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## Trauma-Informed Care for Students from Teachers' Perspective: A Literature Review from a Developing Country

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**Abstract:** This systematic review aimed to explore teachers' perspectives on trauma-informed care (TIC) within educational settings, focusing on Vietnam as a representative case of developing countries. While TIC has received growing global attention, its implementation in resource-constrained, exam-oriented, and culturally collectivist contexts remains underexplored. A total of 34 peer-reviewed studies

published between 2012 and 2024 were analyzed using PRISMA guidelines and thematic synthesis. The findings reveal that although Vietnamese teachers generally expressed a strong moral obligation and confidence in supporting trauma-affected students, there exists a significant discrepancy between their perceived awareness and actual classroom practices. Three core themes emerged: (1) teachers' recognition of trauma-related student needs; (2) their perceived roles and readiness to engage in emotional support; and (3) contextual barriers, including limited trauma-specific training, lack of systemic support, Confucian hierarchical norms, and pervasive stigma toward mental health, that constrain the adoption of TIC. This review contributes novel insights into the intersection of trauma-informed practice and cultural context, emphasizing that TIC implementation in Vietnam must be both pedagogically sound and culturally resonant. Recommendations include integrating TIC into national teacher training curricula, ensuring sustained professional development opportunities, and fostering reflective, collaborative school cultures. By equipping educators with both conceptual frameworks and context-specific tools, TIC holds the potential to promote emotional safety, enhance student engagement, and reduce psychological inequities in Vietnam's educational system, particularly among vulnerable youth. The review also calls for further empirical studies to address existing methodological gaps and to inform culturally grounded models of trauma-responsive education in developing countries.

**Keywords:** Childhood trauma, Educational Psychology, School-based prevention program, Trauma-informed care, Trauma-informed training.

## Introduction

In recent years, the concept of trauma-informed care (TIC) has gained prominence in educational discourse, particularly in the wake of increasing awareness about the long-term impacts of trauma on student learning and development. Trauma, broadly defined as the emotional response to deeply distressing experiences, can have enduring psychological, neurological, and behavioral consequences when left unaddressed, especially during childhood and adolescence (Lubit, 2003; Whitaker et al., 2019). International research consistently shows that trauma negatively affects children's emotional regulation, attention span, social relationships, and academic performance (Heslin & Klehe, 2006; Rahimi et al., 2021; Southall, 2024). While much of the literature originates from high-income countries such as the United States, where 60–70% of adolescents are exposed to at least one traumatic event annually (Bargeman et al., 2021), trauma is equally, if not more, prevalent in developing contexts. In Vietnam, national reports by the Ministry of Education and Training (Ministry of Education and Training, 2023) indicate that approximately 68% of secondary school students report having experienced at least one adverse life event, including domestic violence, academic pressure, or parental separation. However, school systems in Vietnam and similar countries are often underprepared to respond effectively to trauma due to limited mental health infrastructure, insufficient teacher training, and pervasive social stigma (Bui et al., 2018).

Despite these challenges, teachers remain central figures in fostering psychosocial safety in schools (Else et al., 2015). Trauma-informed care in education refers to an organizational framework that prioritizes emotional safety, empowerment, trust-building, and sensitivity to trauma symptoms. It requires educators to understand the prevalence and impact of trauma, recognize trauma signs in students, and integrate this awareness into pedagogical practices and school policies (Brunzell et al., 2022). However, in Vietnam, trauma-informed education is not systematically included in teacher training curricula or national education policies. Existing research in Western contexts highlights the positive effects of TIC on student outcomes and teacher well-being. However, there remains a significant gap in the literature concerning how teachers in developing countries perceive, understand, and implement TIC. In particular, few studies have examined the interplay between cultural norms, institutional constraints, and individual teacher

agency in shaping trauma-informed practices. This lack of context-specific data hinders the development of responsive training models and policies that could equip teachers to support trauma-impacted students more effectively.

While TIC has been extensively examined in developed countries, where robust mental health infrastructures and systematic teacher training programs are often in place, its implementation in developing contexts remains underexplored and fraught with systemic challenges (L'Estrange & Howard, 2022; Liang et al., 2020; Loomis & Felt, 2021). In high-income settings, educators typically benefit from comprehensive policies, interdisciplinary collaboration, and reduced stigma toward mental health, thereby facilitating the integration of TIC into pedagogical practice (Brown et al., 2022; Perry & Daniels, 2016). For instance, in the United States (Muskett, 2014) and Australia (Wilson et al., 2017), TIC is frequently embedded within both pre-service and in-service teacher training curricula, accompanied by accessible referral systems and professional supervision mechanisms. In contrast, educators in developing countries, including Vietnam, frequently navigate educational systems characterized by limited mental health resources, fragmented training opportunities, and pervasive cultural stigmas surrounding trauma (Kamimura et al., 2018). Vietnam was purposefully selected as a representative case for this review, given its distinctive position as a lower-middle-income country experiencing rapid educational reform alongside significant mental health challenges. Despite recent policy developments on enhancing the capacity of school counseling (Huynh & Giang, 2021), TIC remains largely absent from national teacher education frameworks (Dang et al., 2018). Moreover, the deeply rooted Confucian educational traditions in Vietnam, which emphasize hierarchical teacher-student relationships and prioritize academic achievement, present additional barriers to implementing trauma-responsive practices (Ngo, 2020). By situating TIC within this complex cultural and systemic landscape, the present review not only illuminates the challenges faced by Vietnamese educators but also provides critical insights applicable to other developing countries navigating similar educational and psychosocial contexts.

