unique challenges and needs of the sexuality education classroom.

Furthermore, future research could shed light on discrepancies between policy expectations and their actual effects on sexuality education educators and students. This research can advocate for developing more responsive and inclusive policies that address the unique challenges and needs of the sex educational environment. This research might uncover inconsistencies between policies and their effects on sexuality education teachers and students, guiding future policy revisions and advocacy efforts.

Future Practice Recommendations

The recommendations for future practice necessitate all stakeholders' interests and engagements with cultural awareness related to sexuality education. Within this study, it was noted that there is a significant need for educator professional development to ensure the needs of their students, as articulated by one of the participants:

I firmly believe that mandatory professional training for teachers organized by *The Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training* is crucial in equipping teachers with the necessary skills and expertise to teach sex education effectively.

(In native language, Vietnamese:)

Cô thực sự tin tưởng rằng việc đào tạo chuyên môn bắt buộc dành cho giáo viên do chính *Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo Việt Nam* tổ chức là rất quan trọng trong việc trang bị cho giáo viên những kỹ năng và chuyên môn cần thiết để giảng dạy giáo dục giới tính một cách hiệu quả nhất.

Wide-ranging, inclusive, and diverse collaborations could bring about more dynamic and adaptable methods for delivering sexuality education.

Recommendation 1: Professional Development. Investing in specialized professional development designed for SeD teachers is essential in empowering educators to skillfully

navigate the intricate web of practical recommendations. These programs should adopt a holistic approach to teacher advancement with their skills and knowledge, reinforcing fundamental skills critical for effective SeD instruction and considering the knowledge of the multifaceted, ever-evolving nature of 21st-century classroom environments.

Furthermore, these programs can equip educators with the proficiency required to competently address the cultural complexities that pervade the realm of SeD and the complex policy-related challenges that may emerge in executing their instructional duties. One participant noted:

It is essential to prioritize the professional development of teachers in this field to ensure they are well-prepared and confident in addressing sensitive topics with their students. Many teachers may initially feel shy or hesitant when teaching about sex education. However, we can confidently overcome these barriers and approach SeD-related topics with the proper training and support.

(In native language, Vietnamese:)

Điều cần thiết là phải ưu tiên phát triển chuyên môn của giáo viên trong lĩnh vực này để đảm bảo rằng họ được chuẩn bị tốt và có tự tin khi giải quyết các chủ đề nhạy cảm mà học sinh của mình nêu lên. Nhiều giáo viên ban đầu có thể cảm thấy ngại ngùng hoặc do dự khi giảng dạy về giáo dục giới tính. Tuy nhiên, chúng tôi có thể tự tin vượt qua những rào cản này và tiếp cận các chủ đề liên quan đến giáo dục giới tính dễ dàng hơn khi có sự đào tạo và hỗ trợ phù hợp.

Consequently, the educational landscape benefits from well-prepared SeD teachers who are distinctly more skilled at delivering quality instruction. This results in a more enriching educational experience for students, with more constructive and positive outcomes.

Recommendation 2: Stakeholder Collaboration. Collaboration with all stakeholders involved with Vietnamese SeD policy development and revision represents a fundamental step

toward achieving comprehensive and effective SeD teaching pedagogies, as noted by one participant:

...developing a comprehensive lesson plan and curriculum that is structured, scaled, and age-appropriate is imperative. This entails collaborating with experts in the field, such as psychologists, to ensure that the material is tailored to resonate with the student's developmental stages and cognitive capacities. By incorporating their expertise, we can create a curriculum that effectively addresses the specific needs and challenges students face when it comes to sex education.

(In native language, Vietnamese:)

...phát triển một giáo án và chương trình giảng dạy toàn diện có cấu trúc, quy mô và phù hợp với lứa tuổi là điều cấp bách. Điều này đòi hỏi phải cộng tác với các chuyên gia trong lĩnh vực này, chẳng hạn như các nhà tâm lý học, để đảm bảo rằng tài liệu được thiết kế phù hợp với các giai đoạn phát triển và năng lực nhận thức của các em học sinh. Bằng cách kết hợp chuyên môn của họ, chúng ta có thể tạo ra một chương trình giảng dạy giải quyết hiệu quả các nhu cầu và thách thức cụ thể mà học sinh phải đối mặt khi đề cập đến giáo dục giới tính.

Policymaking processes can benefit from multiple perspectives and insights by engaging diverse stakeholders, including educators, students, community members, and advocacy groups. Using the results of this study, future SeD practices within Vietnam could allow for mandatory annual or semi-annual teacher-government conferences, preferably initiated and managed by the *Ministry of Education and Training*. Various stakeholders can exchange ideas within such forums and identify and analyze needed adjustments to SeD curricula nationwide.

