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Challenges in Implementing Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Materials: A Survey of Primary School Teachers

Diem-My Nguyen-Thi¹, Van-Son Huynh¹, Le Hien Mai^{1*}

¹Faculty of Psychology, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

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*Corresponding author: Le Hien Mai

Faculty of Psychology, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Abstract

Original Research Article

The study investigates the current state of training materials used to prevent child sexual abuse, focusing on their frequency of use and the challenges faced by teachers in implementing these resources. The research surveyed 534 primary school teachers in Can Tho, Ho Chi Minh City and Binh Duong, revealing that while the materials are generally regarded as useful, they are utilized only at an "average" level, with 54.3% of teachers referencing "Books, newspapers, magazines" during lesson planning. Despite the appreciation for the content and form of these resources, the study identifies significant challenges, notably the time and effort required by teachers to select scientifically sound materials, with an average difficulty score of 3.62. The research highlights that the existing materials, although scientifically based, are often too academic and difficult to apply in practical teaching scenarios. The findings underscore the fragmented and emotionally driven nature of current resources, which lack a solid scientific foundation tailored to children's psychological development. Consequently, this results in inadequate access to well-constructed materials by both parents and children. The study's outcomes provide insights into the frequency of use and the obstacles teachers encounter, offering recommendations for improving the accessibility and applicability of these materials. However, the research is limited to a specific geographic area and teacher demographic, suggesting that the results may not be fully representative of the broader southern region or Vietnam as a whole.

Keywords: Materials, sexual-abuse, primary school, teacher, sexual abuse prevention materials.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The modern civilization of society, along with the remarkable progress of science and technology, has brought significant changes to human life, including both positive aspects and numerous negative impacts that require individuals to confront, cope with, and effectively prevent these challenges. Life skills, therefore, have become essential tools in the journey of comprehensive human personality development, including skills for preventing dangerous situations, such as sexual abuse, which is a pressing issue that greatly affects human safety, especially for young children (primary school students). The number of recorded sexual abuse cases is alarming. For instance, Stoltenborgh et al., (2011) estimated a rate of sexual abuse at 127 per 1000, based on data from over 217 studies conducted between 1980 and 2008. In the United States alone, 13,052 children and adolescents (aged 0 to 17) were reported to have been sexually abused (Gewirtz-Meydan & Finkelhor, 2019). In Vietnam, 8,442 cases of child abuse were recorded from 2015 to June

2019 (Nhu Huong & Cong Tho, 2020). The issue can lead to serious physiological and psychological harm for children, with consequences that persist throughout the child's life, potentially leading to disruptions in their lives and heavily impacting families and society.

Given the gravity of the situation, equipping students with self-protection skills to avoid situations with a risk of sexual abuse is essential. Research on training skills to prevent child sexual abuse has been promoted for many years in various formats, including skill books, handbooks, social media posts, or popular newspapers, as well as through counseling/training sessions for parents. However, these materials often remain at an emotional and spontaneous level, lacking solid foundations in terms of construction, building processes, and scientific bases. This situation results in parents or children not having access to well-constructed appropriate for materials that are psychological development. Additionally, the materials are fragmented across different authors and studies,

leading parents and children to only approach certain aspects of sexual abuse prevention or spend time selecting materials from different sources. Furthermore, the materials supporting teachers in teaching sexual abuse prevention skills to primary school students are still very limited. Teachers often have to self-study the content and search for materials to teach about it, which consumes time and may not achieve the intended educational goals. Therefore, arranging sexual abuse prevention materials with clear orientations on goals, content, and formats is necessary, along with providing specific guidance for teachers on using these materials effectively.