The present review explores teachers' perspectives on trauma-informed care with a focus on Vietnam as a developing country. It aims to (1) synthesize international and local literature on teachers' roles in trauma-informed education, (2) identify key factors influencing their awareness and readiness to implement TIC, and (3) highlight contextually grounded recommendations for teacher training and educational reform. By doing so, this study contributes to the emerging discourse on culturally adaptive trauma-informed frameworks in low-resource settings.

Despite the growing international recognition of TIC in education, its adoption in developing countries remains uneven and underexamined. Vietnam, in particular, is facing a dual challenge: a rising prevalence of student psychological distress, exacerbated by family instability, academic pressure, and post-pandemic stress, and an educational system that lacks structural support for mental health initiatives. While the Ministry of Education and Training has begun to promote school-based psychological services, implementation remains limited in scale, especially in rural or resource-constrained settings. Furthermore, teacher training programs in Vietnam often emphasize academic instruction over psychosocial support, leaving educators unprepared to identify or respond to trauma-related issues. Given these systemic constraints, there is an urgent need to understand how teachers in Vietnam perceive their role in addressing student trauma, what barriers they face in adopting trauma-informed practices, and how existing models can be adapted to fit the local cultural and institutional context.

### ***Research Aim and Research Questions***

This review aims to:

- Synthesize global and Vietnamese literature on teachers' perspectives and practices related to TIC;

- Identify core challenges and enabling factors for TIC implementation in Vietnamese educational settings.
- Explore how cultural norms, institutional policies, and training opportunities intersect to shape TIC readiness among Vietnamese teachers.
- Offer recommendations to inform policy reforms and teacher training frameworks grounded in local realities.

The research questions:

1. How do teachers perceive the relevance and application of trauma-informed care in educational settings?
2. What factors influence teachers' awareness, readiness, and implementation of TIC?
3. How can teacher training programs be designed to better support TIC adoption in Vietnam better?

## **Literature Review**

### ***Systematic Review Methodology***

This study employed a systematic review methodology, guided by PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) standards, to ensure transparency and replicability in the identification, selection, and analysis of relevant literature. The review process consisted of four main phases: literature search, screening and selection, quality appraisal, and thematic synthesis.

### ***Search Strategy and Databases***

A comprehensive literature search was conducted across six academic databases: Scopus, PubMed, Web of Science, ERIC, PsycINFO, and Vietnam Journals Online (VJOL). The search included studies published between January 2012 and March 2024. The following Boolean keyword combinations were used:

- "trauma-informed care" AND "teachers"
- "trauma-informed education" AND "Vietnam" OR "developing countries"
- "psychological trauma" AND "school-based" OR "educational settings"
- "teacher perspectives" AND "student trauma."

Search filters were applied to include only peer-reviewed articles, empirical studies (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods), and literature focused on K–12 educational contexts. Clinical, medical, or non-school-based interventions were excluded.

### ***Study Selection and PRISMA Flow***

A total of 263 articles were identified after deduplication. Titles and abstracts were screened for relevance, followed by full-text review. Ultimately, 34 studies met all inclusion criteria. A PRISMA flow diagram (Figure X) is provided to illustrate the selection process, including the number of excluded studies at each stage and reasons for exclusion.

### ***Quality Assessment***

Each study was evaluated using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT, 2018 version) to ensure methodological rigor. Criteria included clarity of research questions, appropriateness of methodology, coherence of data collection and analysis, and relevance to TIC implementation. Only studies scoring at least 75% on the MMAT were included in the final synthesis.

## Data Analysis and Synthesis

Thematic synthesis was employed to extract and organize key findings across studies. An open coding approach was first applied to identify recurring concepts, which were then grouped into higher-order themes. Two reviewers independently conducted the coding process, and discrepancies were resolved through discussion. NVivo software was used to manage and analyze the qualitative data. Three central themes emerged from the synthesis:

- Teachers' perspective on the need for TIC in their classroom;
- Teachers' perspective on their role in supporting trauma-impacted students;
- The factors that affect teachers' perspectives on TIC for students.