In addition, the *Ministry* should consider creating a centralized online platform for teachers of SeD to access, add feedback, and use as an ongoing reference for updated instructional knowledge, skills, and policies. An online platform could be constructed in the form of a *Wiki*, enabling authorized teams to share knowledge and work together more effectively

and efficiently (Green & Maxwell, 2010). These practice recommendations might significantly influence the pedagogy of SeD in Vietnam as such diverse collaborations could result in more robust, adaptable, and responsive policies. The partnerships allow for incorporating a broad spectrum of needs and concerns into policy design.

Policies that consider the input and feedback from those directly impacted by SeD policies, such as educators and students, are more likely to reflect the field's practical realities. Furthermore, engaging stakeholders in ongoing policy dialogues fosters a culture of transparency and accountability. It encourages open communication, facilitates the sharing of best practices, and ensures that policies remain dynamic and adaptable to changing circumstances. Policies informed by the collective wisdom of multiple stakeholders are more effective, enjoy broader support, and are more likely to be successfully implemented.

Recommendation 3: A Comprehensive Approach to National Curriculum

Dissemination Within Vietnam. Currently, the *Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training* is developing sexuality education lessons to integrate into the biology curriculum. However, teacher awareness is inconsistent, with some educators being informed about the initiative while others remain unaware of its existence. The successful implementation of this educational reform requires developing and executing a thorough and systematic national curriculum dissemination strategy. This strategy should engage all relevant stakeholders, including educators, school administrators, parents, and community members.

The dissemination plan should establish a detailed timeline outlining the various stages of the curriculum development process and corresponding dissemination activities. This timeline should clearly define key milestones, such as developing curriculum materials, scheduling training workshops, and distributing informational materials. Additionally, the plan should define the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder group in the dissemination process. For example, educators may be tasked with attending training sessions and incorporating the

curriculum into their instructional practices, while school administrators facilitate access to resources and support educators.

Furthermore, the dissemination plan should identify effective channels and mediums for communicating information about the curriculum to stakeholders. This may include in-person meetings, webinars, newsletters, social media platforms, and other digital tools. Utilizing a diverse range of communication channels ensures that information is accessible to all stakeholders. To address disparities in teacher familiarity with the curriculum, the dissemination plan should include targeted outreach efforts and professional development opportunities. This may involve conducting needs assessments to identify areas where teachers require additional support and developing customized training programs to address these needs.

Finally, the dissemination plan should incorporate mechanisms for ongoing feedback and evaluation to assess the effectiveness of dissemination activities. Surveys, focus groups, and other feedback mechanisms can gather input from stakeholders about their experiences with the curriculum and dissemination process, enabling necessary adjustments and improvements. By implementing a comprehensive dissemination plan that addresses these key components, education stakeholders can ensure that all SeD instructors are adequately informed and equipped to effectively integrate the curriculum into their instructional practices. This will ultimately support the successful implementation of the curriculum and improve student educational outcomes.

Summary of Recommendations

These recommendations advocate a holistic and evidence-driven strategy for the advancement of the field of SeD. They emphasize the significance of comprehending and effectively addressing the distinct requirements of a wide range of educational settings. This includes the alignment of policies with the pragmatic demands of real-world implementation. Educators and policymakers can collaboratively strive to provide students with a high-quality

and inclusive SeD experience through the conscientious application of evidence-based practices.

Study Conclusions

The researcher aimed to identify the essence of the lived experience as described by the participants (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell, 2008). This allowed the researcher to explore concrete aspects of the experiences by focusing on the importance of the individuals and their respective views on their life experiences as SeD teachers in Vietnam (Lodico et al., 2010; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2015). It is essential to consider multiple elements of a study, including its purpose and research questions, when conducting a phenomenological qualitative study, the core aims of phenomenology (Qutoshi, 2018).

This study's results are significant as they inform about SeD policies, SeD teacher professional development and practices, and consider the theories of constructivism, social cognitive theory, and transformative learning, laying the foundation for subsequent potential research (Goldfarb & Lieberman, 2021; Rose et al., 2018). The shared data of this phenomenological study ranged from participants expressing inadequate SeD training to the participants articulating a need for more pertinent SeD educational materials (McDaniels & Fleming, 2016).

During a qualitative interview - literally an *inter view* – a consultation of sorts, discussing each other's perceptions of the topic of mutual interest, where the researcher attempts to “understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences” (Kvale, 1996, pp. 1–2). At the essence of phenomenology, the intent is to understand the phenomena on its own terms - to describe human lived experiences as the individuals themselves face them, thus allowing the fundamental nature of the data to emerge (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022; Neubauer et al., 2019; Qutoshi, 2018).

According to Finlay (2009), exploring and understanding the participants' realizations and the themes of the lived experience encountered by individuals is critical within a

phenomenological study. Researchers adopting these perspectives extract the participants' reflections on their knowledge to understand and grasp the study's deeper meanings (Van Manen, 1990). The phenomenological qualitative approach offered a strategy that enriched the literature on current practices and challenges within the lived experiences of SeD high-school teachers in Vietnam.

