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The Social and Emotional Learning Needs of IB Diploma Students: A Phenomenological Study on the Perceptions of IB Diploma Teachers

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Concordia University–Portland
College of Education
Doctorate of Education Program

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The Social and Emotional Learning Needs of IB Diploma Students:
A Phenomenological Study on the Perceptions of IB Diploma Teachers

Brad Augustine

Concordia University–Portland

College of Education

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the College of Education

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in

Educational Administration

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Concordia University–Portland

2020

Abstract

This phenomenological study focused on the perceptions of International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB diploma) teachers toward school-based social and emotional learning programs. The purposeful sample for this study relied on interviews with 16 participants from one international school in Southeast Asia. Utilizing a retrospective data collection methodology, six themes were identified: benefits for students, a lack of preservice training, the need for ongoing professional development, a lack of confidence teaching social and emotional learning, curriculum challenges teaching social and emotional learning, and the need for strategic plans regarding social and emotional learning. The results indicated that the social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students were unique and students benefited from direct instruction regarding social and emotional learning competencies. However, findings also revealed participants had low levels of confidence teaching social and emotional learning curriculum. Participants discussed inadequate social and emotional training prior to entering the teaching profession and limited social and emotional learning professional development after becoming full-time teachers. In alignment with Ajzen and Fishbein's (1975) theory of reasoned action (TRA), which emphasized an individual's intention to perform a behavior was the biggest predictor of that behavior being performed, the findings in this study suggested that teachers who felt they did not have the training, ability, or confidence to teach social and emotional learning were more likely to ineffectively teach social and emotional learning. Based on these results, the arbitrary access students might have to effective social and emotional learning support calls for expanded studies by future researchers.

Keywords: phenomenological study, International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, social and emotional learning, teacher perceptions

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the inspiring teachers, counselors and leadership team at the international school where this study took place. Thank you for your ceaseless professionalism to create a culture of care that supports students academically as well as socially and emotionally.

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The completion of this dissertation would not have been possible without the support of my committee chairperson, Dr. Christopher Jenkins. I was told the most important aspect of a successful dissertation experience was working with an experienced committee chairperson who was caring but direct, encouraging but honest, and patient but demanding. I feel so fortunate to have worked with Dr. Jenkins who was all of these things and much more. I cannot thank you enough for your time, guidance, and wisdom the past two years.

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I am also thankful for the support of the advisors at Concordia University–Portland who assisted me in countless ways over the past four years. Please know I am grateful for the work you have quietly done so well.

My parents have been a constant source of love and support every day of my life. In the middle of this dissertation process, I needed them to get through a difficult period and they were amazing as always in helping me. A dedication or acknowledgement here cannot possibly reflect the deep love and gratitude I have for you both.

To the rest of my family and friends, thank you for your patient ears and encouraging words throughout this dissertation process. I needed them more than you know and I can't wait to celebrate the completion of this journey with you over the coming weeks and months.

Lastly, I want to recognize every person who has made the decision to become a teacher. All teachers share one thing in common: they care deeply about children. They rarely know how great of an impact they make on the lives of their students, but I would like to give voice to all students everywhere and say thank you for the work you do every day.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction to the Problem

The social and emotional challenges facing today's youth are striking in how different they are compared to the problems faced by generations before them. Adolescents today are struggling to navigate multifaceted social media worlds that are negatively impacting their self-esteem, body image and overall well-being, problems that are leading to an increase in social isolation and risky behavior (Argo & Lowery, 2017; Richards, Caldwell, & Go, 2015). An extensive vocabulary of new terms, such as sexting, cyber bullying, "likes" and selfies, reflect just a few of the social media anxieties today's youth face (Best, Manktelow, & Taylor, 2014; Lee et al., 2018; Pounders, Kowalczyk, & Stowers, 2016). However, the challenges that may begin with social media behaviors extend beyond that for today's teenagers.

Rates of teenage depression are increasing, a dire situation further exacerbated by the reality that far too many teachers in schools are unable to identify the depressive symptoms children exhibit or have the training to address those issues when made aware of them (Reicher & Matischek-Jauk, 2017). The combination of challenges leaves students less likely to acquire the social and emotional skills they need before leaving high school (Durlak et al., 2015). Many schools around the world attempt to provide school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs but those attempts frequently lack clear short and long-term outcomes or assessment measures to gauge the effectiveness of those intervention programs (Dusenbury & Weissberg, 2016). Some of these schools are classified as international schools because English is the main language of instruction for students whose first language is primarily not English, and the curriculum is mainly not from the country where the school is geographically located

(Machin, 2017). One such international school in Southeast Asia will be the focus of this phenomenological study.

In recent years, the expansion of international schools on a global scale has been significant, making already complicated and diverse environments even more challenging for the students in those schools (Bunnell, Fertig, & James, 2017). For many Asian students growing up in international schools, there is enormous pressure to perform at a high level and be accepted into major universities in far-away countries such as the United States, England or Australia (Machin, 2017). At the same time, many of their classmates are Third Culture Kids (TCKs) who have grown up in multiple cultures and countries that are different from their passports or places of birth (Kwon, 2019). For some TCKs, they can feel like baggage that their parents bring from one part of the world to the next, ultimately leaving them hesitant to develop friendships when those relationships are likely to be fleeting. The two groups find they are oddly connected and disconnected at the same time: classmates on the same international school campus each day but with backgrounds and experiences that can leave them with widely diverse social and emotional needs. These international school students will be the focus population for this study.

The social and emotional learning issues for international school students continue to escalate as they approach the end of high school and face the realities of university applications and pending adulthood. Schools can provide coordinated intervention programs to help students on a social and emotional level as they transition out of this phase of their lives but this is often not the case. Most schools decrease the time given to teaching social and emotional learning competencies as students age, a challenge further exasperated for students in Grades 11 and 12 who attempt the demanding International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB diploma). The academic requirements of the IB diploma are far greater than traditional high school graduation

requirements, resulting in higher levels of stress for IB diploma students compared to students in less demanding academic programs (Shaunessy & Suldo, 2010; Suldo, Shaunessy, & Hardesty, 2008; Suldo & Shaunessy-Dedrick, 2013). This study will specifically look at how to support the unique social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students.

While a number of studies exist on the academic benefits of the IB Diploma Programme, little research has been conducted on how to best support IB diploma students in nonacademic areas such as mental health and well-being. The current curriculum within the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme does not specify the teaching of social and emotional learning skills to students (International Baccalaureate, 2019). Attempts by international schools to teach IB diploma students social and emotional learning strategies need to be strategized and taught outside of the demanding academic structure of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. For the high school students at the international school in this study, the teaching of social and emotional learning curriculum is done through academic curriculum which is assessed in a health and well-being class as well as through an advisory program that utilizes nonacademic curriculum that is not assessed.

In terms of academic curriculum, students in Grade nine take a one semester freshman seminar course that is a graded and mandated for graduation. This course is co-taught by counselors and physical education teachers in an attempt to help students transition into high school. The curriculum includes social and emotional learning topics like responsible decision making and healthy relationships but also topics that focus less on social and emotional learning competencies, such as understanding school rules, how to find resources in the school library, and making long-term plans for college applications. Similarly, in Grade 10, students take an additional semester course on social and emotional learning competencies, further supporting

students with a standards-based curriculum that is assessed. However, once students enter Grade 11 and begin the IB Diploma Programme, the academic curriculum for social and emotional learning ceases. In an attempt to support Grade 11 and 12 students on a social and emotional level outside of an assessed curriculum, the school gives students the opportunity to gain social and emotional learning competencies through a weekly advisory program.

High school advisory programs typically allow for a small group of students, approximately 12–15 students, to meet regularly with a teacher to ensure that at least one person in the school knows each student on a personal level that is often not possible in a larger classroom setting (Brodie, 2014). By creating a structure that allows students to connect with a small cohort of classmates and feel cared for by a designated advisor, advisory programs can be powerful support networks for IB diploma students (Walloff, 2011). However, the structure of the Advisory program at the international school in this study is limited to one 30-minute session each week.

Additionally, the Advisory sessions include time for things such as career fairs, school photographs, and registering for future academic courses that are not focused on social and emotional learning. Over the course of a month, IB diploma students will receive less than two hours of time designated specifically for social and emotional learning support. As a result, one goal of this study is to investigate the perceptions of a select group of IB diploma teachers as to whether or not the school's overall social and emotional learning intervention program is effectively supporting the unique social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students.

Background, Context, History, and Theoretical Framework for the Problem

The interest in social and emotional learning in the United States has grown rapidly over the past 25 years. The Collaborative to Advance Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) was

created in 1994, subsequently leading the push for social and emotional learning education curriculum in schools throughout the United States. Since then, every state has adopted social and emotional learning developmental standards, with many states taking the additional step of integrating social and emotional learning competencies into academic standards (Durlak et al., 2015).

Outside of the United States, the need for effective social and emotional learning education has made gains in some countries. However, the existing literature on the effectiveness of social and emotional learning intervention programs around the world is limited (Sklad, Diekstra, De Ritter, & Be, 2012). Furthermore, there is even less data specific to IB diploma students in international schools and how they are being supported on a social and emotional level. Countries like Singapore and Australia utilize CASEL's five social and emotional learning competencies to frame national social and emotional learning standards, but international schools in many countries often do not have to adhere to the same standards.

The existing body of literature on effective school-based social and emotional learning programs focuses mainly on studies for students in kindergarten through Grade 8 (Taylor et al., 2017). Social and emotional learning programs that extend into Grades 9 and 10 may attempt to help students as they transition into high school, but far too little data exists on the explicit teaching of social and emotional learning competencies to students by the time they reach Grades 11 and 12. For students who enter the academically rigorous two-year IB Diploma Programme in Grade 11, they face even greater challenges. Managing time and deadlines as well as balancing a healthy lifestyle in terms of sleep and physical activity, areas that effective social and emotional learning programs target as key competencies, are challenging tasks for students taking six

university-level classes as well as additional requirements to complete the IB diploma (Shaunessy-Dedrick, Suldo, Roth, & Fefer, 2014; Suldo & Shaunessy-Dedrick, 2013).

The scope and sequence for a kindergarten through Grade 12 social and emotional learning program could culminate with schools providing opportunities for students to effectively transfer the social and emotional learning skills they have developed in previous years to challenging, authentic situations, such as completing the demanding IB Diploma Programme. Instead, schools often decrease the time given to apply social and emotional learning skills and IB diploma teachers limit the integration of social and emotional learning practices into the curriculum because they must cover extensive subject-specific content (Bridgeland et al., 2013). In the end, students need more structures that provide social and emotional learning support as they approach graduation, but schools often provide even less social and emotional learning opportunities.