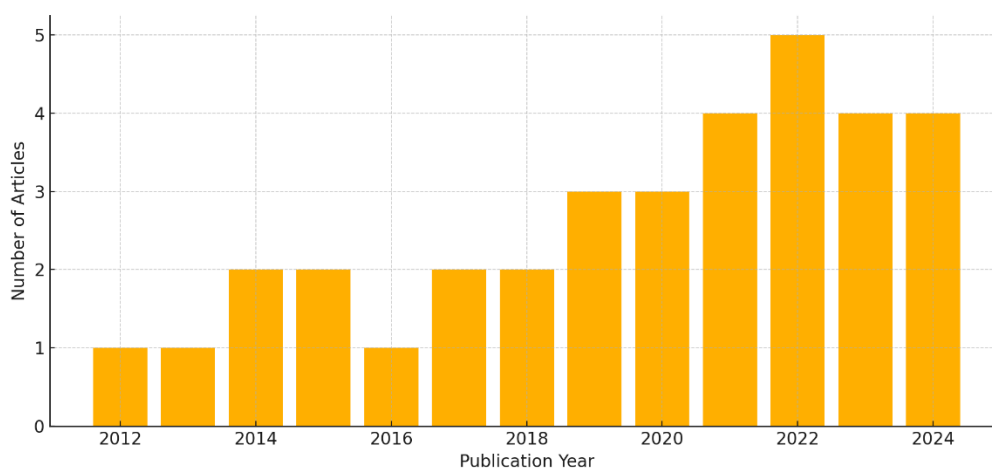
These themes were further analyzed to compare trends across geographical regions, educational levels, and professional training contexts, with particular attention to the Vietnamese educational system.

This review acknowledges several limitations. First, the reliance on published, peer-reviewed studies may introduce publication bias, potentially excluding relevant grey literature. Second, while efforts were made to ensure inter-rater reliability, subjective judgments in screening and thematic coding could still influence findings. Third, the predominance of self-report data and limited observational studies in the included literature constrains the depth of insight into actual classroom practices. Finally, the majority of Vietnamese studies were conducted in urban settings, limiting the generalizability of findings to rural or ethnic minority contexts.

## Literature Review and Highlights

**Figure 1**

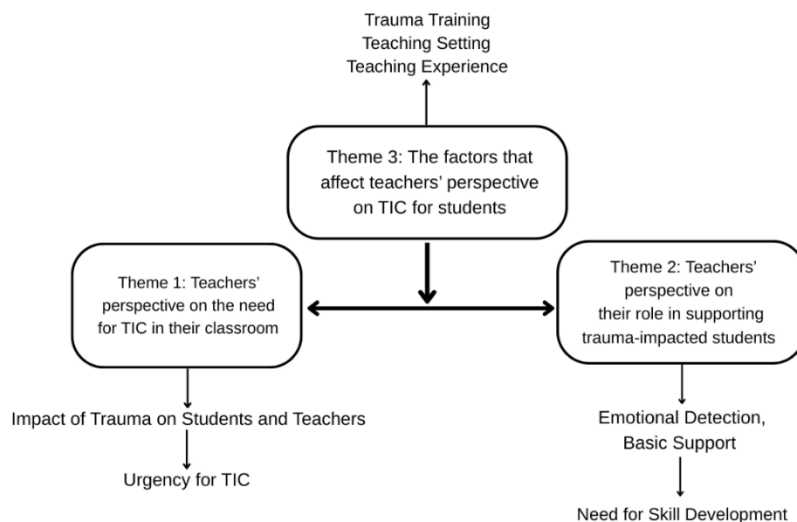
*Distribution of Analyzed Sources by Publication Year*



The figure (see Figure 1) shows a steady increase in TIC-related publications from 2012 to 2024, reflecting growing academic attention to trauma-informed education. A notable surge is observed between 2020 and 2023, likely influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on student mental health. This trend underscores the timeliness and urgency of synthesizing current literature for educational application in developing contexts.

**Figure 2**

*Conceptual Map of Key Themes*



This conceptual map illustrates the interconnection between teachers' recognition of trauma, their perceived roles, and key contextual influences such as training and institutional support (see Figure 2). The model provides a culturally relevant framework to understand how TIC implementation depends on both individual competencies and systemic readiness, especially in collectivist societies like Vietnam.