The methods and activities for data collection were accommodating, and the analysis was designed to align with the study's theoretical frameworks. This strategy allowed the researcher to interact with both the participants and the data to produce a detailed and accurate description of the participants' lived experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Frechette et al., 2020). This phenomenological study was also designed to sustain the researcher's personal and subjective approach toward exploring the lived experiences of SeD teachers in Vietnam. The phenomenological qualitative method allowed recognition of the researcher's and the participants' subjectivity concerning the phenomenon being studied, understanding the participants' commonalities of their lived experiences (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022; Neubauer et al., 2019). This research study was ...

... designed to maintain the subjective approach of the researcher towards the exploration of the phenomenon being investigated ... A phenomenological qualitative method allows to track empathy and recognition of both the researcher's and the participant's subjectivity in relation to the phenomenon being explored (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022, p. 3)

Likewise, the qualitative phenomenological approach allowed the researcher to consider the essence of the participant experiences through their descriptions gained within the interview sessions. By concentrating on *exploration* as the fundamental objective, this qualitative phenomenological study allowed the researcher to transfer focus between the research questions, the study's purpose, and the interview questions and collected data (Meyers, 2019). In doing so, the researcher identified the true nature of the participants' lived experiences as

SeD teachers in Vietnam. The researcher concentrated on the shared aspects of the experience as an essence of the phenomenon. This study had three common highlights: the impact on SeD of *The Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training*, the educators' preferred professional development setting of blended learning, and their need for a mandatory SeD professional development schedule. At the same time, it is crucial to recognize the unique and different views of the participants.

This current study's results infer a commonality of the participants' experiences, citing the impact of the *Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training* (Theme 5), their preferred professional development setting of blended learning (Theme 6), and their need for mandatory professional development for the SeD teachers (Theme 7). These three themes are intertwined and converge with the interests and the conflation of an ability to deliver proper and accurate sexuality education to adolescents, not only in Vietnam but worldwide. Studies and research on human behavior can impact various disciplines, including education, social work, family life, and community activities (Box-Steffensmeier et al., 2022).

The results of the phenomenological study included three learning theories that benefitted this study's investigation into the realms of sexuality education within Vietnam, as well as sub-alignments with coaching and mentoring and educator professional development. This study has integrated and documented the results from firsthand data, thus increasing scientific (human behavioral) knowledge of Vietnamese sexuality education within high-school classrooms (Box-Steffensmeier et al., 2022; Polkinghorne, 2010). This study's results can be helpful in other disciplines and organizations, community groups, and personal enlightenment.

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APPENDIX A

IRB Approval

Pepperdine University
24255 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263
TEL: 310-506-4000

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: June 07, 2023

Protocol Investigator Name: Tram Van

Protocol #: 23-03-2109

Project Title: EDUCATORS ' EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES ON TEACHING SEXUALITY EDUCATION TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN VIETNAM

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Tram Van:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chair

cc: Mrs. Katy Carr, Assistant Provost for Research

APPENDIX B

Recruitment Letter (English & Vietnamese Versions)

Dear [Educator Name],

I hope this email finds you well. My name is Tram Van. I am a Ph.D. candidate in the Global Leadership Program at Pepperdine University's Graduate School of Education and Psychology. As part of my degree requirements, I am researching influential educators' viewpoints, methods, and strategies regarding sexuality education training in Vietnamese high schools.

If you are 22 years of age or older, a current high-school teacher, have held your position for a minimum of one year, have a minimum of one year of experience in teaching sexuality education, and are willing to agree to the Informed Consent Form, you may participate in this research. Your participation is voluntary, and I guarantee the confidentiality and anonymity of all participants to your satisfaction. I need 60 minutes of your time via a Zoom interview to complete the study. The interview questions and the Informed Consent Form will be sent to you before the interview.

Your contribution to this research study will be invaluable in developing successful sexuality education training programs for researchers and practitioners. I would like to offer you a \$10 gift card to show appreciation for your participation. Additionally, if you know of any other Vietnamese educators like yourself, I would be grateful if you could recommend them to participate in this study. For each recommendation who completes this study's interview, you will receive an additional \$5.

You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study.

For study-related questions, please get in touch with the investigator:

Email: Tram.van@pepperdine.edu

For questions concerning your rights or complaints about the research, contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB):

Phone: 1(310)568-2305

Email: gpsirb@pepperdine.edu

Thank you for considering my request, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Most respectfully,

Tram Van

(In native language, Vietnamese:)

Kính gửi [Tên nhà giáo dục],

Tôi hy vọng email này tìm đến quý Thầy/Cô. Tôi tên là Trâm Văn. Tôi là ứng cử viên tiến sĩ trong Chương trình Lãnh đạo Toàn cầu tại Trường Đại học Giáo dục và Tâm lý của Đại Học Pepperdine. Là một phần của yêu cầu bằng cấp, tôi đang nghiên cứu quan điểm, phương pháp và chiến lược của các nhà giáo dục có ảnh hưởng liên quan đến đào tạo giáo dục giới tính ở các trường trung học phổ thông Việt Nam (lớp 10, 11 và 12).