The stress and anxiety IB diploma students face is perhaps best understood by their teachers. However, IB diploma teachers, hired to teach specific curriculum mandated by the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, are often not trained to teach the social and emotional learning curriculum IB diploma students need. Nevertheless, when schools try to support the social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students, they commonly call on IB diploma teachers, whether or not those teachers have the specific social and emotional learning qualifications or experiences to effectively deliver the curriculum. As a result, IB diploma teachers may feel ill-prepared at being asked to teach social and emotional learning competencies, feelings that ultimately impact their behavior in teaching these competencies to students. The theory of reasoned action (TRA) can be utilized to examine this relationship

between the attitudes and behavior of IB diploma teachers towards the teaching of social and emotional learning.

The TRA model predicts human behavior based on the combined influences of attitudes, behavioral intentions and social norms (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975). The TRA model can be applied in a range of fields, including education, to predict the behaviors of people based on certain conditions, such as their attitude toward an action (Mishra, Akman, & Mishra, 2014). Attitudes can be defined as beliefs toward an action that can increase the likelihood that an action will be taken (Schwartz, 1992). For example, studies on teacher behavior, with respect to the integration of technology in schools, found that attitude had the greatest impact on how effectively teachers incorporated technology into their curriculum (Teo & van Schaik, 2012). In the TRA model, a person's attitudes towards performing a behavior is a good predictor of one's behavior, so a negative attitude toward the teaching of social and emotional competencies makes it more likely that the teaching of those competencies to students will be negatively affected. (Glanz, Rimer, Barbara, & Viswanath, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this study was the lack of effective support for the social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students (Suldo & Shaunessy-Dedrick, 2013). This problem was examined by studying the perceptions of a particular group of IB diploma teachers in one international school in Southeast Asia. Students completing the IB diploma often perceive the academic expectations as extreme, untenable, and detrimental to their well-being (Suldo & Shaunessy-Dedrick, 2013). Too often, students poorly manage these challenges, leading to further social and emotional problems (Shaunessy-Dedrick et al., 2014). IB diploma teachers recognize the need to help IB diploma students obtain core social and emotional learning

competencies, but schools frequently fail to provide the training to effectively teach those skills (Bouffard, 2018; Jones & Bouffard, 2012; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017; Sklad et al., 2012).

When schools ask IB diploma teachers to provide students with those competencies without proper training, their potential attitude towards performing that task can be negative and their subsequent behavior result in an inadequate teaching of those competencies. As a result, further investigation was needed to understand how schools can better help IB diploma students learn the necessary social and emotional learning skills for their short-term and long-term well-being.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the lived experiences of IB diploma teachers from one international school in order to ascertain effective approaches to support the unique social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students. Researching these experiences through purposeful sampling provided rich data and broad themes about the views of teachers who were particularly knowledgeable about this phenomenon (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Palinkas et al., 2015; Patton, 2015). This study revealed that IB diploma teachers perceived their students need more effective social and emotional learning support than what they are receiving. IB diploma teachers also did not feel competent to support the mental health and well-being of IB diploma students. The study supports the growing body of literature calling on schools to develop more deliberate actions plans for the unique social and emotional learning needs of students struggling with the demanding nature of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme.

Research Questions

This study provided empirical evidence in support of the need for coordinated, systemic, school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs for IB diploma students. This

investigation examined the perceptions of IB diploma teachers toward social and emotional learning skills for IB diploma students. The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme curriculum does not provide opportunities for students to learn specific social and emotional learning competencies (International Baccalaureate, 2019). Understanding if a select group of IB diploma teachers perceive they could teach social and emotional learning competencies was also necessary to evaluate the overall efficacy of their school's social and emotional intervention program. Hence, this research study was designed to answer the following three research questions:

RQ1. How do IB diploma teachers perceive school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs for IB diploma students?

RQ2. How do IB diploma teachers perceive their ability to effectively teach social and emotional learning competencies to IB diploma students?

RQ3. How do IB diploma teachers perceive their school's overall social and emotional learning intervention program?

Rationale, Relevance, and Significance of the Study

The significant meta-analysis of Durlak et al. (2011) noted that only 27 of 213 school-based social and emotional learning programs they investigated were focused specifically on students in high school. Questions remain why students have fewer opportunities for social and emotional learning support in high school (Bridgeland et al., 2013). There may be an assumption that older teenagers have already gained the social and emotional skills needed to have healthy, balanced lives as adults. Such assumptions are naive as risk-taking increases and self-regulation decreases for adolescents (Steinberg, 2008). Even in schools with social and emotional learning intervention programs for older students, those programs are commonly led by teachers who

have little training or experience teaching social and emotional learning competencies (Reicher and Matischek-Jauk, 2017). Durlak et al. (2015) concluded, “there is a pressing need for continued development and research on high school social and emotional learning programs” (p. 192).

This phenomenological study addressed this need because it focused on a particular high school social and emotional learning program. More specifically, this study investigated the perceptions of IB diploma teachers regarding the best ways to provide social and emotional competencies to IB diploma students. This study on how teachers view their ability to effectively teach social and emotional learning competencies may encourage schools to reconsider their broader strategic approach to the teaching of social and emotional learning.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are specific to the field of social and emotional learning, the conceptual framework used for this study, and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme within the unique context of international school education.

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). This organization was formed in 1994 to study the science of social and emotional learning and promote evidence-based recommendations for students in preschool through high school in the United States (Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013).

International Schools. The term refers to schools where English is the main language of instruction to students whose first language is primarily not English, and the curriculum is mainly not from the country where the school is geographically located (Machin, 2017).

International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB diploma). Developed by the European-based International Baccalaureate Organization for students typically in Grade 11 and

12, the IB diploma refers to the university-level international curriculum that culminates in end of course examinations for students applying to higher education institutions (Sanders & Ishikura, 2018).

School-Based Social and Emotional Learning Intervention Programs. Schools develop coordinated programs to specifically teach students developmentally and culturally appropriate social and emotional learning competencies (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011).

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). The term labeled to identify the process through which children effectively develop social, emotional and relational skills or social and emotional learning competencies (Durlak et al., 2015).

Social and Emotional Learning Competencies. CASEL promotes five core competencies that students should be taught to effectively deal with the challenges young people face on a daily basis: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making (CASEL, 2019).

Third Culture Kids (TCKs). TCKs refer to children who have grown up in multiple cultures and countries that are different from their countries of birth or the countries from which they possess passports (Kwon, 2019).

Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations

This phenomenological study was based on two assumptions. First, the researcher assumed IB diploma students need social and emotional learning support and students can gain that support through a school-based social and emotional learning program. Additionally, the researcher assumed the interview questions for this study would allow teachers the chance to

reflect on their experiences and provide responses that were honest and accurately represented their views on social and emotional learning and the needs of IB diploma students.

This study was limited due to the subjective perceptions of the participants and what they chose to share during interviews. Creswell (2014) notes that the principal investigator's personal views and experiences can also limit the validity of the findings if they are acted on to manipulate, disregard, or invent data. The principal investigator has worked in IB diploma schools for over 15 years and experienced IB diploma students and their unique social and emotional learning needs.

This phenomenological study was also delimited to the shared phenomenon of the lived experiences of 16 IB diploma teachers working in one international school in Southeast Asia. The small sample size delimited the overall research findings, but that is to be expected when using a phenomenological design for a study. Additionally, this study was delimited to gathering data from only IB diploma teachers. There were no interviews with IB diploma students, parents and school administrators for this study. The participants in the study were also delimited to having valid teaching licenses and at least three years of experience teaching an IB diploma course. The findings were not intended to reflect the experiences of IB diploma teachers in other international schools in different parts of the world, but instead provide rich descriptions of the perceptions a particular group of IB diploma teachers had towards social and emotional learning.

Summary

This chapter provided background information on school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs, with a specific focus on the unique social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students in the international school context. The theory of reasoned action (TRA) provided a theoretical framework to examine the attitudes and behavior of IB diploma

teachers towards teaching social and emotional learning competencies to IB diploma students. There is the potential for a significant problem if IB diploma teachers have negative attitudes towards teaching social and emotional learning competencies and their subsequent behavior results in an inadequate teaching of those competencies to students. Hence, the purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the lived experiences of a particular group of IB diploma teachers from one international school in Southeast Asia in order to ascertain the most effective approaches to providing IB diploma students with the social and emotional skills they need to effectively complete high school and enter adulthood.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction to the Literature Review

The Fetzer Institute's 1994 meeting of school leaders and education researchers proved landmark in two ways for the social and emotional learning movement. First, the term "social and emotional learning" was created to identify the process through which children effectively develop social, emotional and relational skills (Durlak et al., 2015). Additionally, the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) was created to forge better partnerships between families, schools, and communities to support the social and emotional learning needs of children.

More than two decades later, CASEL has been instrumental in developing social and emotional learning preschool standards for every state in the United States and encouraged more states to also develop social and emotional learning standards with measurable benchmarks. (Dusenbury & Weissberg, 2016). Despite the continual push from local and state policy makers for standardized test scores to evaluate student learning, there is strong public support for teaching social and emotional learning competencies in schools (Heckman & Kautz, 2012; Langer Research Associates, 2017). Similarly, teacher and principal surveys show near unanimous support that social and emotional learning skills benefit students from all backgrounds, that the social and emotional learning skills students need are teachable, and educators are committed to developing the social and emotional learning competencies of students (Bridgeland et al., 2013; DePaoli, Atwell, & Bridgeland, 2017).

Beyond just the perceptions that social and emotional learning interventions help students is data validating the work being done by schools. In 2008, Payton et al. reviewed 317 social and emotional learning studies involving over 324,000 students and concluded that students

participating in social and emotional learning intervention programs had between 11–17 percentile point gains in academic performance compared with students who did not participate in similar programs. Three years later, a meta-analysis of 213 social and emotional learning programs based on over 270,000 students in kindergarten through high school found an academic achievement gain of 11-percentile points for students involved in social and emotional learning intervention programs (Durlak et al., 2011). The following year, a meta-analysis of 75 studies with an average group intervention size of 543 participants revealed that students who did not experience social and emotional learning programs were seven standard deviations lower in all social and emotional learning categories under review than those students who experienced social and emotional learning intervention programs (Sklad et al., 2012).