**Results**

***Teachers' perspective on the need for trauma-informed care in their classroom***

**Table 1**

*Comparison of TIC Understanding Among Teachers in Different Countries*

Country	Level of Understanding	Key Influencing Factors	Reference(s)
USA	Moderate-High	Pre-service training, policy	Brown et al., 2020
Australia	High	Professional development, SEL	Brunzell et al., 2022
Vietnam	Low	Lack of training, cultural stigma	Hoang et al., 2018
Uganda	Moderate	Post-conflict context, teacher stress	Willis & Nagel, 2015

Teachers across diverse educational contexts increasingly recognize the importance of TIC in creating emotionally safe and supportive learning environments. However, the depth of this recognition and the capacity to translate awareness into action vary significantly depending on cultural, institutional, and systemic factors. A synthesis of international and Vietnamese studies reveals converging patterns in teacher attitudes toward TIC, while also exposing stark divergences rooted in contextual realities. In high-income settings such as the United States and Australia, teachers' understanding of TIC is often shaped by access to formal pre-service and in-service training, as well as systemic policies that mandate or support trauma-responsive practices (Brown et al., 2020; Brunzell et al., 2022; McClain, 2021). These systems facilitate the normalization of discussions about trauma, encourage cross-sector collaboration, and position teachers as key mental health allies (Blitz et al., 2016). In contrast, Vietnamese educators operate within a cultural context where mental health remains stigmatized, and trauma is frequently viewed as a

private, family-bound issue. As a result, teachers may hesitate to engage in conversations around emotional distress, fearing social repercussions or professional overreach.

Vietnamese studies (e.g., Hoang et al., 2018) indicate that while many teachers express genuine concern for students' well-being, their understanding of trauma is often conflated with behavioral misconduct or poor academic motivation. This misrecognition reflects both limited training and deeper cultural scripts that discourage emotional disclosure in hierarchical school settings. For example, in collectivist cultures like Vietnam's, students are often socialized to suppress individual distress to preserve group harmony, making trauma symptoms more difficult for teachers to detect unless they manifest in externalized forms such as aggression or absenteeism. The comparison of global and local findings also underscores a structural imbalance. While Blitz et al. (2016) and Ireland & Huxley (2018) emphasize the need for school-level supports (e.g., counseling services, peer debriefing), Vietnamese schools rarely have such infrastructure. Teachers frequently shoulder emotional labor alone, without access to psychological specialists or trauma-informed school policies.

Methodologically, several of the studies reviewed, particularly those from Vietnam, rely heavily on self-reported survey data and lack triangulation with student outcomes or classroom observations. This reliance limits the depth of insight into how teacher perceptions align with actual practices. Moreover, sample sizes in Vietnamese studies are often small, regionally confined (typically urban), and not representative of the full diversity of school settings, particularly rural or mountainous areas where trauma exposure may be higher due to poverty or family migration. To move beyond surface-level awareness, future efforts must incorporate culturally sensitive definitions of trauma, integrate localized case studies, and promote reflective practice among teachers. This means acknowledging both individual and collective dimensions of suffering in Vietnamese educational culture, such as academic pressure, intergenerational expectations, or parental absence due to labor migration, as relevant forms of trauma requiring pedagogical attention.

Ultimately, while teachers in Vietnam increasingly acknowledge the emotional challenges facing students, they are ill-equipped to meet these needs without targeted, culturally adapted training and policy support. Bridging this gap will require rethinking not only what trauma means in context, but also who is responsible for healing it within the school system.

### ***Teachers' perspective on their role in supporting trauma-impacted students***

Globally, there is a growing recognition that teachers are not merely academic facilitators but are increasingly positioned as first-line emotional supports for trauma-affected students. However, this evolving role is mediated by varying degrees of institutional backing, cultural expectations, and professional training. The literature reviewed reflects both convergence and divergence in how teachers perceive and enact their responsibilities toward trauma-impacted learners. Across diverse settings, educators report emotional commitment to supporting student well-being. In contexts such as Finland and Australia, teachers are increasingly viewed, and view themselves, as relational anchors who can foster emotional regulation and psychological safety in classrooms (Markkanen et al., 2019; Brunzell et al., 2022; Vibhakar et al., 2019). Formal professional development programs, multidisciplinary support systems, and trauma-responsive school cultures often reinforce these shifts in role perception.

By contrast, Vietnamese teachers express strong moral responsibility toward students' psychological needs but operate in environments with limited institutional reinforcement. Studies like Hoang et al. (2018) and Nguyen et al. (2022) reveal a critical gap between perceived readiness and actual competence. For instance, while over 85% of surveyed Vietnamese teachers expressed confidence in their ability to provide emotional support, qualitative data and student feedback suggest their interventions often lack consistency, depth, or psychological grounding. This discrepancy can be attributed to the absence of

structured TIC training, culturally appropriate pedagogical tools, and opportunities for supervised reflection. Furthermore, the cultural framing of teachers' roles in Vietnam may reinforce narrow expectations. Within Confucian educational traditions, teachers are revered as moral exemplars and disciplinarians rather than emotional caregivers. This cultural schema can complicate efforts to promote open emotional dialogue between teachers and students, particularly when trauma manifests as behavioral defiance or disengagement responses that may be interpreted as disrespect or laziness rather than distress.