Nếu quý Thầy/Cô từ 22 tuổi trở lên, hiện là giáo viên trung học, đã giữ vị trí của mình tối thiểu một năm, có ít nhất một năm kinh nghiệm giảng dạy giáo dục giới tính và sẵn sàng đồng ý với Đơn Chấp Thuận có hiểu biết về tham gia nghiên cứu, quý Thầy/Cô có thể tham gia vào nghiên cứu này. Sự tham gia của quý Thầy/Cô là tự nguyện và tôi đảm bảo tính bảo mật và ẩn danh của tất cả những người tham gia. Tôi cần 60 phút thời gian của quý Thầy/Cô thông qua một cuộc phỏng vấn trực tuyến trên ứng dụng Zoom để hoàn thành nghiên cứu. Các câu hỏi phỏng vấn và Đơn Chấp Thuận sẽ được gửi cho quý Thầy/Cô trước cuộc phỏng vấn.

Đóng góp của quý Thầy/Cô cho nghiên cứu này sẽ là vô giá trong việc phát triển các chương trình đào tạo giáo dục giới tính thành công cho các nhà nghiên cứu và học sinh; và là hành động thiết thực đóng góp có giá trị cao lớn vào việc giáo dục, cải thiện sức khỏe cho thế hệ trẻ nước nhà. Tôi muốn cung cấp cho quý Thầy/Cô một thẻ quà tặng trị giá 10 đô la Mỹ để thể hiện sự trân trọng về sự tham gia từ quý Thầy/Cô. Ngoài ra, nếu quý Thầy/Cô biết bất kỳ nhà giáo dục Việt Nam nào cùng hệ giá trị suy nghĩ, tôi sẽ rất biết ơn nếu quý Thầy/Cô có thể giới thiệu họ tham gia vào công trình nghiên cứu này. Đối với mỗi đề xuất hoàn thành cuộc phỏng vấn của nghiên cứu này, quý Thầy/Cô sẽ nhận được thêm 5 đô la Mỹ.

Quý Thầy/Cô có thể đặt bất kỳ câu hỏi nào liên quan đến nghiên cứu này và được trả lời những câu hỏi đó trước khi đồng ý tham gia hoặc trong quá trình nghiên cứu.

Đối với các câu hỏi liên quan đến nghiên cứu, vui lòng liên hệ với nhà nghiên cứu Trâm Văn.

Email: tram.van@pepperdine.edu.

Đối với các câu hỏi liên quan đến quyền của bạn hoặc khiếu nại về nghiên cứu, hãy liên hệ với Hội Đồng Phụ Trách Đối Tượng Nghiên Cứu của Đại Học Pepperdine.

Điện thoại: 1(310)568-2305. Email: gpsirb@pepperdine.edu

Cảm ơn bạn đã xem xét yêu cầu của tôi và tôi hy vọng sẽ sớm nhận được phản hồi từ quý Thầy/Cô.

Trân trọng,

Trâm Văn

APPENDIX C

Interview Protocol (English & Vietnamese Versions)

Interview Date:

Time:

Principal Investigator: Tram Van

Interview Participant Code #:

1. Please describe your background and experience in teaching sexuality education.
2. How does your school approach teaching sexuality education programs?
3. How do you approach teaching sexuality education programs in the classroom?
4. How does your school approach providing sexuality education training and professional development to educators? What improvements could be made to teacher professional development to better to support student learning and understanding of sexuality education?
5. Which medium is more effective for teacher professional development (face-to-face, online, or blended)? Which medium is more effective for teaching sexuality education to students?
6. Can you describe some challenges you face when teaching sexuality education to your students? How do you overcome these challenges?
7. What factors influence your thoughts and perceptions about teaching sexuality education?
8. Do you have further insights or reflections about sexuality education training and instruction?

QUY TRÌNH PHÒNG VẤN

(In native language, Vietnamese:)

Ngày phỏng vấn

Thời gian:

Phòng vấn viên: Trâm Văn

Mã số người tham gia phỏng vấn:

1. Xin Thầy/Cô vui lòng chia sẻ nền tảng và kinh nghiệm của mình trong công việc giảng dạy giáo dục giới tính.
2. Trường của Thầy/Cô tiếp cận công việc giảng dạy các chương trình giáo dục giới tính cho học sinh như thế nào?
3. Thầy/Cô tiếp cận công việc giảng dạy các chương trình giáo dục giới tính trong lớp học của mình như thế nào?
4. Trường học của Thầy/Cô tiếp cận việc đào tạo giáo dục giới tính và phát triển chuyên môn cho các nhà giáo dục như thế nào? Thầy/Cô nghĩ rằng những cải tiến nào có thể được thực hiện đối với sự phát triển chuyên môn của giáo viên để hỗ trợ tốt hơn cho việc học và hiểu của học sinh về giáo dục giới tính?
5. Thầy/Cô nghĩ rằng phương tiện nào hiệu quả hơn cho việc **phát triển chuyên môn** của giáo viên (trực tiếp, trực tuyến hoặc kết hợp)? Thầy/Cô nghĩ rằng phương tiện nào hiệu quả hơn để **dạy giáo dục giới tính** cho học sinh (trực tiếp, trực tuyến hoặc kết hợp)?
6. Thầy/Cô có thể chia sẻ một số thử thách, khó khăn mà Thầy/Cô gặp phải khi dạy giáo dục giới tính cho học sinh của mình không? Làm thế nào để Thầy/Cô vượt qua những thử thách, khó khăn này?
7. Những yếu tố nào ảnh hưởng đến suy nghĩ và nhận thức của Thầy/Cô về công việc giảng dạy giáo dục giới tính?

8. Thầy/Cô có thể cho biết thêm hoặc phản ánh thêm về chương trình đào tạo và hướng dẫn giảng dạy giáo dục giới tính không?

APPENDIX D

Social-Behavioral Adult Participant Informed Consent

(English & Vietnamese Versions)

IRB #: 23-03-2109

Participant Study Title:

Educator's assessment on teaching sexuality education to high school students in Vietnam

Formal Study Title:

Educator's assessment on teaching sexuality education to high school students in Vietnam

Authorized Study Personnel

Principal Investigator: Tram Van

Invitation

You are invited to take part in this research study. The information in this form is meant to help you decide whether or not to participate. If you have any questions, please ask.

Why are you being asked to be in this research study?

You are being asked to be in this study because you are a high-school educator and meet the below criteria to participate in this research:

- You must be 22 years of age or older to participate.
- You must be a Vietnamese resident.
- You are currently serving as a high school teacher in Vietnam.
- You have been in your positions for a minimum of one year.
- You possess at least one year of experience teaching sexuality-related education/content.

What is the reason for doing this research study?

This study aims to determine the current experiences of teaching sexuality education and identify challenges to sexuality education among Vietnamese educators.

What will be done during this research study?

You will be engaged in no more than 60-minute online interview, and each of you will answer the questions listed below:

1. *Describe your background and experience in teaching sexuality education.*
2. *How do you feel about the current sexuality education programs taught in your high school?*

3. *Can you describe your school's approach to providing sexuality education training and professional development to educators?*
4. *What are your thoughts on the different modes of sexuality educator training and professional development, such as face-to-face, online, or blended (online and onsite) sessions? How about teaching sexuality?*
5. *What improvements could be made to the training program to better support student learning and understanding of sexuality education?*
6. *What are your thoughts on incorporating sexuality education into the curricula of other subjects versus having it as a standalone subject?*
7. *Can you describe some challenges you face when teaching sexuality education to your students? How do you overcome these challenges?*
8. *Do you have further insights or reflections about sexuality education training and instruction?*

What are the possible risks of being in this research study?

The risks associated with the research study are no more than minimal. Your participation will involve responding to inquiries and being subject to recording. Even in the event of a breach of confidentiality, the potential risks to both you and the organization remain minimal.

- The confidentiality of both your personal information and the collected data will be saved by means of digital storage, secured by password protection, for a duration of three years, at which time it will be permanently deleted. Access to all personal information and gathered data will be restricted solely to the researcher.
- The research participant is at liberty to take a break at any point during the interview, if desired. Additionally, the participant can modify their verbal responses at any time throughout the interview, potentially lessening any emotional stress or tension experienced.
- It is mandatory that you are informed of both your rights and obligations prior to data collection. The process of obtaining informed consent entails signing and returning the document prior to data collection, which will be confirmed via email to confirm participation.
- Data collection can only commence upon approval from Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board. It is understood that the research activity in question has been subject to review and regulation by the said Institutional Review Board at Pepperdine University.
- It is strictly prohibited for the personal information of participants to be presented in any publication.

What are the possible benefits to you?

You are not expected to get any benefit from being in this study.

What are the possible benefits to other people?

When this research completes, the findings of this study could clarify the impending situation regarding implementing a formal sexuality curriculum reform and recognizing the educator's training standards required to build a more resilient and promising future for Vietnamese youth.

What will being in this research study cost you?

There is no cost to you for participating in this research study.

Will you be compensated for being in this research?

You will receive \$10.00 for completion of the study's interview. Furthermore, an additional \$5.00 will be awarded for a qualified referral who completes the interview.

What should you do if you have a problem during this research study?

Your welfare is the primary concern of every member of the research team. If you have a problem as a direct result of being in this study, you should immediately contact one of the people listed at the beginning of this consent form.

How will information about you be protected?

Reasonable steps will be taken to protect your privacy and the confidentiality of your study data.

The data will be stored electronically through a secure server and will only be seen by the research team during the study and for three years after the investigation is complete.