Recent data points have been even more encouraging. A 2017 study by Taylor et al., a follow up to the meta-analytic work conducted by Durlak et al. (2011), reviewed 82 social and emotional learning programs impacting over 97,000 students in kindergarten through high school. Students who participated in social and emotional learning programs exhibited significantly better benefits in a range of wellness indicators for as long as 195 weeks compared to students who did not receive social and emotional learning support. A similar study on the long-term benefits of social and emotional learning intervention in Sweden focused on 663 students over a five-year period, demonstrating that the benefits of social and emotional learning intervention, with respect to teenage drug use, far outweighed the costs of administering the programs (Klapp et al., 2017). Perhaps most significantly, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) announced that the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) test, given to over 28 million 15-year-old students from over 70 countries every three years, will assess the global competence of students for the first time

(Busby, 2017). Schools administering the tests will not only be evaluated on traditional academic skills but so-called soft skills such as empathy and resilience, skills commonly associated with social and emotional learning programs.

Despite the growing attention and evidence regarding the benefits of school-based social and emotional learning intervention, there are numerous challenges impacting effective social and emotional learning implementation in schools. DePaoli, Atwell, and Bridgeland (2017) referred to the disconnect of school leaders in terms of their broad support for social and emotional learning programs and their ability to successfully integrate such programs into schools. Commonly cited barriers include prioritizing academic curriculum, lack of time available for professional development, teacher perceptions of their own efficacy to deliver social and emotional learning instruction, and the lack of social and emotional learning training teachers receive before employment in schools (Bouffard, 2016; Durlak et al., 2015; Dusenbury & Weissberg, 2017; Jones, Bouffard, & Weissbourd, 2013; Oberle et al., 2016; Schonert-Reichl, 2017; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017). Additionally, while formal social and emotional learning standards and benchmarks are developing at the state level, social and emotional learning assessments and systems for monitoring how schools are progressing need to be further addressed (Dusenbury & Weissberg, 2016).

The challenges for students to receive effective social and emotional learning intervention at the middle and high school levels are even greater. Dymnicki, Sambolt, and Kidron's (2013) review of a CASEL study on all pre-kindergarten through Grade 12 social and emotional learning standards for each state concluded that schools more often address social and emotional learning standards in early childhood than for adolescents and teenagers. Further, Bridgeland, Bruce, and Hariharan (2013) found that 49% of elementary school teachers reported

schoolwide social and emotional learning programming on their campuses, but that number decreased to 43% for middle school teachers and plummeted to 28% for high school teachers. At the same time that social and emotional learning intervention decreases as students get older, the stress associated with academic expectations and puberty increases. Instead of students building on early childhood social and emotional learning competencies, they are often left without support, making them more vulnerable to struggle with mental health (Suldo, Shaunessy, Thalji, Michalowski, & Shaffer, 2009).

For students in international schools, the pressure to perform at high levels in rigorous academic programs such as the IB Diploma Programme further exacerbates the social and emotional learning struggles many students face. A study of 480 high school students reported that almost 40% of respondents perceived the academic expectations of the IB Diploma Programme as “excessive, unmanageable, and/or detrimental to their well-being” (Suldo & Shaunessy-Dedrick, 2013, p. 836). Without effective social and emotional learning support from schools, IB diploma students in international schools often rely on poor coping methods such as spending less time with family members or friends as well as reduced time for sleeping (Shaunessy-Dedrick et al., 2014).

This literature review further focuses on supporting the social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students through a phenomenological study at one international school in Southeast Asia. The literature review begins with an examination of the theory of reasoned action theoretical framework related to this study and then uses that framework to examine the perceptions of IB diploma teachers on the social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students. This literature review concludes with an analysis of previous social and emotional learning research and a Chapter 2 summary.

Theoretical Framework

This study examined the attitudes of IB diploma teachers towards social and emotional learning through the theory of reasoned action (TRA) model. The TRA model predicts human behavior based on the combined influences of attitudes, behavioral intentions and social norms (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975). The TRA model applied to this study because of the disconnect between the positive attitudes international schools and teachers have towards students learning social and emotional learning competencies and the behavior that is practiced in not successfully implementing those attitudes. The belief that robust social and emotional learning programs prepare students for college and life is manifested in the social and emotional learning practices in elementary and middle school programs.

However, there are factors that prevent those practices from extending to students in high schools, especially for IB diploma students. One factor is the substantial breadth of content for an individual IB diploma course. Over 100 universities in the United States now reward students with at least a year of college credit for graduating high school with an IB diploma because of the challenging nature of the curriculum (Mayer, 2010). IB diploma teachers in this study believed in the benefits of teaching social and emotional learning competencies to IB diploma students, but they explained that covering the extensive curriculum of an IB diploma course prevented them from acting on those attitudes in an effective manner.

Teachers in this study stated a common social norm that social and emotional instruction should be taught by individuals who are formally trained to teach this content, much like an economics or geography teacher is hired to specifically teach IB Economics or IB Geography. Teachers understood the normative belief that they should help students by delivering social and emotional learning content. However, the data from interviews with teachers revealed that their

motivation to comply was weakened because they did not feel they had the training or ability to deliver that content.

Research shows that a lack of teacher competence and confidence were major barriers for teachers to successfully integrate technology into their curriculum (Bingimlas, 2009). The same concerns around teacher competence and confidence applied for many teachers when asked to teach social and emotional learning curriculum without training (Reicher & Matischek-Jauk, 2017). Schonert-Reichl (2017) noted when teachers have less competence and confidence in their abilities, those beliefs “influence the fidelity with which they implement SEL programs in the classroom” (p. 137). Low fidelity resulted in social and emotional learning programs being less successful (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Unlike elementary school teachers who are generalists that can implement social and emotional learning content as they teach across multiple disciplines, IB diploma teachers are trained to specifically teach core content for subjects such as environmental systems or global politics. As such, this study showed their motivation to comply was at odds with their attitude to comply because of a perceived lack of skills to deliver social and emotional learning curriculum relative to the skills they had to deliver their specialized IB diploma curriculum.

Researchers showed that a large majority of teachers believe students from all types of backgrounds benefited from learning social and emotional competencies in schools, but the teaching of those competencies was complex and required systemic planning and training (Taylor et al., 2017). However, this study showed that the IB diploma teachers at this school in Southeast Asia felt their school had not successfully implemented their social and emotional learning program or trained teachers to deliver social and emotional learning content, weakening the motivation of teachers to comply and effectively deliver such curriculum. If the behavioral

norm of a school is to value social and emotional learning curriculum as being as important as the traditional academic curriculum, schools should staff for social and emotional learning teachers in the same manner that they staff for academic teachers.

The TRA model can also be applied to how international schools approach social and emotional learning on a systemic level. The subjective norm for international schools is to provide students with robust social and emotional learning programs that meet the needs of all students from kindergarten through Grade 12. The positive attitude toward the research on integrating social and emotional learning curriculum into the academic curriculum at the elementary and middle school levels aligned with the actions of international schools in Southeast Asia. However, the intention to incorporate similar behaviors regarding social and emotional learning integration rarely extended into high schools, especially at the IB diploma level.

Should international schools start to be externally assessed on social and emotional learning competencies, as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) proposed with changes to future Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests, schools will have a more positive attitude toward systemic, school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs that include students through Grade 12. Additionally, schools will have a more positive attitude toward hiring trained teachers to specifically deliver social and emotional learning curriculum if they believe that those trained teachers will produce more positive social and emotional learning assessment results for students than untrained teachers.

Review of Research Literature and Methodological Literature

The review of research literature and methodological literature in this study focused on the theoretical reviews and empirical reviews impacting the field of social emotional learning.

Theoretical Reviews. With respect to a historical timeline, the methodological literature and research in the field of social emotional learning was often associated with the formation of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) in 1994, but the roots of social and emotional learning go back even further. Four comprehensive, meta-analytical studies investigating thousands of students in hundreds of schools from 1970 through 2014 gave strong evidence regarding the range of benefits school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs can provide students in pre-kindergarten through Grade 12.

The influential work of Durlak et al. (2011) is often cited in social and emotional learning literature studies because of the significant findings of an 11-percentile gain in academic achievement for students who participated in school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs compared to those who did not. Based on 30 years of data ending in 2007, their findings involved 270,034 students in 213 school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs. Although 64% of the studies in their review came from data before 1997, the meta-analytical work of Durlak et al. was the first to focus entirely on school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs. Their conclusions regarding the ability of teachers to effectively lead social and emotional learning intervention methods left an important understanding of the early work conducted in social and emotional learning research.

A year after Durlak et al. (2011), Sklad et al. (2012) relied similarly on a meta-analysis of 75 studies before 2008 but limited their findings to “reflect the effectiveness of contemporary programs or interventions that are currently available for schools” (p. 894). As a result, their

studies only included data after 1995, reflecting an approximate timeline coinciding with the formation of CASEL and Daniel Golman's Emotional Intelligence. Additionally, Slad et al. included 16 studies from outside North America, broadening the scope of their findings and strengthening the conclusions that school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs showed positive effects on a number of social emotional skills as well as student academic achievement.

Wiggelsworth et al. (2016) extended the work of Durlak et al. (2011) and Sklad et al. (2012) by using meta-analytic research to review 89 studies on the challenges of successfully replicating social and emotional learning intervention programs in different cultural and social contexts. Like Sklad et al., Wiggelsworth et al. traced studies back to 1995 but included data as recent as 2013. However, unlike Durlak et al. (2011) and Sklad et al. the conclusions by Wiggelsworth et al. offered a "more complex picture than that hypothesized in previous literature" (p. 361) regarding the effective implementation of social and emotional learning programs across a broad spectrum of audiences.

A fourth meta-analytic study that gave an important theoretical perspective on social and emotional learning research was Taylor et al. (2017). The impressive sample of 97,406 students involved in 82 school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs extended the work of Durlak et al. (2011) to further investigate the long-term benefits of social and emotional learning programs in schools. This study used similar measures as the three previously mentioned studies to select reports for their study, but collected data involved on studies through December 2014. Similar to other studies, Taylor et al. noted that their findings supported previous data that social and emotional learning interventions "significantly improved skills, positive attitudes, prosocial behavior, and academic performance" for students (p. 1166).

Empirical Reviews. A series of studies between 2008 and 2014 from the University of South Florida provided valuable data on the ability of students to effectively manage academically rigorous programs like the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. Suldo, Shaunessy, and Hardesty (2008) used questionnaire packets to ascertain the mental health of 139 students coping with the stressful demands of the IB diploma program compared with 168 students in the same school who were doing general education curriculum. Their conclusions noted that “higher levels of perceived stress co-occurred with compromised mental health” for IB students (p. 286). Two years later a similar study by Shaunessy and Suldo (2010) examined specific strategies employed by students navigating the IB diploma. The data again revealed that “IB students . . . perceived higher levels of stress than adolescents in a general education program” (p. 129).