Methodologically, many Vietnamese studies rely on self-reported data with limited observational or longitudinal follow-up, raising questions about the depth of insight into sustained behavior change among educators. In contrast, more robust international research, such as MacLochlainn et al. (2022), demonstrates that intensive, hands-on TIC training can reframe teachers' self-conception, fostering transitions from purely instructional roles to emotionally attuned, student-centered practitioners. Such transformation requires both attitudinal change and the acquisition of specific trauma-responsive strategies. Without access to these enabling conditions, Vietnamese teachers risk emotional burnout and vicarious trauma, especially when they are expected to manage student distress in isolation. This highlights a systemic contradiction: teachers are increasingly expected to support trauma-affected students without adequate emotional scaffolding for themselves. As Ireland and Huxley (2018) observe, educators' mental health is often neglected, even as they are tasked with safeguarding that of their students.

To address this misalignment, TIC frameworks in Vietnam must go beyond raising awareness. They should prioritize sustained, practice-based training, reflective supervision, and integration of mental health resources at the school level. Importantly, training should acknowledge teachers' lived realities—heavy workloads, hierarchical school structures, and sociocultural norms around emotional expression—and provide feasible strategies that align with both professional duties and cultural expectations.

### ***The factors that affect teachers' perspectives on trauma-informed care for students***

A complex interplay of personal, institutional, and cultural factors shapes teachers' perspectives on TIC. Synthesizing both global and Vietnamese literature reveals three critical domains that consistently influence educators' readiness and responsiveness to TIC: teaching experience, educational setting, and access to trauma-related training. While these factors are frequently cited in international studies, local systemic constraints and sociocultural expectations uniquely mediate their impact in Vietnam.

**Table 2**

*Comparative Summary of Key Factors Influencing Teachers' Perspectives on TIC*

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Notable Findings</i>	<i>Source(s)</i>
Teaching Experience	Years of teaching influence teachers' awareness of trauma, self-efficacy, and perceived roles.	Late-career teachers better identify academic needs; early-career teachers are more inclined to offer emotional support.	Alisic et al., 2012; Reker, 2016
Teaching Setting	School level (elementary, high school) and region (rural/urban) affect the perception of trauma needs.	Elementary teachers are more sensitive to emotional/behavioral needs; high school teachers are less attentive.	Reker, 2016; Bongers et al., 2003
Trauma Training	Participation in trauma-specific training affects attitude, confidence, and TIC implementation.	Increases in ARTIC scores and self-efficacy; effective even across varying experience levels.	Parker & Levinson, 2020; Reker, 2016

This comparative table consolidates evidence from both Vietnamese and international contexts, emphasizing that while structural and cultural differences exist, teachers' readiness to engage in TIC is most impacted by systematic training and professional experience. These insights underline the need for targeted interventions and nuanced policy approaches tailored to the school level, teacher career stage, and localized training availability.

TIC and TIC perspectives have not been studied thoroughly in Vietnam. Therefore, the limited number of studies and the limitations in research design are not enough to conclude the practical influencing factors in Vietnam. However, there are overseas studies that could reveal some results about this correlation. Research synthesis indicates that there are 3 main factors affecting teachers' perspective on trauma-informed care for their students, which are teaching experience, teaching setting, and trauma training.

### ***Teaching experience***

Teaching experience has consistently been identified as an influential factor shaping teachers' perspectives on trauma-informed care, particularly in terms of perceived competence, understanding of student needs, and sense of professional responsibility. While teachers across different stages of their careers may share a common concern for students affected by trauma, the depth and nature of their engagement often vary depending on years of teaching and exposure to trauma-related situations.

Across multiple contexts, teaching experience emerges as a predictor of teacher self-efficacy and nuanced understanding of student trauma. Studies such as Alisic et al. (2012) and Reker (2016) suggest that veteran teachers are better equipped to identify academic indicators of trauma, whereas early-career educators tend to exhibit higher emotional responsiveness—perhaps due to more recent exposure to student-centered pedagogy. In Vietnam, this dichotomy is particularly pronounced, where late-career teachers often rely on didactic methods and perceive trauma as a discipline problem, while younger teachers are more open to socio-emotional perspectives but lack institutional support to act on them.

A foundational study by Alisic et al. (2012) examined 765 elementary school teachers to investigate the challenges they encountered when working with traumatized children. Through multiple regression analysis, the researchers found that the number of teaching years was negatively associated with perceived difficulties in supporting trauma-affected students ( $B = -0.07$ ,  $\beta = -0.12$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ). Similarly, the number of previously encountered traumatized students and recent trauma-focused training also predicted reduced difficulty levels. Although the model accounted for only a modest proportion of variance ( $R^2 = 0.04$ ), the findings suggest that accumulated teaching experience and relevant exposure may foster greater confidence and fewer barriers in trauma-informed teaching. This trend highlights that while formal training is essential, lived classroom experience plays an equally valuable role in shaping practical readiness.