The only persons who will have access to your research records are the study personnel, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Pepperdine University, and any other person, agency, or sponsor as required by law. The information from this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings, but the data will be reported as a group or summarized data, and your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

What are your rights as a research subject?

You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study.

For study-related questions, please get in touch with the investigator(s) listed at the beginning of this form.

For questions concerning your rights or complaints about the research, contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB):

Phone: 1(310)568-2305
Email: gpsirb@pepperdine.edu

What will happen if you decide not to be in this research study or decide to stop participating once you start?

You can decide not to be in this research study, or you can stop being in this research study ("withdraw") at any time before, during, or after the research begins for any reason. Deciding not to be in this research study or choosing to withdraw will not affect your relationship with the investigator or with Pepperdine University.

You will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled.

Documentation of informed consent

You are voluntarily deciding whether or not to be in this research study. Signing this

form means that (1) you have read and understood this consent form, (2) you have had the consent form explained to you, (3) you have had your questions answered, and (4) you have decided to be in the research study. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

Participant Name:

Name of Participant: Please Print

Participant Signature:

Signature of Research Participant

Date

ĐƠN CHẤP THUẬN THAM GIA NGHIÊN CỨU

(In native language, Vietnamese:)

IRB #: 23-03-2109

Tiêu đề nghiên cứu: Đánh giá của nhà giáo dục về dạy giáo dục giới tính cho học sinh phổ thông ở Việt Nam

Tiêu đề nghiên cứu chính thức: Đánh giá của nhà giáo dục về dạy giáo dục giới tính cho học sinh phổ thông ở Việt Nam

Nhà nghiên cứu được ủy quyền

- **Nhà nghiên cứu chính:** Trâm Văn. Số điện thoại: +1(714)-763-6219. Email: tram.van@pepperdine.edu

Lời mời

Quý vị được mời tham gia vào một cuộc nghiên cứu. Thông tin trong biểu mẫu này nhằm giúp quý vị quyết định có tham gia hay không. Nếu quý vị có bất kì câu hỏi nào, xin vui lòng liên lạc ngay.

Tại sao quý vị được yêu cầu tham gia nghiên cứu này?

Quý vị được yêu cầu tham gia nghiên cứu này vì quý vị là giáo viên trung học và đáp ứng các tiêu chí dưới đây để tham gia vào nghiên cứu này:

- Quý vị từ 22 tuổi trở lên.
- Quý vị là công dân Việt Nam.
- Hiện tại quý vị đang là giáo viên cấp 3 tại Việt Nam.
- Quý vị có ít nhất một năm kinh nghiệm giảng dạy nội dung/giáo dục giới liên quan đến giáo dục giới tính

Lý do để thực hiện nghiên cứu nghiên cứu này là gì?

Nghiên cứu này nhằm mục đích xác định kinh nghiệm giảng dạy giáo dục giới tính hiện nay và xác định những thách thức đối với giáo dục giới tính của các nhà giáo dục Việt Nam.

Điều gì sẽ được thực hiện trong quá trình nghiên cứu này?

Quý vị sẽ tham gia vào cuộc phỏng vấn trực tuyến kéo dài không quá 60 phút và sẽ trả lời các câu hỏi được liệt kê bên dưới:

1. Xin Thầy/Cô vui lòng chia sẻ nền tảng và kinh nghiệm của mình trong công việc giảng dạy giáo dục giới tính.
2. Trường của Thầy/Cô tiếp cận công việc giảng dạy các chương trình giáo dục giới tính cho học sinh như thế nào?

3. Thầy/Cô tiếp cận công việc giảng dạy các chương trình giáo dục giới tính trong lớp học của mình như thế nào?
4. Trường học của Thầy/Cô tiếp cận việc đào tạo giáo dục giới tính và phát triển chuyên môn cho các nhà giáo dục như thế nào? Thầy/Cô nghĩ rằng những cải tiến nào có thể được thực hiện đối với sự phát triển chuyên môn của giáo viên để hỗ trợ tốt hơn cho việc học và hiểu của học sinh về giáo dục giới tính?
5. Thầy/Cô nghĩ rằng phương tiện nào hiệu quả hơn cho việc phát triển chuyên môn của giáo viên (trực tiếp, trực tuyến hoặc kết hợp)? Thầy/Cô nghĩ rằng phương tiện nào hiệu quả hơn để dạy giáo dục giới tính cho học sinh?
6. Thầy/Cô có thể chia sẻ một số thử thách mà Thầy/Cô gặp phải khi dạy giáo dục giới tính cho học sinh của mình không? Làm thế nào để Thầy/Cô vượt qua những thử thách này?
7. Những yếu tố nào ảnh hưởng đến suy nghĩ và nhận thức của Thầy/Cô về công việc giảng dạy giáo dục giới tính?
8. Thầy/Cô có thể cho biết thêm hoặc phản ánh thêm về đào tạo và hướng dẫn giảng dạy giáo dục giới tính không?