Among the approaches to teaching sexual abuse prevention skills to primary school students, teacher-led instruction offers many advantages, especially since primary school students' self-study abilities are still limited, and some parents may not have the time, knowledge, or methods to teach their children. Therefore, a key solution is to provide and guide teachers with scientific materials for teaching children sexual abuse prevention. Child sexual abuse encompasses a wide range of behaviors, from seemingly minor acts to extremely dangerous ones with profound consequences for children's development. Despite significant progress in research on preventing child sexual abuse and enhancing national laws to address this issue, such as the 2016 Children's Law, the 2015 Criminal Code (amended in 2017), and the 2015 Criminal Procedure Code, gaps remain. UNICEF (2021) recommends addressing shortcomings in Vietnamese laws to align with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography (OPSC). One key suggestion from UNICEF is to clarify the definition of child sexual abuse. Although the 2015 Criminal Code (amended in 2017) added several offenses related to sexual abuse of minors and expanded the definition of rape to include intercourse and other sexual acts, terms like "intercourse" and "other sexual acts" are not clearly defined, making the nature of these offenses unclear. Using precise terminology could help improve awareness, prevention, and effective handling of these acts. Without clear definitions, there is a significant loophole that abusers could exploit to evade punishment (UNICEF, 2021).

Within the scope of this research, the term "child sexual abuse" generally refers to several aspects: using children to satisfy sexual needs; adults exploiting their position and the child's trust to entice, coerce, or force the child into sexual activities; non-contact abuse behaviors such as looking at the child's genitals, making the child look at genitalia, exposing genitals to the child, talking to the child about sex, showing the child pornographic materials, sending lewd messages, images, or videos, instructing or stimulating the child sexually, or making the child pose for pornographic pictures; online

abuse behaviors, including drawings, animations, audio recordings, films, videos, electronic games, sex chatting, video calls for watching child sexual performances, online pornographic filming, or recording for sale; and contact abuse behaviors such as touching the child's genitals, making the child touch others' genitals, masturbation, oral-genital contact, digital penetration, sexual intercourse with the child, or forcing the child into prostitution. (Del Campo, Fávero, & Sousa-Gomes, 2023). According to Hoang Phe's Vietnamese Dictionary, "prevention" is defined as "to prevent something bad or undesirable from happening" (Hoang Phe, 1992). Therefore, the skills for preventing child sexual abuse primarily focus on "prevention," which involves anticipating and implementing measures to avoid situations where children might be abused or lured into sexual activities or trafficking. These skills equip children with the knowledge to protect themselves from danger, fostering awareness, emotional regulation, and positive actions to avoid potential risks and unfortunate outcomes, ensuring their safety.

Based on established concepts of skills, prevention, and sexual abuse behaviors, within the research scope, sexual abuse prevention skills for children are understood as the ability to apply learned knowledge to recognize sexual abuse behaviors, understand potential dangers, maintain a safe distance, and develop a positive attitude to proactively protect oneself in specific situations, thereby preventing potential abuse. Sexual abuse prevention skills for primary school students focus on several key aspects: awareness, which includes helping students understand their bodies, including naming body parts, recognizing differences between male and female bodies, distinguishing between care and abuse, understanding their right to protection (Patterson, Ryckman, & Guerra, 2022). Students should also identify abusive behaviors, recognize abusers' patterns, establish and protect personal boundaries, and be aware of online dangers related to sexual abuse, such as not sharing personal information or interacting with strangers online; attitude, where students should control their emotions when facing abuse, build self-confidence to courageously protect themselves in dangerous situations, and feel comfortable talking to adults about all issues, including sensitive ones like sexual abuse; and action, where students should be able to respond to abuse, proactively prevent and avoid abuse risks, maintain a safe distance, and trust their own feelings (Patterson, Ryckman, & Guerra, 2022). They should know how to say "no" and "refuse" in uncomfortable or potentially abusive situations and actively protect themselves from dangerous scenarios. Corpus is a research topic that has attracted the attention of linguists, educators, and psychologists. Due to this interest, definitions related to corpus are quite diverse and rich, encompassing several concepts (Biber, Conrad, & Reppen, 1998).

The purpose of this research is to develop educational materials aimed at enhancing the teaching of sexual abuse prevention skills to primary school students. This involves creating a systematic collection of content, including texts, images, and videos, that is specifically focused on child sexual abuse prevention. These materials are designed to be practical and applicable, organized in a way that provides clear and purposeful guidance for educators in selecting and effectively utilizing them in their teaching practices. The intent is to support teachers in delivering comprehensive and engaging lessons that empower students with the knowledge and skills necessary to prevent sexual abuse.