Building upon this insight, Reker (2016) offered a more nuanced analysis by categorizing teachers into early-career (0–9 years), mid-career (10–19 years), and late-career (20+ years) groups. The results showed that teachers in the late-career stage were more sensitive to students' academic needs following trauma, with a statistically significant relationship between teaching years and perception of academic deficits ( $\chi^2 = 0.7005$ ,  $p = .030$ ). Moreover, early-career teachers tended to view themselves as more responsible for offering emotional support compared to mid-career teachers, suggesting that newer teachers may bring a heightened sense of emotional commitment, perhaps driven by recent training or idealistic motivation.

Interestingly, late-career teachers also demonstrated the highest levels of self-efficacy in providing behavioral support, outperforming both early- and mid-career counterparts. Yet, this finding contradicts

earlier assumptions that self-efficacy peaks during mid-career stages. Instead, Reker's findings imply that confidence may increase further with experience, even beyond twenty years of service.

Together, these findings illustrate that teaching experience is not only a predictor of practical skill but also a dynamic lens through which educators interpret trauma, assess student needs, and define their own professional roles. Future trauma-informed training programs would benefit from aligning their content with teachers' career stages, acknowledging both the strengths and challenges that arise at each phase of professional development. However, most Vietnamese studies to date fail to stratify teacher responses by years of experience or career stage, limiting the ability to draw robust comparisons. Moreover, self-report biases in existing surveys (e.g., Hoang et al., 2018) further obscure how experience influences actual classroom behavior.

### ***Teaching setting***

Educational level and school geography also shape TIC perceptions. International findings indicate that elementary school teachers are more attuned to emotional and behavioral disruptions (Reker, 2016), while high school teachers focus on academic outcomes. This trend holds in Vietnam, where primary school teachers, particularly in urban areas, are more likely to participate in SEL and mental health awareness programs due to pilot interventions from international NGOs. Many years ago, Vietnamese educational settings were raising more awareness of school well-being. Education is no longer solely focused on academic achievements; nurturing the mental well-being of the future generation has also become a priority. Teachers, who directly manage classrooms, organize educational activities, directly care for and support students, and guide their future paths, play a critical role in preventing psychological issues and providing timely interventions for students.

On November 24, 2023, under Decision No. 3996, the Ministry of Education and Training approved the "Training Materials for Enhancing the Capacity of School Psychological Counseling for Homeroom Teachers in Secondary Schools." The document consists of four main sections: (1) Psychological characteristics of secondary school students; (2) The process of school psychological counseling; (3) Basic psychological counseling skills; (4) Common areas of psychological counseling in secondary schools. Therefore, this decision set a firm foundation for enhancing teachers' awareness of students' mental health, which includes trauma-impacted symptoms.

Overseas studies show that the teaching setting is characterized by the school's location (rural, suburban, and urban) and type (preschool, elementary, middle, and high school). There is limited research on the impact of school types on teachers' perceptions of trauma awareness and their role in supporting their students. While some studies suggest that urban youth have higher rates of trauma exposure, others conclude that children in rural areas experience higher rates of adverse childhood experiences compared to urban areas. Additionally, some research indicates consistent trauma exposure across different regions.

A study by Reker (2016) indicates that considerable differences were found in teachers' perceptions of students' emotional and behavioral needs between different types of schools. It suggests that elementary teachers were more likely to view traumatised students as in need of emotional and behavioral support than the other types. This finding can be explained by characteristics of developmental psychology and the changes in trauma symptoms. Namely, internalizing symptoms (e.g., anxiety, depression, somatic complaints, and withdrawal) increase as children age, while externalizing symptoms (e.g., verbal and physical aggression) tend to decline into adolescence (Bongers et al., 2003). Therefore, it is comprehensible that high school teachers are likely not paying much attention to students' need for emotional and behavioral support.

Yet, rural and mountainous schools remain excluded mainly from such initiatives. In these settings, cultural beliefs that equate emotional distress with weakness or poor upbringing continue to dominate, further deterring trauma recognition. Moreover, the stratification of Vietnam’s educational system reinforces disparities in exposure to psychological services, deepening the urban-rural divide in trauma awareness and support.