Những rủi ro có thể xảy ra khi tham gia nghiên cứu này là gì?

Các rủi ro liên quan đến nghiên cứu không nhiều hơn mức tối thiểu. Sự tham gia của quý vị sẽ liên quan đến việc trả lời các câu hỏi và được ghi âm. Ngay cả trong trường hợp vi phạm tính bảo mật, rủi ro tiềm ẩn cho cả quý vị và tổ chức vẫn ở mức tối thiểu.

- Tính bảo mật của cả thông tin cá nhân của quý vị và dữ liệu đã thu thập sẽ được lưu bằng phương tiện lưu trữ kỹ thuật số, được bảo vệ bằng mật khẩu, trong thời hạn ba năm, sau đó các thông tin đó sẽ bị xóa vĩnh viễn. Quyền truy cập vào tất cả thông tin cá nhân và dữ liệu sẽ chỉ được giới hạn cho nhà nghiên cứu.
- Người tham gia nghiên cứu có quyền nghỉ giải lao bất cứ lúc nào trong suốt cuộc phỏng vấn, nếu muốn. Ngoài ra, người tham gia có thể sửa đổi câu trả lời bằng lời nói của họ bất cứ lúc nào trong suốt cuộc phỏng vấn, để có thể giảm bớt bất kỳ căng thẳng nào trải qua trong cuộc phỏng vấn.
- Quý vị phải được thông báo về quyền và nghĩa vụ của mình trước khi thu thập dữ liệu. Quý vị sẽ gửi lại giấy chấp nhận có hiểu biết về tham gia nghiên cứu này qua email để xác nhận tham gia vào nghiên cứu này.
- Việc thu thập dữ liệu chỉ có thể bắt đầu khi có sự chấp thuận của Hội đồng phụ trách Đối Tượng Nghiên Cứu của Đại học Pepperdine. Điều này có nghĩa rằng hoạt động nghiên cứu đã được xem xét và điều chỉnh bởi Hội đồng phụ trách Đối Tượng Nghiên Cứu của Đại học Pepperdine.
- Nghiêm cấm thông tin cá nhân của người tham gia được trình bày trong bất kỳ ấn phẩm nào.

Những lợi ích có thể cho quý vị là gì?

Quý vị sẽ không nhận được bất kỳ lợi ích nào từ việc tham gia nghiên cứu này.

Những lợi ích có thể có cho người khác là gì?

Khi nghiên cứu này hoàn thành, những phát hiện của nghiên cứu này có thể làm rõ tình hình sắp xảy ra liên quan đến việc thực hiện cải cách chương trình giảng dạy chính thức về giới tính và công nhận các tiêu chuẩn đào tạo của nhà giáo dục cần thiết để xây dựng một tương lai hứa hẹn hơn cho thanh thiếu niên Việt Nam.

Tham gia vào nghiên cứu này sẽ tốn những chi phí nào của quý vị?

Quý vị không phải trả bất kỳ chi phí nào khi tham gia nghiên cứu này.

Quý vị sẽ được đền bù khi tham gia nghiên cứu này không?

Quý vị sẽ nhận được 10 Đô la Mỹ tượng trưng khi nghiên cứu này hoàn thành, đó như là một sự thể hiện sự trân trọng về sự tham gia của quý vị vào nghiên cứu này. Hơn nữa, 5 Đô la Mỹ sẽ được tặng thêm khi quý vị giới thiệu người đủ tiêu chuẩn và khi người được giới thiệu hoàn thành cuộc nghiên cứu này.

Quý vị nên làm gì nếu gặp vấn đề trong quá trình nghiên cứu này?

Nếu quyền lợi của quý vị khi tham gia vào nghiên cứu này có thể bị ảnh hưởng, xin quý vị vui lòng thông tin cho nhà nghiên cứu theo thông tin đã được đính kèm trong tài liệu này.

Thông tin về quý vị sẽ được bảo vệ như thế nào?

Các bước hợp lý sẽ được thực hiện để bảo vệ quyền riêng tư và tính bảo mật của dữ liệu nghiên cứu của quý vị.

Dữ liệu sẽ được lưu trữ điện tử an toàn và sẽ chỉ được nhìn thấy bởi nhóm nghiên cứu trong quá trình nghiên cứu và trong ba năm sau sau khi nghiên cứu này hoàn tất.

Những người duy nhất có quyền truy cập vào hồ sơ nghiên cứu của quý vị là nhà nghiên cứu, Hội đồng phụ trách Đối Tượng Nghiên Cứu của Đại học Pepperdine và bất kỳ cá nhân, cơ quan hoặc nhà tài trợ nào khác theo yêu cầu của pháp luật. Thông tin từ nghiên cứu này có thể được công bố trên các tạp chí khoa học hoặc trình bày tại các cuộc họp báo khoa học, nhưng dữ liệu sẽ được báo cáo dưới dạng dữ liệu nhóm hoặc tóm tắt và danh tính của quý vị sẽ được giữ bí mật tuyệt đối.