2. METHODS

The study on the current state and utilization of learning materials supporting primary school teachers in

teaching child sexual abuse prevention skills involved a total of 534 participants. These participants were primary school teachers selected through a combination of random and convenience sampling methods. The participants' specific characteristics are detailed in Table 1.

Data were collected via surveys conducted with primary school teachers in Ho Chi Minh City, Can Tho City, and Binh Duong Province. The purpose of this data collection was to provide a foundation for the development of learning materials that would assist teachers in effectively teaching child sexual abuse prevention skills to primary school students. Additionally, experimental research was conducted with teachers in the regions to evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of the developed learning materials.

Table 1: Characteristics of the Study Participants

No.	Characteristics	Responses	Percentage
1	Gender		112 (21%)
		Female	419 (78,5%)
		Unspecified	2 (0,4%)
2	Experience in primary school teaching	< 1 year	11 (2,1%)
		1 - 3 years	35 (6,5%)
		3 - 5 years	52 (9,8%)
		> 5 years	436 (81,6%)
3	Experience in teaching child sexual-abuse prevention skills	< 1 year	117 (21,9%)
		1 - 3 years	71 (13,3%)
		3 - 5 years	68 (12,7%)
		> 5 years	278 (52,1%)

Among the 534 respondents, 419 were female primary school teachers (78.5%), 112 were male teachers (21%), and 2 did not specify their gender. This distribution of gender is reflective of the primary school teaching profession, where females predominantly constitute the workforce. A significant portion of the teachers, 436 individuals (81.6%), reported having over 5 years of experience in primary school teaching. The data indicates a gradual increase in the number of participants as teaching experience increases, suggesting that most of the study participants are seasoned professionals in primary education.

In contrast, the experience in teaching child sexual abuse prevention skills does not follow a similar trend. Although many respondents with over 5 years of experience (278 participants, 52.1%) dominate, a considerable number of teachers (117 participants, 21.9%) have less than 1 year of experience in this area. This finding implies that while the participants have some level of experience in teaching these prevention skills, their assessments of the current state of learning materials are likely to be both practical and insightful, based on their varying levels of expertise.

The findings indicate that the content related to child sexual-abuse prevention is not consistently integrated into the teaching process at some of the surveyed schools. Some teachers only begin incorporating these skills into their curriculum after they have spent a period teaching primary school.

The research employed a mixed methods approach to explore the research problem objectively (through quantitative methods) and to uncover the subjective experiences of the participants regarding the issue. This research design aligns with the proposed hypothesis by balancing subjective and objective aspects, thus providing a comprehensive perspective. Specifically, the study utilized a survey method with questionnaires as the primary data collection tool. complemented by semi-structured interviews. This approach allowed the researcher to gather data from a large sample size while also delving into the perceptions and attitudes of the interviewees regarding sexual abuse. The study is classified as a cross-sectional study, where qualitative and quantitative data were collected sequentially. Ethical considerations were rigorously upheld throughout the research process. To implement the survey research method using questionnaires, the following steps were taken:

Step 1: Group Discussion and Open Survey The research team invited 25 primary school teachers to participate in discussions and respond to open-ended questions such as: "When teaching about child sexual-abuse prevention, where do you source your materials?" and "During the process of finding materials, what factors do you consider important in terms of form and content?" The purpose of this phase, in addition to integrating theoretical knowledge, was to identify the key factors to include in the questionnaire, ensuring that its construction was closely aligned with actual teaching practices and the real needs of teachers in teaching child sexual-abuse prevention skills.

Step 2: Constructing the Questionnaire, Pilot Survey, and Measuring Reliability The questionnaire on the current state of data sources and the use of materials for teaching child sexual-abuse prevention skills in primary schools comprised two main sections:

An identifying information section (questions 1 to 4).

A survey content section with three subsections:

(1) the current state of materials supporting teachers in teaching child sexual-abuse prevention skills in primary schools (questions 5 to 10); (2) the current use of these materials (questions 11 to 13); and (3) the need for developing additional materials (questions 14 to 17). After constructing the questionnaire, a pilot survey was conducted with 40 primary school teachers, their feedback was collected, and adjustments were made to clarify any ambiguous or unclear questions, preparing the survey for official use.