### **Trauma training**

Among the three factors, trauma training is most consistently associated with improved TIC implementation. Studies like Tynes et al. (2019), Parker and Levinson (2020) and MacLochlainn et al. (2022) report gains in teacher self-efficacy, attitudinal change, and classroom strategies following structured interventions. However, in Vietnam, trauma training remains fragmented and non-standardized. Recent policy steps, such as the Ministry of Education and Training’s 2023 Decision No. 3996 on school psychological counseling, signal growing institutional interest, yet operationalization at the school level is inconsistent.

**Table 3**

*Effectiveness of TIC Teacher Training Programs*

<i>Study</i>	<i>Type of Training</i>	<i>Measured Outcomes</i>	<i>Effectiveness Level</i>
MacLochlainn et al., 2022	Whole-school training	ARTIC score improvement, self-efficacy	High
Parker & Levinson, 2020	Short-term trauma course	Attitudinal changes, work behavior	Moderate-High
Reker, 2016	Mixed methods	Teacher-reported skill and confidence	Moderate

Several experimental studies are proving the efficiency of trauma training programs in changing the participants’ behaviors. Table 3 demonstrates that the effectiveness of TIC training programs varies by scope and delivery. Whole-school training models, such as those implemented by MacLochlainn et al. (2022), show the highest effectiveness, improving both attitudinal and behavioral outcomes. These findings underscore the importance of systemic approaches rather than isolated workshops. Parker and Levinson (2020) revealed that short-term trauma courses also bring significant attitudinal changes, although less sustainable than immersive models. Meanwhile, Reker’s (2016) mixed-methods approach highlights the moderate gains in self-efficacy and skill, particularly in settings with limited follow-up support.

Training programs on psychological trauma are defined as educational activities designed to provide theoretical and practical knowledge on psychological trauma, creating opportunities for participants to practice empathetic responses informed by trauma understanding during the learning process. Among the factors influencing teachers’ perceptions of trauma, such programs have been shown to have a significant, observable impact on altering perceptions, practical skills, and self-efficacy beliefs when supporting trauma-affected students. The effectiveness of trauma training programs has been found to show no substantial variation across teachers with different years of experience (Reker, 2016). Teachers often describe training workshops as too short, overly theoretical, or disconnected from classroom realities. Few programs provide follow-up coaching or integrate cultural reflections, thereby limiting long-term behavioral change. Moreover, the absence of embedded mental health professionals in most Vietnamese schools means that teachers have limited opportunities for applied learning or peer consultation. Together, the studies confirm that training effectiveness depends on contextual fit, intensity, and ongoing reinforcement.

**Table 4***Barriers to TIC Implementation in Developing Countries*

<i>Barrier</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Source(s)</i>
Limited Training Access	Uneven training availability across schools	Reker, 2016; Hoang et al., 2018
Cultural Stigma	Mental health is often silenced or misunderstood culturally	Blitz et al., 2016
Institutional Support Deficit	Minimal policy guidance or school-level prioritization	Brown et al., 2020; Ministry of Education and Training, 2023

Table 4 highlights structural and cultural barriers hindering TIC adoption in developing countries. Limited training access remains the most cited barrier, especially in regions where mental health is underprioritized. Cultural stigma, as shown in studies by Blitz et al. (2016) and Hoang et al. (2018), restricts teachers from acknowledging trauma-related needs, reflecting broader societal taboos. Institutional support deficits further exacerbate the problem, without clear policy direction or leadership engagement, TIC remains an optional rather than an integrated framework. These insights reinforce the need for systemic reform, where TIC is embedded into national educational strategies, with sustained investment in teacher capacity-building and schoolwide implementation.

In practice, the availability of trauma training programs for teachers remains limited. A study by Reker (2016) on the attitudes of 384 early childhood, elementary, middle, and high school teachers in Nebraska, USA, toward supporting trauma-affected students found that only 45% of teachers had participated in such programs. Most teachers considered the quantity insufficient and expressed dissatisfaction, perceiving these programs as largely ineffective. In Vietnam, trauma training programs are similarly limited in number, with no research evidence on their quality. Thus, the effectiveness of these programs in raising awareness largely depends on two factors: an adequate quantity of training opportunities and the assurance of program quality that meets standards, focusing on the core objectives of identifying and addressing trauma-related challenges faced by students.

A common limitation across both global and Vietnamese studies is the reliance on cross-sectional designs and self-assessed readiness metrics. There is a paucity of longitudinal data that examines how teacher perspectives evolve or how training translates into sustained practice. Additionally, few studies incorporate multi-informant designs, such as student feedback or classroom observations, to triangulate teacher-reported data. Vietnamese research, in particular, suffers from regional clustering, with the majority of studies conducted in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, overlooking ethnic minority populations and underserved provinces where trauma risks may be higher. Without broader sampling and mixed-method approaches, conclusions about national readiness for TIC remain tentative.