Another study by Suldo and Shaunessy-Dedrick (2013a) investigated slightly younger students and how well they adjusted to the academic expectations when entering the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme. Data from 134 students from three high schools revealed “elevated stress is apparent as early as ninth grade [and] stress among IB students is higher than what is present before they begin high school” (p. 211). A second study that same year by Suldo and Shaunessy-Dedrick (2013b) further investigated the psychosocial abilities of students in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. Findings from 480 students from four high schools confirmed that these students “face stressors related to extreme academic demands and preparations for college admission” (p. 837). Through all four studies, it was clear that the academic demands of IB students were further exasperated when students were not supported and taught appropriate coping skills through school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs.

Review of Methodological Issues

An examination of the research conducted on social and emotional learning revealed significant studies investigating both the short-term and long-term benefits of social and emotional learning. Additionally, studies have been conducted using both small and large sample sizes. With respect to methodology, studies have utilized quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research methodologies.

Social and emotional learning has been frequently examined from a quantitative perspective. Two of the previously mentioned studies by Suldo and Shaunessy-Dedrick in 2013 utilized quantitative methods to investigate the perceptions of students in terms of stress and psychological problems in academically rigorous programs like the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. Sample sizes of as few as 134 students and as many as 480 students were divided into two groups, those in advanced curriculum courses and those that were not. Both groups then completed multiple, self-report questionnaires, such as the 14 item Perceived Stress Scale (PSS). Similar statistical analysis for all three studies showed, amongst other conclusions, that IB students had higher scores on the PSS compared to students not enrolled in IB programs. A range of indicators revealed consistent evidence of decreasing life satisfaction as students' progress through middle and high school. That said, all three studies were limited to convenience samples based on a small number of schools from the same rural area of the United States. Further studies in international schools, where many students participate in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, warrant examination.

Additionally, there were larger, long-term quantitative studies on the benefits of social and emotional learning interventions. Several studies utilized self-report questionnaires at different points of time over a range of two to five years to get data from students. Klapp et al.

(2017) gathered data from 663 students across Sweden while Jones et al. (2011) utilized an experimental design involving 1,184 students from 18 elementary schools in New York City. Compared to the work of Suldo and Shaunessy-Dedrick, a clear strength of both studies was the larger sample size elicited more confidence in the validity of the findings. However, it was unclear which specific social and emotional learning interventions in these studies were benefiting students, only that such interventions yielded positive results.

Research designs using only qualitative methodologies were less frequently found and typically involve a small number of participants, such as the work of Shaunessy-Dedrick et al. (2014) which was based on interviews with 30 high school students. The narrative voices regarding student perceptions of stress and coping measures was a clear strength often missed with quantitative only research designs that limit respondents to predetermined choices. Shaunessy-Dedrick et al. used the data provided by students to develop codes that revealed broad themes related to effective and ineffective strategies students use to deal with stress. As the researchers noted, there were clear limitations to their study given the small sample size. However, the data supported the pressures older students faced in schools with strong academic reputations. Students in highly competitive international schools in Southeast Asia face similar pressures.

More robust findings were evident when researchers utilized both quantitative and qualitative measures. Bouffard's (2018) study of all 95 California universities certified to administer education credentials garnered important quantitative findings, such as 86% of respondents identifying the integration of social and emotional learning competencies as one of their three most important priorities for the future. The surveys further prompted respondents to provide more open-ended, qualitative feedback to questions such as, "How do you define social-

emotional learning?” (p. 3). The anecdotal evidence from these types of questions revealed additional themes regarding the connections between training teachers in social and emotional learning practices and better academic success for students. Viewed together, the qualitative and quantitative data from this study showed that universities need to do more to prepare educators to effectively teach social and emotional learning competencies when they enter schools.

Two other important studies from CASEL also highlighted the value of a mixed methods approach to social and emotional learning research. In 2013, Bridgeland, Bruce, and Hariharan gathered three focus groups of mixed elementary, middle and high school teachers in Philadelphia and Chicago to “explore potential survey topics and to give some teachers an opportunity to express their views in their own words” (p. 44). Additionally, 15 individual interviews with middle and high school students allowed CASEL to examine “students’ perspectives on the qualities of an engaging school environment and their views of specific social and emotional skills” (p. 44). Both studies also included a telephone survey of 605 teachers that revealed a range of significant findings and voices on the perceptions and frequency of social and emotional learning interventions in schools across the United States.

Four years later, as a follow up to the research approach of Bridgeland, Bruce, and Hariharan (2013), DePaoli, Atwell, and Bridgeland (2017) sought data from principals and superintendents on the importance of social and emotional learning interventions in American schools. In addition to the quantitative data gleaned from a nationwide internet survey of 884 principals, the findings also drew on interviews with 16 superintendents and 10 education research specialists from across the country. The clear support for social and emotional learning intervention in the interviews, supported by a cross-comparison with the statistics from the survey, left DePaoli, Atwell, and Bridgeland with the conclusion that the participant sample

“represented a true national sample of public-school principals in America” (p. 47). Such a conclusion was rendered possible by utilizing a methodology that gathered both quantitative and qualitative data.

The mixed methodology CASEL studies by Bridgeland, Bruce, and Hariharan (2013) and DePaoli, Atwell, and Bridgeland (2017) offered convincing arguments for further social and emotional learning interventions in schools, but other reports from CASEL came with less methodological certainties. Schonert-Reichl, Kitil, and Hanson-Peterson (2017) stated that their study into preservice teacher preparation programs was “the first ever scan of social and emotional learning content in state-level teacher certification requirements and preservice teacher education programs” (p. 5). Such a national study of all state programs would appropriately build upon the work conducted by researchers such as Bouffard (2018), but the findings in the report were primarily based on scanning state websites for standards and coursework and then analyzing the available documents from them. Given a sample of 50 states working independently from each other, the information on social and emotional learning practices available online was likely inconsistent with the actual data that might have been available with a more thorough examination. Like previous CASEL studies, Schonert-Reichl et al. (2017) conducted interviews to give a narrative voice to their findings, but the interviews were limited to four college deans of education. While the interviews revealed important themes regarding the integration of social and emotional learning practices into teacher preparation programs, the report only provided selected quotes from the deans involved.

Similar concerns about social and emotional learning recommendations were seen in briefs that utilized broad reviews of social and emotional learning research but did so without clear methodologies. Jones, Crowley, and Greenberg (2017) reviewed research on the long-term

benefits for children who received social and emotional learning intervention in early childhood, noting that “increased investment in social and emotional learning programming has the potential to generate an economic benefit (or savings) for individuals and society” (p. 10). The implications of such findings were significant, but the conclusions were based on a range of studies that were merely referenced in the brief with little to no discussion on the methodologies used by the researchers. Such briefs generally provided supportive overviews of research on social and emotional learning practices but lacked the convincing findings evident in several meta-analytical reviews conducted in the field of social and emotional learning research.

Arguably the most definitive evidence promoting social and emotional learning came from a number of significant meta-analytical studies. The seminal work of Durlak et al. (2011) analyzing 213 school-based social and emotional learning programs involving 270,034 students, offered arguably the most definitive research-based evidence on the benefits of social and emotional learning intervention. In order to “secure a systemic, nonbiased, representative sample of published and unpublished studies,” Durlak et al. employed multiple search strategies to ensure their final study sample drew on no more than 12% of other social and emotional learning meta-analytical studies previously conducted (p. 409). Furthermore, final data for their findings met six inclusion criteria, such as the use of control groups and effect sizes that could be calculated, as well as multiple exclusion criteria, for example studies that relied on students who opted in rather than data on entire classes. Given the measures taken by Durlak et al. to ensure the validity of their research design, there was strong justification for their findings of an 11-percentile gain in academic achievement for students who participated in school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs compared to those who did not.

As a follow-up to the study conducted by Durlak et al. (2011), a second seminal meta-analytical review by Taylor et al. (2017) increased validity by employing specific procedures to select studies for their research. The methodological criteria ensured all report samples collected follow-up information from both intervention and control groups between 56 weeks and 195 weeks. The notable final sample of 82 interventions involving 97,406 students relied almost exclusively on published reports using randomized designs and clear outcome measures. Whereas Durlak et al. focused exclusively on studies from the United States, the fact that Taylor et al. also garnered data from 38 international studies while maintaining strict measures for sample studies, further confirmed the findings in support of school-based social and emotional learning interventions. Taylor et al. acknowledged limitations in their findings, including any conclusions that social and emotional learning intervention “was more appropriately targeted in childhood than early adolescence” because follow-up data was harder to collect as students age (p. 1167). The impact of age in their findings was reduced to no significance when subsequent studies accounted for normal regression due to attrition. The Taylor et al. study provided significant conclusions on the benefits of social and emotional learning practices and justification for further studies on social and emotional learning intervention measures at the secondary level.

A final note on the methodological approaches to the field of social and emotional learning should include *The Handbook of Social and Emotional Learning*, a comprehensive review of social and emotional learning by Durlak et al. (2015). This text included information for any audience to learn more about the past history and research on social and emotional learning as well as issues that need to be addressed to advance research in the future. Moreover, Durlak et al. “offer critical, integrative, and up-to-date coverage” of all research in the field of social and emotional learning up to 2014 (p. 4). The four editors of the Handbook worked

extensively in the field of social and emotional learning research, enabling them to analyze with a high degree of accuracy the theoretical foundations and findings regarding the social and emotional learning studies shared. Multiple chapters on successful social and emotional learning programs and a range of assessment practices that demonstrate the benefits of social and emotional learning intervention for children in schools served as important discussion points for any study on the future of social and emotional learning research.

Synthesis of Research Findings

In synthesizing the research for this literature review on social and emotional learning, four themes emerged: (a) positive perceptions from a range of stakeholders regarding school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs, (b) evidence from studies supporting the benefits of school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs, (c) challenges to effective school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs, and (d) the need for further school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs for high school students in rigorous academic environments. The range of stakeholders included students, parents, teachers, university school leaders, state and national education researchers and policy makers as well as the general public. Benefits of school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs included academic benefits, long term social-emotional benefits, and economic benefits. Challenges to effective school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs include a lack of

- preservice training for teachers,
- clearly defined social and emotional learning benchmarks and standards,
- tools for monitoring and assessing social and emotional learning programs,
- strategic and systemic school-wide social and emotional learning plans,

- teacher buy-in for teaching social and emotional learning competencies, and
- ongoing professional development of teachers.

The need for further school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs for high school students in rigorous academic environments correlates with decreased social and emotional learning support given to students faced with the increased pressures of high-stakes external examinations such as the IB diploma.