Step 3: Official Survey The questionnaire was distributed online via Google Forms. The research team surveyed primary school teachers in the regions of Ho Chi Minh City, Binh Duong, and Can Tho. After filtering out erroneous responses, the total number of valid responses collected was 534.

Table 2: Content of the Survey on the Current State of Data Sources and the Use of Materials to Support Teaching Child Sexual-Abuse Prevention Skills in Primary School Students

Teaching Child Sexual-Abuse Prevention Skills in Primary School Students					
No.	Survey content	Scale			
Part I	Demographic Information of Survey Subjects				
1	Workplace	Nominal			
2	Gender	Nominal			
3	ice	Ordinal			
4	Experience in teaching sexual abuse prevention skills	Ordinal			
2.1. C	I: Survey Content urrent State of Materials Supporting Teachers in Teaching Child Sexual-Abuse Students	Prevention Skills for Primary			
1	General evaluation of materials	5-point Likert			
2	Current sources of materials	Nominal			
3	Forms of materials (6 variables)	5-point Likert			
4	Content of materials (6 variables)	5-point Likert			
5	Detailed perception of materials (9 variables)	5-point Likert			
	urrent Use of Materials Supporting Teachers in Teaching Child Sexual-Abuse l Students	Prevention Skills for Primary			
1	Frequency of consulting materials	5-point Likert			
2	Use of materials in different teaching stages	Nominal			
3	Difficulties in applying and using materials (10 variables)	5-point Likert			
2.3. No	eed for Developing Materials to Support Teachers in Teaching Child Sexual-Abuse	Prevention Skills for Primary			
School	Students				
1	General evaluation of the need for using materials	5-point Likert			
2	Need for the forms of materials (6 variables)	5-point Likert			
3	Need for the content of materials (6 variables)	5-point Likert			

- Calculate the percentage for the following questions: 2, 3, 4 (Part I); 2 (Part 2.1); 2 (Part 2.2)
- Calculate the average for questions measuring levels: 1, 3, 4, 5 (Part 2.1); 1, 3 (Part 2.2); and 2, 3 (Part 2.3)

The scoring method and significance of the levels according to the 5-point Likert scale are specifically presented in Table 3:

Table 3: Significance of the Levels According to the 5-Point Likert Scale					
Survey Content	Very	Unhelpful	Neutral	Helpful	Very Helpful
	Unhelpful				
	1	2	3	4	5
Current state of	Level 1 (1.00 – 1.80): Very unhelpful. The materials do not provide any significant support				e any significant support to
materials supporting	teachers in teac	hing child sexual-al	ouse prevention	skills.	
teachers in teaching	Level 2 (1.81	- 2.60): Unhelpfu	ıl. The material	s have little in	npact and significance in
child sexual-abuse	supporting teachers in teaching child sexual-abuse prevention skills.				
prevention skills for	Level 3 (2.61 – 3.40): Neutral. The materials have some significance in supporting teachers				
primary school	in teaching chil	d sexual-abuse prev	ention skills.		
students					ignificance and usefulness
		eaching child sexua			
	Level 5 (4.21 – 5.0): Very helpful. The materials have great significance and are very useful				
	for teachers in t	eaching child sexua	ıl-abuse preventi	on skills.	
Survey Content	Strongly	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Disagree				
	1	2	3	4	5
Evaluation of	Level 1 (1.00	– 1.80): Strongly	disagree. Partici	pants believe the	hat this statement has no
materials supporting	accuracy at all.				
teachers in teaching	Level 2 $(1.81 - 2.60)$: Disagree. Participants do not believe this statement is accurate.				
child sexual-abuse	Level 3 $(2.61 - 3.40)$: Uncertain. Participants are unsure about the accuracy of this statement.				
prevention skills for	Level 4 (3.41 – 4.20): Agree. Participants agree with this statement.				
primary school	Level 5 (4.21 –	5.0): Strongly agree	e. Participants be	lieve this statem	nent is completely accurate
students	and aligns with their evaluation.				
Survey Content	Unnecessary	Uncertain	Uncertain	Necessary	Completely Necessary
	1	2	3	4	5
Teachers' need for	Level 1 (1.00	- 1.80): Complete	ly unnecessary.	Participants be	lieve this element has no
developing materials	significance and should not be included in the materials.				
to support teaching	Level 2 (1.81 – 2.60): Unnecessary. Participants believe this element has very little				
child sexual-abuse	significance and should not be included in the materials.				
prevention skills for	Level 3 (2.61 – 3.40): Uncertain. Participants are unsure about the importance of this element				
primary school	and whether it should be included in the materials.				
students	Level 4 (3.41 – 4.20): Necessary. Participants believe this element is important and should be				
	included in the materials.				
	Level 5 $(4.21-5.0)$: Completely necessary. Participants believe this element is very important,				
	highly relevant, and must be included in the materials.				