**Discussion**

This review sought to examine teachers' perspectives on TIC in educational settings, focusing on Vietnam as a representative case of developing countries. Through synthesizing findings from 34 peer-reviewed articles, three core themes emerged: teachers' recognition of TIC needs, their perceived roles in supporting trauma-affected students, and key contextual factors influencing TIC implementation. While the review affirmed the global importance of teachers as frontline responders to student trauma (Brunzell et al., 2022; Blitz et al., 2016; White et al., 2018), it also revealed specific cultural and systemic challenges that uniquely shape TIC in Vietnam.

A particularly salient finding concerns cultural barriers that constrain the adoption of trauma-informed practices. In Vietnam's Confucian-influenced educational system, hierarchical teacher-student relationships, academic performance pressures, and deeply rooted stigmas surrounding mental health contribute to a reluctance among teachers to acknowledge or address trauma (Hoang et al., 2018). Teachers often interpret trauma symptoms as disciplinary problems rather than emotional distress, reflecting societal norms that view emotional vulnerability as a sign of weakness (Cafaro et al., 2023; Reker, 2016). Moreover, the collectivist orientation emphasizes group harmony over individual expression, which can inhibit open dialogue about trauma between teachers and students (Brown et al., 2020). These cultural factors limit not only teachers' willingness to engage in TIC but also the effectiveness of imported TIC models that may not align with local values and practices.

Despite these barriers, the review also identified opportunities for culturally sensitive adaptation of TIC in Vietnam. For instance, the collectivist emphasis on community and group support could be leveraged to create peer-based TIC interventions, enabling teachers to support each other while gradually integrating trauma-responsive practices into classrooms (MacLochlainn et al., 2022; Parker & Levinson, 2020). Additionally, the moral authority and respected status of teachers in Vietnamese society can be mobilized as a strength, positioning educators as key change agents in fostering emotionally safe learning environments.

In terms of methodological limitations, this review is subject to several constraints. First, the reliance on published, peer-reviewed studies introduces potential publication bias, excluding relevant grey literature and program evaluations that may offer practical insights. Second, the majority of included studies utilized self-reported surveys, with limited observational or longitudinal data, constraining the depth of understanding of teachers' actual classroom practices. Third, the concentration of Vietnamese studies in urban areas overlooks the experiences of rural and ethnic minority communities, where trauma exposure may be higher and educational resources more limited. Finally, subjective judgment in thematic coding remains a potential source of bias, despite efforts at consensus-building.

Policy recommendations derived from this review are as follows. First, it is essential to integrate trauma-informed frameworks into national teacher training curricula, ensuring that TIC is not treated as an optional add-on but as a core pedagogical competency. Second, policymakers should develop culturally adapted TIC training modules that incorporate local case studies, recognize indigenous trauma typologies (e.g., parental migration, academic stress), and address mental health stigma. Third, educational policies should mandate ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers, including supervision and peer support networks to sustain TIC implementation. Fourth, the Ministry of Education and Training should establish a national monitoring system for student mental health, incorporating indicators of trauma exposure and school readiness to respond. Finally, incentives such as school accreditation or additional funding should be considered to recognize and support schools that successfully implement TIC frameworks. In conclusion, this review highlights both the promise and complexity of implementing trauma-informed care in Vietnam's educational system. By addressing cultural barriers and strengthening policy support, TIC can become a transformative force in promoting student well-being and educational equity in developing countries.

## **Conclusions**

This systematic review synthesized current global and Vietnamese research on teachers' perspectives of TIC in educational settings, with a particular focus on Vietnam as a representative case of developing countries. Teachers across contexts increasingly recognize the importance of TIC in supporting student wellbeing and fostering emotionally safe classrooms. However, in Vietnam, this recognition is often limited by cultural stigmas surrounding mental health and a predominant focus on academic outcomes,

which inhibit open dialogue about trauma and reduce teachers' confidence in implementing TIC. Three critical factors were identified: (a) teaching experience, with veteran teachers showing higher self-efficacy but often conflating trauma with discipline issues; (b) teaching setting, with urban educators reporting greater exposure to TIC-related initiatives compared to their rural counterparts; and (c) trauma training, which significantly improves teachers' attitudes and readiness but remains fragmented and inconsistent in Vietnam. The review highlights the urgent need for culturally adapted training that integrates local trauma typologies, recognizes Confucian educational values, and addresses the structural constraints within the Vietnamese educational system.

### ***Suggestions for Future Research***

This review advances the scientific understanding of TIC by contextualizing its application within a collectivist, exam-oriented educational system in a lower-middle-income country. It highlights the interplay between cultural norms, policy structures, and teacher agency, underscoring the importance of integrating TIC into national education reforms. By mapping these complex dynamics, the study provides a foundation for future research on culturally responsive TIC models in developing countries, offering a framework for both researchers and policymakers to adapt and implement TIC in diverse educational settings.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

None.

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