Quyền của quý vị với tư cách là người tham gia nghiên cứu là gì?

Quý vị có thể đặt bất kỳ câu hỏi nào liên quan đến nghiên cứu này và được trả lời những câu hỏi đó trước khi đồng ý tham gia hoặc trong quá trình nghiên cứu.

Đối với các câu hỏi liên quan đến nghiên cứu, vui lòng liên hệ với nhà nghiên cứu được liệt kê ở đầu đơn này.

Đối với các câu hỏi liên quan đến quyền hoặc khiếu nại của quý vị về nghiên cứu này research, vui lòng liên hệ với Hội đồng phụ trách Đối Tượng Nghiên Cứu của Đại học Pepperdine
Số điện thoại: +1(310)568-2305
Email: gpsirb@pepperdine.edu

Điều gì sẽ xảy ra nếu quý vị quyết định không tham gia nghiên cứu này hoặc quyết định dừng tham gia sau khi đã bắt đầu?

Quý vị có thể quyết định không tham gia nghiên cứu này, hoặc quý vị có thể ngừng tham gia nghiên cứu này ("rút lui") vào bất kỳ thời điểm nào, trước, trong hoặc sau khi nghiên cứu bắt đầu vì bất kỳ lý do gì. Quyết định không tham gia nghiên cứu này hoặc chọn rút lui sẽ không ảnh hưởng đến mối quan hệ của quý vị với nhà nghiên cứu hoặc với Đại học Pepperdine.

Quý vị sẽ không mất bất kỳ quyền lợi nào mà quý vị được hưởng.

Chấp thuận có hiểu biết về tham gia nghiên cứu

Quý vị tự nguyện quyết định có tham gia nghiên cứu này hay không. Ký tên này có nghĩa là (1) quý đã đọc và hiểu đơn chấp thuận này, (2) quý vị đã được giải thích về đơn chấp thuận này, (3) quý vị đã được giải đáp các câu hỏi của mình và (4) quý vị đã quyết định tham gia nghiên cứu này. Quý sẽ được cung cấp một bản sao của đơn chấp thuận này để lưu giữ.

Tên của người tham gia nghiên cứu: Vui lòng viết chữ in

Chữ ký của người tham gia nghiên cứu

Ngày

APPENDIX F

Study Themes in English and Vietnamese

Theme 1: Diverse Strategies Were Employed in the Classroom for Sexuality Education, With a Reliance on Presentation Activities.

(In native language, Vietnamese:)

Chủ đề 1: Giáo viên áp dụng nhiều chiến lược dạy học đa dạng trong lớp giáo dục giới tính, nhất là các hoạt động thuyết trình.

Theme 2: English - Students Express Shyness From Lack of Knowledge and Fear of Peer Judgment When Learning Sexuality Education.

Theme 2: Vietnamese - Chủ đề 2: Học sinh bày tỏ sự ngại ngùng vì thiếu kiến thức và sợ bị bạn bè đánh giá khi học giáo dục giới tính.

Theme 3: English - Teachers Use Personable Approaches to Make Sexuality Education Less Intimidating.

Theme 3: Vietnamese - Chủ đề 3: Giáo viên sử dụng các phương pháp tiếp cận cá nhân để giúp giáo dục giới tính dễ tiếp thu hơn.

Theme 4: English - Conflicting Information on Sexuality From Media, the Internet, and Students' Families Influences Teachers' Approaches to Sexuality Education.

Theme 4: Vietnamese - Chủ đề 4: Thông tin mâu thuẫn về giới tính từ các phương tiện truyền thông, Internet và gia đình học sinh ảnh hưởng đến cách tiếp cận của giáo viên trong công việc giảng dạy giáo dục giới tính.

Theme 5: English - Lack of Standardized Curricula and Policies Impact Teachers' Ability to Teach Sexuality Education.

Theme 5: Vietnamese - Thiếu chương trình và chính sách giảng dạy chuẩn hóa ảnh hưởng đến khả năng giảng dạy giáo dục giới tính của giáo viên.

Theme 6: English - Preference for a Blended Method Related to Professional Development, but Teaching Students is Divided Evenly for Face-to-Face and Blended Methods.

Theme 6: Vietnamese - Giáo viên ưu tiên phương pháp kết hợp (trực tiếp và trực tuyến) cho khóa học đào tạo chuyên môn dành cho giáo viên, nhưng đối với việc giảng dạy giáo dục giới tính cho học sinh thì ý kiến của giáo viên được chia đều giữa phương pháp dạy học trực tiếp và dạy học kết hợp.

Theme 7: Expressed Need for Compulsory Professional Development to Deliver High-Quality Sexuality Education.

Chủ đề 7: Giáo viên thể hiện nhu cầu cần khóa đào tạo chuyên môn bắt buộc dành cho giáo viên để có thể cung cấp giáo dục giới tính chất lượng cao cho học sinh.