Positive perceptions from a range of stakeholders regarding school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs. The most common assertions for social and emotional learning intervention programs focused on the academic benefits for students, but several studies have further emphasized the view that school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs benefited students beyond just academics (Durlak et al., 2015; Dymnicki et al., 2013; Heckman & Kautz, 2012). The positive perceptions regarding social and emotional learning intervention in schools was shared by students (Yang et al., 2018), parents and the general public (Langer Research Associates, 2017) teachers (Bridgeland et al., 2013), school principals (DePaoli et al., 2017), and university representatives (Bouffard, 2016).

Evidence from studies supporting the benefits of school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs. There was a great deal of data showing the effectiveness of school-based social and emotional learning interventions on the overall health and well-being of children (Busby, 2017; DePaoli et al., 2017; Durlak et al., 2011; Klapp et al., 2017; Payton et al., 2008; Sklad et al., 2012). Academically, social and emotional intervention programs increased student engagement in class as well as performance in terms of tests and grades (Greenberg et al., 2017). In terms of dealing with emotions, problem-solving and having healthy relationships, school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs also benefited students in both

short and long terms periods of time (Taylor et al., 2017). Investigations into the economic benefits of social and emotional learning concluded that the most cost-effective way to ensure individuals gained the necessary social and emotional skills to thrive as adults was to invest in their well-being development when they were children (Conti & Heckman, 2012).

Challenges to effective school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs. Although the awareness of and demand for school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs continues to grow in schools around the world, significant challenges faced effective implementation. Challenges of note include the preservice social and emotional learning training of teachers (Bouffard, 2016; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Jones et al., 2013; Schonert-Reichl, 2017; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017), teacher buy-in for teaching social and emotional learning competencies (Bouffard, 2016; Schonert-Reichl, 2017), and ongoing social and emotional learning professional development opportunities for teachers (DePaoli et al. 2017; Dusenbury & Weissberg, 2017; Jones & Bouffard, 2012). Other challenges included academic curriculum demands taking time away from teaching social and emotional learning competencies (Bouffard, 2016; Oberle, Domitrovich, Meyers & Weissberg, 2016), a lack of clearly defined social and emotional learning benchmarks and standards (DePaoli et al., 2017; Dusenbury & Weissberg, 2016), a lack of monitoring and assessing social and emotional learning programs (Busby, 2017; Dusenbury & Weissberg, 2016) and school-wide social and emotional learning plans that were not strategic and systemic (Oberle et al., 2016; Taylor et al., 2017).

The need for further school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs for middle and high school students in rigorous academic environments. A great deal of the research regarding school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs

was focused on studies pertaining to elementary school students. Data subsequently showed that students' access to school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs decreased as they progressed through middle and high school (Bridgeland et al., 2013; Dymnicki et al., 2013). Students in rigorous academic environments in middle schools and high schools also faced increased stress from the pressure to obtain high grades (Shaunessy-Dedrick, Suldo et al., 2015; Suldo & Shaunessy-Dedrick, 2013; Suldo et al., 2008; Suldo et al., 2009). Students taking difficult end-of-course IB or AP examinations to gain access to highly competitive universities were often left without support when they need it the most (Shaunessy & Suldo, 2010).

Critique of Previous Research

Arguably the biggest limitation in the field of social and emotional learning research is the lack of studies directly focused on the unique developmental needs of students in middle and high school. Jones, Brown, and Aber's (2011) research on 1,184 children in public elementary schools concluded that programs designed to help social, emotional and academic skill development benefited students in behavior, social and academic domains. Their findings were in line with other similar studies on targeted intervention practices for younger children, but their work did not consider the social-emotional needs of students as they move into middle and high school.

The meta-analytic work of Korpershoek et al. (2016) similarly concluded that implementing intervention programs focused on the social-emotional development of students had a substantial influence on an array of academic, social and behavior outcomes for students. Their analysis was based on a decade worth of evidence, resulting in a sample of 54 random and non-random controlled intervention studies that met a number of criteria, such as whole-classroom management interventions. Their findings also made a strong case for systemic

school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs in schools, but the data was only based on students in pre-kindergarten through Grade 6.

The meta-analytical work of Taylor et al. (2017) provided more valuable evidence on the long-term benefits of school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs for students who participated in programs compared to those who did not. The study of 97,406 students in kindergarten through high school reviewed 82 programs, including 38 programs from outside of the U.S. However, only 13.4% of the Taylor et al. sample was focused on students in high school. During these four years, students commonly experience high levels of stress due to increased academic expectations, the university application process, and end-of-course IB examinations.

Yang, Bear, and May (2018), in their study of 25,896 students in Grades 4–12, found students also had positive perceptions regarding social and emotional learning intervention in schools. Similar to Taylor et al. (2017), the impressive scale of the data, which included 114 schools in total, was mitigated because only 17 of those schools, less than 15% of the total sample, came from high schools. Additionally, the data came only from students in public schools in the state of Delaware, a vastly different context than private international schools in Southeast Asia.

A final study often cited by social and emotional learning researchers is the work of Durlak et al. (2011) who found a significant 11-percentile-point gain in achievement for students who participated in school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs than similar students who did not. The meta-analysis of 213 school-based social and emotional learning programs involving 270,034 students provided noteworthy evidence for further social and emotional learning research. However, it also reflected a narrow scope of participants at the

secondary level, with only 31% of students coming from middle schools and 13% coming from high schools. Clearly, there is a lack of research focusing on the unique social and emotional learning needs of students in late adolescence.

Other limitations in the field of social and emotional learning research included data from narrow geographic and contextual focuses. For example, recommendations for individual states in the United States that advanced clear social and emotional learning frameworks did so in a limited geographic and cultural context that differ greatly from private international schools in Southeast Asia. Similarly, Klapp et al. (2017) found the economic costs to administer social and emotional learning programs clearly outweighed the costs of treating students for drug use. The findings highlighted the economic benefits of social and emotional learning intervention, an important issue for the ongoing study of school-based social and emotional learning programs, but the data was gathered from a nonrandom sampling of students only in Sweden.

Additionally, several studies on stress and the ability of high school students to cope in rigorous academic programs like the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme demonstrated the need for strategic social and emotional learning intervention methods to ensure student health and well-being (Shaunessy-Dedrick et al., 2015; Shaunessy & Suldo, 2010; Suldo & Shaunessy-Dedrick, 2013; Suldo et al., 2008). These studies were significant because of the limited number of studies dealing specifically with IB diploma students. However, the authors note that all of their data was limited to convenience samplings of a small number of schools in a particular geographic region of Florida.

Other factors that pose as challenges to social and emotional learning research focus on data from the pretraining of teachers prior to entering the profession. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) surveyed a broad range of social and emotional learning literature before making a strong

argument for investing in the preservice training of social emotional competencies for teachers. They noted, though, that their data was “susceptible to social desirability biases” as their conclusions drew on self-reporting documents from teachers (p. 513).

Schonert-Reichl (2017) referenced the University of British Columbia’s model of adding social and emotional learning coursework to their one-year program to prepare teachers to enter schools. However, adding to already taxed curriculum programs for teachers in training was difficult to implement for those who wanted to enter the teaching profession within one year. Additionally, such actions did not address the much larger issue of teachers already in the workforce without social and emotional learning training.

Schonert-Reichl, Kitil, and Hanson-Peterson (2017) also conducted a review of the social and emotional learning practices of teacher preparation education programs in every U.S. state. With a final sample of 304 colleges of education, they surmised that the teaching of social and emotional learning competencies was given little attention in most programs (p. 9). However, with approximately 70% of eligible teacher preparation education programs excluded from their study, questions remain as to how indicative the findings were across broader contexts.

Analyzing a number of other social and emotional learning studies revealed an assortment of validity concerns that warranted further investigation. For example, Bridgeland, Bruce, and Hariharan (2013) found a drastic decrease in schoolwide social and emotional learning intervention for high school students compared to elementary school students. However, the data, collected from over 600 public school teachers through telephone surveys, only reflected the views of teachers willing to answer telephone calls that can often be perceived as intrusive and time consuming.

The meta-analytical review of 75 studies by Sklad et al. (2012) found clear benefits for school-based social and emotional learning interventions in seven areas effecting student health and well-being. Unlike many studies that focused on elementary school students in the United States, 62.7% of the data in this review came from secondary schools and 21.3% of the programs studied occurred outside of North America. The authors noted the importance of the data from the United States being in line with data from outside of the United States, giving credence to school-based social and emotional learning interventions being applicable to students regardless of geographic location. At the same time, the programs studied by Sklad et al. were studied for scientific research purposes and did not consider the vast majority of school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs that are not monitored for efficacy.

Analyzing the work of researchers such as Durlak et al. (2011) and Sklad et al. (2012) Wigelsworth et al. (2016) investigated some of the challenges to replicating school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs in different contexts. Meta-analytic methodology involved exclusion and inclusion criteria, ultimately yielding 89 studies to explore differences in the effectiveness of social and emotional learning programs in schools. Given the often optimistic conclusions surrounding social and emotional learning research, Wigelsworth et al. gave a stark reminder to researchers that “there is comparatively limited understanding of how positive effects can be consistently maintained” (p. 367). In short, the successful programs in one part of the world were difficult to reproduce in other parts of the world. Given the lack of studies involving school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs in private international schools in Southeast Asia, the topic warranted further investigation.

Lastly, DePaoli, Atwell, and Bridgeland (2017) investigated the vital role principals play in promoting and sustaining systemic social and emotional learning practices in schools. They

found principals were committed to developing social and emotional learning programs but struggled to effectively implement such programs. One of their recommendations for future research centered on the benefits of integrated and stand-alone social and emotional learning approaches, an issue that this study will examine as it has drawn little attention from previous researchers.

Chapter 2 Summary

A review of the literature on social and emotional learning revealed both theoretical and empirical findings supporting the need for further investigations on how social and emotional learning intervention programs can support high school students in academically rigorous programs like the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. A range of indicators demonstrated that educators believe that social and emotional learning skills can and should be taught to students of all ages and backgrounds. Furthermore, researchers found a range of short-term and long-term benefits for students participating in social and emotional learning intervention programs. Future changes to assessments such as the PISA test are further indicating that international schools need to demonstrate evidence that students are learning global competency skills commonly associated with social and emotional learning curriculum. Evidence suggested that younger children are getting more opportunities than teenagers to learn social and emotional learning skills, a situation that is a cause for concern given the stress and pressure students feel as they approach college and complete academic rigorous curriculum like the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (Bridgeland et al., 2013).