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 4 shows the frequency of using learning materials in supporting the teaching of child sexual-abuse prevention skills to primary school students.

Table 4: Frequency of Using Learning Materials to Support Primary Teachers in Teaching Child Sexual-Abuse Prevention Skills

No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage	
1	Very rarely used	14	2.6%	
2	Rarely used	72	13.5%	
3	Normally used	201	37.6%	
4	Frequently used	215	40.3%	
5	Very frequently used	32	6%	
Average		3.34		

The results indicate that primary school teachers use these materials at a "normal" level, with an overall average of 3.34. Among the respondents, 40.3% "frequently used" the materials, but only 32 individuals "very frequently used" them, accounting for 6%. This can be attributed to the repetitive nature of primary school teaching. Teachers typically refer to the materials

a few times for lesson planning or initial teachings of the content. Once proficient, teachers can deliver the lessons without further reference to the materials. The research findings differ from those of Nguyen Tieu Bang (2021), which found that teachers frequently used learning materials, particularly pictures, photos, and video clips. This discrepancy may be due to geographical differences

and related objective factors such as facilities affecting the usage of materials by the study group.

When asked about the stage of the teaching process where teachers use learning materials, the highest-rated response was "Directly during the lecture" with 431 choices (80.7%), followed by "During the idea and lesson planning phase" with 256 choices (47.9%),

and finally, "During lesson outcome evaluation" with 104 choices. Thus, the current learning materials are sufficiently visual, dynamic, and suitable for the age characteristics of students, hence frequently used during teaching. However, it appears that the current materials lack criteria for evaluating lesson outcomes, resulting in less than 20% of teachers choosing to use them for summarizing and evaluating.

Table 5: Difficulties in Using Learning Materials to Support Primary Teachers in Teaching Child Sexual-Abuse Prevention Skills

No.		Average Score	Rank
1	Teachers spend a lot of time and effort searching for materials suitable for lesson goals	3.61	2
2	Teachers spend a lot of time and effort selecting scientific materials	3.62	1
3	Teachers lack materials to visualize sample lessons for teaching prevention skills	3.45	4
4	Teachers lack clear materials for guiding the teaching of prevention skills	3.45	4
5	Existing materials are too academic, difficult to apply practically to prevent abuse	3.48	3
6	Existing materials do not meet the required skills for sexual abuse prevention	3.39	8
7	Students are not interested in the current materials for prevention skills	3.44	5
8	Existing materials do not support teachers in teaching prevention skills easily	3.39	8
9	Existing materials do not suggest many methods or forms for teaching prevention skills	3.43	6
10	Existing materials do not support scientific teaching of prevention skills	3.42	7
Over	all Average Score	3.47	

The findings from the survey provide a comprehensive view of the challenges faced by primary school teachers in utilizing and applying current learning materials, specifically in the context of teaching sexual abuse prevention skills. Overall, teachers expressed agreement that the existing materials pose difficulties, with an average difficulty score of 3.47. The most significant challenge identified was the time and effort required to select appropriate scientific materials, as reflected by an average score of 3.62. This suggests that while teachers recognize the scientific value of the materials, the lack of readily accessible, reliable sources necessitates extensive time investment to filter and select the most accurate content.