The goal of this study was to investigate the perceptions of teachers on teaching social and emotional learning competencies to IB diploma students. A phenomenological study utilized interviews with IB diploma teachers at one international school in Southeast Asia. This study

investigated the challenges international schools face to successfully develop school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs and the need for schools to prioritize systemic plans to effectively support the unique social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students in international schools.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction to Chapter 3

To understand the unique social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students, a qualitative methodology was utilized to gather data from interviews with a select group of IB diploma teachers. The questions asked of teachers focused on their perceptions regarding three themes associated with social and emotional learning: perceptions of school-based social and emotional intervention programs for IB diploma students, the ability to teach social and emotional competencies to IB diploma students, and the overall efficacy of the social and emotional learning program at their school. Teachers reflected on their experiences working with IB diploma students and the unique social emotional learning needs of those students.

The perceptions of IB diploma teachers in one international school in Southeast Asia towards the teaching of social and emotional learning competencies were examined through the theory of reasoned action (TRA) model. The TRA model predicts human behavior based on the combined influences of attitudes, behavioral intentions and social norms (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975). As a theoretical framework, the TRA model proposes that information stored in memories plays an important part in forming a person's attitude towards something (Yanovitzky, 2014). Bernstein and Lysniak (2015) utilized TRA to investigate how teachers' beliefs and previous experiences impacted their approach to teaching competitive activities and physical education to students.

The TRA model applied to this study in examining the positive attitudes teachers and international schools have towards students learning social and emotional learning competencies and the disconnect to the behavior that is practiced which does not reflect those attitudes. The belief that robust social and emotional learning programs prepare students for college and life

was manifested in social and emotional learning practices in elementary and middle school programs at international schools throughout Southeast Asia. However, this study focused on a range of factors that prevented those practices from extending to IB diploma students.

Overall, this chapter will discuss the phenomenological research design for this study, including information on the research questions, purpose and design of the study, as well as the research population and sampling method that was selected. Additionally, instrumentation, identification of attributes, and the process used for data collection and data analysis will be addressed. This chapter will conclude with the limitations of the research design, comments on validation, the expected findings and possible ethical issues related to a phenomenological design.

Research Questions

Schools that fail to support the social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students are likely to see students struggle with both the normal well-being challenges of teenagers as they approach adulthood and the rigorous academic demands of the IB Diploma Programme. The individuals most likely to assist students through these challenging two years are the IB diploma teachers who work with students daily. To better understand how IB teachers viewed school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs, it was important to investigate if those teachers perceived benefits for IB diploma students in learning social and emotional learning competencies. Additionally, understanding if IB diploma teachers felt they could teach those competencies was necessary to evaluate the overall efficacy of the school's social and emotional learning intervention program. Hence, this research study was designed to answer the following three research questions:

RQ1. How do IB diploma teachers perceive school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs for IB diploma students?

RQ2. How do IB diploma teachers perceive their ability to effectively teach social and emotional learning competencies to IB diploma students?

RQ3: How do IB diploma teachers perceive their school's overall social and emotional learning intervention program?

Purpose and Design

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the lived experiences of IB diploma teachers from one international school in order to ascertain effective approaches to support the unique social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students. There were three aspects of this study that make it significant to the growing body of literature on social emotional learning. First, the focus of this study was on the unique social emotional learning needs of high school students in the IB diploma program. In 2018, approximately 3.6 million students graduated from high schools in the United States, but only about two percent of those students--87,957 in total--completed the IB Diploma Programme prior to graduating (International Baccalaureate, 2018; Snyder, De Brey, & Dillow, 2018.) Additionally, of the 163,173 students from around the world who graduated with IB diplomas in 2018, only about six percent of those students did so in the country where this study took place (International Baccalaureate, 2018). Lastly, while there are almost 100,000 public schools for elementary and secondary students in the United States alone, there are only a little over 9,600 private international schools offering English-medium education around the world (Cavanagh, 2018; Snyder, De Brey, & Dillow, 2018.).

Creswell (2013) noted that one of the benefits of a phenomenological study is the ability to investigate the experiences of a group of people experiencing a similar phenomenon to identify common experiences and the implications of those common experiences. Key to understanding this shared phenomenon was conducting in-depth interviews with subjects in a manner that allowed participants to share their perceptions as they experienced them (Butina, Campbell, & Miller, 2015). The nature of people reflecting on their past experiences and then expressing them through verbal responses naturally led to a range of views concerning the phenomenon. Bevan (2014) noted that these varied perspectives, or modes of appearing, allowed for a collective perception of the phenomenon worthy of analysis.

The design for this study focused on interviews with a small number of subjects, 16 IB diploma teachers. The use of a phenomenological design allowed for an examination of the shared perceptions of those IB diploma teachers with respect to the social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students. Additionally, this design also permitted subjects to express their sentiments regarding their past and ongoing training to teach social and emotional learning competencies to IB diploma students as well as discuss their shared phenomenon of the overall efficacy of their school's social and emotional learning intervention program. Collectively, these three areas correlated to the three research questions driving this study.

Research Population and Sampling Method

This study employed a purposeful sampling method to understand the perceptions of IB diploma teachers regarding social emotional learning in one international school in Southeast Asia. Although there were many teachers at this school that could have been used for this study, all the subjects in the study had the similar characteristic of being experienced IB diploma teachers (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). Homogeneous sampling was therefore utilized to

focus on this subgroup of teachers who best knew the unique social emotional needs of IB diploma students.

Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot (2013) recommended between 15 to 30 interviews for a single case study using qualitative research methodologies. The purposeful sample for this study was 16 participants who come from diverse geographical backgrounds, such as the United States, Canada, South Africa, and New Zealand. The participants met the criteria of having valid teaching licenses and at least three years of experience teaching an IB diploma course. Teachers were purposefully selected to reflect gender balance as well as a range of academic disciplines in the IB Diploma Programme, such as English, dance, mathematics, science, etc.

The Head of School was contacted for permission to work with teachers as participants for the study. After the Head of School agreed to the study, an email was sent to prospective teachers that invited them to participate in the study, gave background information on the study, provided information regarding ethics and confidentiality, and shared information on how the interview process was going to be conducted. To encourage participation, teachers who consented were provided a \$20 gift card for Starbucks. Teachers who agreed to be a participant in the study were asked to respond with an informed consent form.

Instrumentation

It was recommended that a phenomenological study employ interviews with open-ended questions to best access the detailed views and experiences of participants (Creswell, 2013). While Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) defined interviews as guided conversations between two people on a common theme or mutual interest, Tracy (2013) noted that conversations during interviews were different from typical conversations because of the purposeful structure involved

in the interviews. Lindlof and Taylor (2011) noted the importance of interviews giving participants the opportunity to discuss and reflect on their opinions and experiences through a variety of methods, such as stories and examples, to explain their perceptions of the phenomenon being studied.

The specific format for the interview design for this study was a standardized open-ended interview, comprised of highly structured questions but worded so participants could give open-ended responses (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Standardized open-ended interviews encouraged subjects to give rich details but also provided the opportunity for follow-up questions to ensure responses were clarified if needed (Turner, 2010). Although open-ended interviews can make it harder to identify common themes from participant responses, this design helped to limit researcher bias as the data was analyzed for common interview perspectives (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007).

In preparation for the interviews, pilot tests were conducted with teachers who met the interview criteria but did not work at the same school as the participants in the study. As per Turner (2010), the goal of the pilot tests was to see if any research questions needed to be edited or there were any other limitations to the planned interview design. Feedback from the pilot tests necessitated final changes to interview questions and the interview protocol prior to beginning interviews for the study.

Participants selected their preference for an interview location to encourage candid conversations. Each participant was interviewed face-to-face, one at a time. As per Gullick and West (2012), a discussion on how the interviews would be conducted occurred just before the interviews began to minimize any participant nervousness or apprehensions. Participants were also invited to ask questions to ensure they were at ease with the process before beginning.

Participants were informed that they could stop the interview process or withdraw from the study at any point. Interviews were recorded and transcribed within two days of the interview. Each interview took approximately 45 minutes and was conducted over a period of five weeks. The interview questions can be found in Appendix A.

Data Collection

The primary source of data for this study was semi-structured interviews. The interviews focused on three broad areas regarding social and emotional learning: teacher perceptions on the value of social emotional learning for IB diploma students, teacher perceptions on their ability to teach social emotional learning competencies, and teacher perceptions of their school's overall social emotional learning program. A retrospective data collection method was utilized for this study, which allowed participants to revisit previous events days, weeks, months or years after the lived experiences (Longhofer, Floersch, & Hoy, 2012).

Longhofer, Floersch, and Hoy (2012) note that collecting qualitative data necessitates making records of the experience so a lived experience can be transferred to textual data or narrated text for future analysis. The primary data record collection was conducted through audio recordings. Handwritten field notes also served as a secondary source of data storage. Taylor, Bogdan, and DeVault (2016) noted that even small talk experienced in the field can be an important source of information later in the process. They further explained that it is common to return to field notes during the analysis phase and the difficulties researchers can encounter if their notes were not comprehensive and completed in a disciplined manner. Field notes on the nonverbal behaviors of participants during the interviews complemented their verbal responses to give a more complete picture of participant interviews. Field notes also explained any possible

changes to interview questions during the course of the interview and why those changes occurred (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018).

Thoresen and Öhlén (2015) further acknowledged that the data collection process can lead to new questions, directions and insights on the part of the researcher as more participants share their experiences. Similarly, Phillippi and Lauderdale (2018) highlighted the recursive nature of a phenomenological study as it progresses, and new data is introduced as more participant interviews take place. As such, field notes were an ongoing process of reflection throughout the data collection phase, so the researcher could improve the interview process, conduct preliminary data analysis, and note any unintended bias.

The methods used to record data were through a digital audio workstation (QuickTime Player), backed up with an iPhone 7, as well as handwritten field notes. Handwritten notes were converted to audio files within one day of the interview taking place. Interviews were also listened to within one day of the interviews and then transcribed. All audio files were encrypted and only accessible to the researcher. All files were securely stored on the researcher's hard drive as well as electronically on a password protected Google drive folder. When it was confirmed that the primary audio files had been recorded properly, the backed up iPhone 7 files were destroyed. To ensure anonymity, participants were given a pseudonym, such as "P1", "P2", and so on, based on the order in which they were interviewed. All other identifying characteristics such as nationality and teaching discipline were changed. The audio file recordings of the interviews were transcribed within two days of the interviews and then the audio files were deleted. Each interview was uniquely coded by the participant pseudonym and the date of the interview, such as "P1.August.23", and stored as separate electronic files. Hard copies of any data were stored in a locked desk. If any participant withdrew from the study or was removed for

any reason, all data pertaining to that participant was immediately deleted or destroyed. All data included in the final study will remain securely stored, physically or electronically, for three years, at which point it will be deleted or destroyed.

Identification of Attributes

Three main attributes were the focus of this study: perceived social emotional learning benefits for IB diploma students, perceived teacher effectiveness in delivering social emotional learning competencies, and the perceived overall efficacy of the school's social emotional learning program. Through the lens of the theory of reasoned action (TRA), this study employed a phenomenological design that used standardized open-ended interviews to better understand these three attributes. Once the data was analyzed, common themes were revealed regarding these three attributes.

Social and emotional learning refers to a conceptual framework that encourages the development of social, emotional and academic competencies for children and young adults through school-based intervention programs (Durlak et al., 2015). The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (2003) identifies five key attributes or competency domains: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making. Schools often frame their social and emotional learning curriculum on these five competencies.

Self-awareness is the ability to accurately assess one's own thoughts, emotions and values for strengths and being positive about actively addressing areas for growth (Durlak et al., 2015). Self-management refers to one's skills in effectively managing behaviors, emotions, stress and challenges to accomplish goals. Social awareness is associated with empathy and compassion to understand the societal beliefs and point of view of others (Durlak et al., 2015).

Relationship skills involve competencies concerned with communication, listening, as well as dealing with peer and social differences in healthy manners. Responsible decision making addresses the healthy choices a person should make in light of complex factors like morals, environmental risks, the rights of others, and behavioral norms (Durlak et al., 2015).

Perception was also an important attribute in this study. Jussim (2017) claimed that the most important factor to determine the truth between a person's beliefs and objective social reality is data. Jussim further explained that people are far more likely to have perceptions based on logical data and rationality than perceptions that are irrational and based on distorted biases. Given that the data for this study was based on the perceptions of IB diploma teachers, Jussim's notions support this paper's premise that IB teacher perceptions were worthy data to be examined for this study.

Data Analysis Procedures

Creswell (2014) noted the importance of clarifying the specific steps that will be taken to break down each aspect of the data collected from the interviews as well as put the data back together again to fully understand the data. Unlike quantitative studies, the examination of data took place as data was collected, resulting in an ongoing process of analyzing and organizing findings. Data analysis began with the preliminary examination of the interview transcripts and field notes to identify patterns and divide the data into logical segments through coding. Saldaña (2015) explained that coding allows the researcher to assign meaning and interrupt data by converting data collection into data analysis. Therefore, one goal was to identify patterns that could be categorized for consistent similarities or consistent differences.

Similarly, Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) discussed the need to repeatedly listen to the audio recordings of interviews as well as read over the written transcripts to fully understand the

context of the data, gain deeper insights into the ideas shared, and record notes on important concepts and phrases. Hence, another goal was to see how patterns might reveal broader themes that were based as closely as possible on the subject's experience with the phenomenon. Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012) also explain the importance of carefully considering how the coded data will be divided into different segments so the data ultimately yields a manageable number of meaningful themes. Creswell (2013) suggested five to seven themes. Emerging themes that were based on clear evidence were themes to further explore, while underdeveloped themes with little evidence were discarded.

The analysis of the identified themes was collected with the goal of understanding how participants experienced the phenomenon and how the shared experiences of participants were similar and different. Reflexivity and member checking were applied to ensure the identified themes were credible and trustworthy. Goldblatt and Band-Winterstein (2016) emphasized reflexivity so the researcher continually reflects on the interactions, expectations, attitudes, etc. with participants to avoid any unintended filtering of their responses. Carlson (2010) stressed member checking to verify the researcher not only accurately captures the participant's data but also ensures that the data has been carefully analyzed so no information is left out, avoiding an incomplete presentation of their views. In this study, both reflexivity and member checking were done as an ongoing process throughout the data analysis process.

Limitations of the Research Design

This qualitative study utilized a phenomenological design through the theory of reasoned action (TRA) model. Patton (2015) noted that phenomenological studies allow participants to examine both their individual and group understanding of a shared phenomenon. This study reported on the shared phenomenon of the lived experiences of IB diploma teachers working in

one international school in Southeast Asia. This study investigated three research questions regarding the perceptions of IB diploma teachers towards school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs for IB diploma students, their ability to teach social and emotional learning competencies to those students and their overall perceptions of their school's social and emotional learning intervention program.

As a result, this study was limited in scope to the perceptions of IB diploma teachers and did not consider the perceptions of IB diploma students, teachers who did not teach IB diploma students or school administrators. Additionally, this study used homogeneous sampling and only interviewed IB diploma teachers with at least three years of experience teaching IB diploma students. This study was also limited in that teachers with less than three years of IB teaching experience were excluded. Indicative of phenomenological methodology, this study also focused on a limited number of subjects in a single international school in Southeast Asia. Therefore, it is not possible to generalize that the data and findings are transferable to the lived experiences of IB diploma teachers in other international schools in different parts of the world.

With respect to instrumentation, this study only utilized interviews with open-ended questions for IB diploma teachers, thus eliminating other data points such as school-produced social and emotional learning curriculum or written feedback from students on how effectively their IB diploma teachers teach social and emotional learning competencies. Furthermore, this study did not use a range of data collection methods over a continuous period of time as a case study might employ, nor was there any attempt by the researcher to observe the IB diploma teachers directly working with IB diploma students, as might occur in an ethnographic study (Creswell, 2014).

Reflexivity was used throughout the data analysis process to ensure the findings were credible and mitigate any subjectivity on the part of the researcher. An ethical consideration that was a limitation was teachers being fully transparent and forthright about how prepared they felt to teach social and emotional learning competencies to IB diploma students. A final limitation concerned teacher privacy and the ability of teachers to keep their interview responses confidential so as not to influence other participants in the study.

Validation

Compared to working with multiple researchers on large quantitative studies, Gibbs (2007) noted validation questions can arise when a single researcher works in isolation on a small qualitative study. To mitigate such questions of reliability, the researcher took steps to ensure transcripts, coding and analysis were trustworthy. The transcripts from interviews were repeatedly analyzed for accuracy so an authentic portrayal of the subjects' ideas was captured as intended.

The extensive time needed to conduct interviews and the large amount of data to analyze increased the chances of data being erroneously coded over a period of weeks or months. As a result, this study also emphasized an ongoing review of the coding of data to increase the credibility of the analysis. Furthermore, quotations from subjects in this study reflected the broader views of participants, as opposed to highlighting only one or two outlier statements that could falsely generalize possible findings.

Credibility. Creswell (2014) explained qualitative validity increases when multiple approaches are taken to guarantee the participants, the researcher, and the individuals overseeing the study agree on the reliability of the findings. Therefore, this study focused on themes that were supported by information provided by numerous participants during interviews. The

information provided by each person on a shared theme was thoroughly described to establish greater credibility in the findings.

At the same time, this study included data that opposed or did not support major themes presented in the findings (Creswell, 2014). Examining contradictory data, what Anney (2014) refers to as negative case analysis, helped synthesize all of the data and themes, further validating the study. The study seeks full transparency by acknowledging the potential bias of the researcher who previously worked as an IB diploma teacher and witnessed IB diploma students struggle due to a lack of social and emotional learning support.

Dependability. Prior to working with participants in this study, a key factor to ensure dependability was working with supervisors, experienced in qualitative research methodologies, to carefully word and organize interview questions that align with the research questions and objectives (Yeong, Ismail, Ismail, & Hamzah, 2018). This study took multiple refinement steps to edit initial interview questions before working with participants to improve the overall dependability and trustworthiness of the interview findings (Clark & Creswell, 2014). Moreover, interview questions were further fine-tuned for vagueness and clarity by conducting pilot tests of interview questions with several IB diploma teachers who did not participate in this study (Yeong et al., 2018). As well, full practice interviews with IB diploma teachers not in this study were conducted to obtain feedback on the order and flow of questions. Their comments helped with the final editing of questions to ensure greater dependability in this study's findings.

To further ensure dependability, this study followed the recommendations of Anney (2014) who advises researchers to verify with participants that the findings in the study reflect the views they shared during their interviews. As Birt et al. (2016) similarly advised, this study ensured consistency through participant validation of the original transcript data as well as

analyzed data at multiple stages throughout the process. Providing detailed explanations of all aspects of the methodology and data analysis processes allows future researchers the ability to replicate or elaborate on this study, again increasing the overall dependability of the findings and recommendations.

Expected Findings

A review of the literature on social and emotional learning revealed that school-based social and emotional learning intervention strategies improved the academic performance of students as well as a range of wellness indicators over both short and long periods of time (Durlak et al., 2011; Payton et al., 2008; Sklad et al., 2012; Taylor et al., 2017). However, many challenges impact effective social and emotional learning implementation in schools, such as prioritizing academic curriculum over social and emotional learning curriculum, time for social and emotional learning professional development, teacher efficacy to deliver social and emotional learning instruction, a lack of social and emotional learning training for teachers prior to entering the profession, and clear social and emotional learning assessment tools (Bouffard, 2016; DePaoli et al., 2017; Durlak et al., 2015; Dusenbury & Weissberg, 2016; Dusenbury & Weissberg, 2017; Jones et al., 2013).

More significantly, as the stress and pressure associated with academic performance and getting good grades increased as students age, the opportunities to participate in effective school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs decreased (Bridgeland et al., 2013; Dymnicki et al., 2013). Instead of building on the early childhood social and emotional learning competencies they learned, students were often left without support, making them more vulnerable to struggle with a range of mental health issues (Suldo et al., 2009). The situation was even more serious for students in extremely rigorous academic programs such as the

International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, where the academic requirements were far greater than traditional high school graduation requirements (Shaunessy & Suldo, 2010; Suldo et al., 2008; Suldo & Shaunessy-Dedrick, 2013).

Without effective school-based social and emotional learning intervention, IB diploma students often relied on poor coping methods that led to an array of unsafe well-being scenarios. It was this lack of effective social and emotional learning support for IB diploma students that was the focus of this study. Based on qualitative interviews with teachers from one international school in Southeast Asia, the goal of this study was to explore the phenomenon of the shared experiences of IB diploma teachers who work with IB diploma students on a daily basis. This study revealed that participants believed IB diploma students needed specific lessons to address their unique social and emotional learning needs.

At the same time, the IB diploma teachers expressed a lack of training and competency to deliver effective social and emotional learning instruction to IB diploma students as well as broader concern that their school lacked an effective strategic plan to teach social and emotional learning competencies to IB diploma students. The Theory of Reason Action (TRA) model applied to this study because of the disconnect between the positive attitudes IB diploma teachers had towards students learning social and emotional learning competencies and the participants' belief that they could not deliver those social and emotional learning competencies to students.