Another critical challenge, closely following with an average score of 3.61, is the substantial time and effort teachers must spend searching for materials that align with specific lesson goals. The disjointed presentation of materials, which often cater to only a single objective, exacerbates this issue. Teachers indicated that the absence of a unified resource that meets diverse teaching objectives significantly increases their workload, particularly in preparing lessons on child sexual abuse prevention.

Additionally, teachers noted the overly academic nature of some existing materials, which hinders practical application in the classroom. This difficulty, with an average score of 3.48, highlights the gap between the theoretical content presented in training sessions and the practical needs of primary school educators. The academic presentation, often laden with statistics and complex professional terms, may be beneficial for adults but is less effective in a primary

school setting. Therefore, it is essential that future material design prioritizes practical presentation, ensuring that content is both accessible and applicable in real-world teaching scenarios.

Two challenges tied for fourth place, each with an average score of 3.45: the lack of materials to visualize sample lessons and the scarcity of clear guidelines for teaching prevention skills. These findings are particularly concerning given that nearly 22% of the 534 respondents had less than one year of experience teaching these skills. The absence of comprehensive teaching videos and clear instructional guides contributes to confusion and uncertainty among teachers, especially those new to the field. Consequently, the development of future materials should include visual aids and instructional videos to enhance teacher confidence and effectiveness.

Interestingly, some of the least rated difficulties were related to the overall adequacy of the materials in supporting sexual abuse prevention education. Specifically, the factors "The available materials do not meet the requirements for child sexual-abuse prevention skills" and "The available materials do not support me in teaching sexual-abuse prevention skills easily" were rated as less problematic, with an average score of 3.39. This suggests that the core content of the materials is generally adequate, but the primary issue lies in the accessibility and convenience of these resources.

Qualitative feedback from teachers further supports these findings. For instance, Teacher 01 highlighted the difficulty in finding suitable materials, often spending hours searching for accurate information,

which is both time-consuming and challenging due to the lack of clear, detailed supporting materials. Teacher 02 echoed this sentiment, pointing out that the academic nature of the materials makes them difficult to simplify for primary students. Teacher 03 emphasized the challenge of selecting appropriate resources for different lesson objectives, particularly in the absence of specific illustrative videos.

These responses underline the necessity for improvements in the compilation and provision of supporting materials for teaching sexual-abuse prevention skills. Specifically, there is a need for diverse, accessible, and accurate resources, coupled with practical instructional videos to aid teachers in visualizing and effectively applying the content in their classrooms. Additionally, it is crucial to avoid overly academic content that may hinder practical application.

In summary, the research results offer a clear understanding of the difficulties primary school teachers encounter in using materials to support the teaching of sexual-abuse prevention skills. The most significant challenges revolve around the time and effort required to find and select suitable materials and the overly academic nature of the content, which limits its practical application. While the materials are generally considered adequate in content, the lack of user-friendly, accessible resources presents a major barrier to effective teaching. Future efforts should focus on developing materials that are both scientifically sound and practically applicable, with a strong emphasis on creating comprehensive instructional guides and visual aids.

However, it is important to note that this study was conducted with a specific sample population in Ho Chi Minh City and Binh Duong, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions in Vietnam. Additionally, the survey focused solely on teachers, which means the results represent the perspectives of this particular group. Future research should consider a broader and more diverse sample to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced in teaching sexual abuse prevention skills across different contexts.

4. CONCLUSION

The research findings offer a comprehensive overview of the frequency with which materials are utilized and the challenges associated with their implementation in teaching sexual abuse prevention skills. These results contribute to a broader understanding of the context in which such materials are used in Vietnam, particularly within Can Tho, Ho Chi Minh City and Binh Duong. The study highlights significant aspects of the current educational landscape in Vietnam, providing valuable insights for future research endeavors. Future studies should consider expanding the sample size to include a more diverse and

representative group, which would enhance the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, incorporating the perspectives of learners could provide a more balanced and objective view, further enriching the understanding of the challenges faced in this educational context. Moreover, subsequent research could focus on testing and developing strategies to address and overcome the difficulties that teachers encounter when implementing these materials, thereby improving the effectiveness of sexual abuse prevention education in primary schools.

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