The findings from this study helped fill several gaps in the burgeoning field of social and emotional learning. First, there was a lack of qualitative studies on school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs with respect to students approaching high school graduation. Secondly, there is even less research on the unique social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students as they navigate the extremely challenging demands of the IB

Diploma Programme. Thirdly, the findings demonstrated a common understanding from IB diploma teachers that schools need to have a more systemic social and emotional learning plan to ensure the health and well-being of IB diploma students. Lastly, the findings will hopefully encourage the International Baccalaureate organization to review their approach to supporting the social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students, given the extremely challenging expectations asked of IB diploma students over a relatively short 2-year period.

Ethical Issues of the Study

Creswell (2014) noted that there are a wide-range of ethical considerations that need to be anticipated throughout all phases of the research and writing process in order to protect research participants and guarantee the validity of the work. Sternberg and Sternberg (2010) similarly acknowledged an extensive list of possible ways a study can be compromised due to ethical violations but that following IRB procedures regarding the ethical treatment of subjects lessened concerns about unethical behavior. Accordingly, careful steps were taken to ensure all participant data was not falsely manipulated, deliberately disregarded or invented. It is important to also note that the principal investigator did not receive any form of funding or economic benefits for any aspect of this study or the findings.

Conflict of interest assessment. The principal investigator worked as a teacher at the school where the participants in this study were employed. In the past five years, the principal investigator had no professional association with the school or been in any position to influence the participants in the study. To eliminate any deception in soliciting the research population, all teachers who had taught an IB diploma course for at least three years were invited to take part in the study. To also avoid bias, the final selection of participants reflected an equitable distribution of gender, nationality, experience and teaching disciplines. Given these preventative measures,

there was no conflict of interest between the principal investigator and the participants or the school utilized in the study.

Researcher's position. This research study was based on the perceptions of IB diploma teachers in one international school in Southeast Asia toward school-based social and emotional learning programs for IB diploma students. This phenomenon was selected to investigate after speaking with a number of school leaders and teachers in several different international schools in Southeast Asia. The principal investigator worked in this region as a teacher in the IB Diploma Programme between 2006–2019 and experienced students in Grades 11 and 12 struggling with the demanding nature of the IB Diploma Programme. The IB Diploma Programme is an explicitly designed academic curriculum that does not include social and emotional learning standards and benchmarks. The principal investigator believed that IB diploma schools need to have better, more deliberate plans to support the unique social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students and that data provided by participants in this study supported that position. The intention of this study was to add to the broader body of literature on the possible benefits of strategic, school-based social and emotional learning programs for older high school students by examining one social and emotional learning program at an international school in Southeast Asia.

Ethical issues in the study. Creswell (2014) emphasized that researchers must reassure participants that the information they provide will be protected. Thus, all participants signed consent forms clearly explaining that their participation in the study was confidential, that the data they provided would be coded for confidentiality, that no information they shared would be made available to school leaders for professional evaluation purposes, and that that they could withdraw from the study at any point in the process for any reason. With respect to the

interviews, participants were asked open-ended questions to encourage a natural dialogue where they could be at ease to discuss anything they wanted to share about the topic. Additionally, participants were able to select the location and time for the interviews, which further created a more comfortable situation for them to speak freely and without reservation. As a result, the primary researcher identified no ethical issues or risks in this study.

Chapter 3 Summary

Social and emotional learning refers to a conceptual framework that encourages the development of social, emotional and academic competencies for children and young adults through school-based intervention programs (Durlak et al., 2015). The perceptions of the participants towards the teaching of social and emotional learning competencies were examined in relationship to the theory of reasoned action (TRA) model. As a theoretical framework, the TRA model proposes that information stored in memories plays an important part in forming a person's attitude towards something and predicts human behavior based on the combined influences of attitudes, behavioral intentions and social norms (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975; Yanovitzky, 2014).

Through the TRA lens, this study employed a phenomenological design with standardized open-ended interviews to better understand three main attributes that were the focus of this study: perceived social and emotional learning benefits for IB diploma students, perceived teacher effectiveness in delivering social and emotional learning competencies, and the perceived overall efficacy of the school's social and emotional learning program. In this study, 16 IB diploma teachers reflected on their experiences working with IB diploma students and the unique social and emotional learning needs of those students. Data was gathered through specific interview protocols employing a range of measures that ensured the rights of participants and

that the information they provided were protected at all times. By controlling for ethical issues and conflicts of interest, this study will hopefully add to the growing body of literature on social and emotional learning and the need to further support high school students, specifically IB diploma students, through strategic school-based social and emotional learning programs.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to ascertain the most effective approaches to support the unique social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students as they complete high school and enter adulthood. The review of literature demonstrated a lack of research regarding high school students accessing effective social and emotional learning intervention programs compared to students in elementary schools and middle schools. (Bridgeland et al., 2013; Dymnicki et al., 2013; Suldo et al., 2009). The study was designed to answer the following three research questions:

RQ1. How do IB diploma teachers perceive school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs for IB diploma students?

RQ2. How do IB diploma teachers perceive their ability to effectively teach social and emotional learning competencies to IB diploma students?

RQ3: How do IB diploma teachers perceive their school's overall social and emotional learning intervention program?

The researcher's experience as an IB diploma teacher in international schools in Southeast Asia for over 15 years allowed for an informed perspective to understand the lived experiences of the IB diploma teachers in the study as well as to analyze the data they provided. The researcher was optimistic that investigating this phenomenon would help international schools increase their focus on more systemic strategies to address the social and emotional learning needs of students in the rigorous IB Diploma Programme. IB diploma students may benefit from this study by gaining more access to the direct instruction of skills to help them navigate a range of social and emotional challenges as a young adult. The results may also be

valuable as a baseline for other researchers to conduct similar studies on other international schools that offer the IB Diploma Programme.

To determine the most effective approaches to support the social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students, the researcher conducted interviews with 16 IB diploma teachers to understand their collective, lived experiences working with IB diploma students in. In this chapter, the organization of the data from these interviews begins with a description of the sample, followed by the research methodology and analysis, and then a summary of the findings. This chapter concludes with a presentation of the data, the results based on the data, as well as a summary of the key findings.

Description of the Sample

The researcher collected data from one international school in Southeast Asia. The Head of School gave permission to work with teachers as participants for the study after the researcher submitted a description of the study, premises permission letter, informed consent form, and IRB approval letter. The high school principal then emailed all IB diploma teachers and invited them to participate in the study. The email gave background information on the study, information regarding ethics and confidentiality, and details on how the interviews would be conducted. Interested teachers were asked to respond by email directly to the researcher. Teachers who met the participant criteria were identified by the researcher and individual interviews were scheduled at the discretion of the participant.

The researcher employed purposive sampling, a type of nonprobability sampling, to acquire a complete representation of the lived experiences of IB diploma teachers and their perceptions of the social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students. Demographic data was used to ensure the sample population of 16 participants was representative of the IB diploma

teacher population demographics in the school. All participants had a valid teaching license and at least three years of experience teaching an IB diploma course. The years of experience teaching an IB diploma course ranged from three years to 23 years, with seven teachers having between three and 14 years of experience and nine teachers with 15 years or more of experience. The years of experience working at the school also ranged from three years to 23 years, with six teachers having less than five years of experience, five teachers with six to 14 years of experience, and five teachers with over 15 years of experience.

Participants came from a range of nations, including Australia, Canada, Colombia, New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States, that reflect the diverse geographic backgrounds of all IB diploma teachers at the school. Homogeneous sampling was utilized to obtain a balance of genders, seven men and nine women, as well as a balanced representation of the six IB Diploma Programme subject areas, such as Language Acquisition, Mathematics, and The Arts. Table 1 shows the participant pseudonyms, nationalities, genders, years of experience teaching at the school, years of experience teaching an IB diploma course and the IB diploma subject areas taught.

Table 1

Demographic Information of the Participants

Participant	Nationality	Gender	Years of Experience Teaching at the School	Years of Experience Teaching an IB Diploma Course	IB Diploma Subject Area
P1	United Kingdom	M	3	9	Individuals and Societies
P2	United States	M	22	24	Mathematics
P3	United States	M	18	20	Experimental Sciences
P4	Australia	F	5	15	Language Acquisition
P5	South Africa	F	4	20	Individuals and Societies
P6	Canada	M	17	23	First Language
P7	United States	F	14	14	The Arts
P8	United States	F	6	3	First Language
P9	Colombia	F	23	23	Language Acquisition
P10	United States	M	18	12	The Arts
P11	Canada	F	6	20	First Language
P12	United Kingdom	F	4	15	Mathematics
P13	United States	F	4	4	Experimental Sciences
P14	New Zealand	F	4	4	Physical Education
P15	United States	M	6	15	Experimental Sciences
P16	United Kingdom	M	6	11	Individuals and Societies

Research Methodology and Analysis

There is strong rationale for investigating the problems, practices and policies in the field of education through qualitative research methodology (Kozleski, 2016). Creswell (2014) argued

that carefully selecting participants is crucial to investigate the problem as effectively as possible in qualitative research. Newman and Clare (2016) similarly stated that the essence of qualitative research is placing the integrity of participant stories at the foreground of the investigation. Yin (2016) further noted qualitative researchers need to have effective communication skills when asking questions and listening to responses to foster productive discussions with participants and ensure meticulous field notes are recorded during interviews. Analyzing qualitative research requires researchers to interpret data through a range of strategic, ethical and personal lenses after sustained, intense experiences with participants (Creswell, 2014).

The goal of this phenomenological study was to focus on a particular group of IB diploma teachers at one international school in Southeast Asia and investigate how to effectively support the social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students. Students completing the IB diploma often struggle to manage not only demanding academic expectations but also the complex social and emotional challenges of being in Grades 11 and 12 (Shaunessy-Dedrick et al., 2014; Suldo & Shaunessy-Dedrick, 2013). At the same time, IB diploma schools often ask untrained teachers to teach IB diploma students social and emotional skills or fail to provide opportunities for students to gain the social and emotional learning skills they need (Bouffard, 2018; Jones & Bouffard, 2012; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017; Sklad et al., 2012).

Hence, a key aspect of this study was the creation and vetting of specific interview questions to encourage candid conversations with IB diploma teachers to understand the phenomenon of how to provide IB diploma students with the social and emotional skills needed to effectively complete high school and enter adulthood. The theoretical framework employed to investigate this phenomenon was Ajzen and Fishbein's (1975) theory of reasoned action (TRA). The TRA model predicts the behaviors of people based on the combined influences of certain

conditions, such as attitudes, behavioral intentions and social norms (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975). If IB diploma teachers have negative attitudes towards teaching social and emotional learning skills, their behavior can result in the ineffective delivery of social and emotional learning curriculum to students.

Pilot tests were conducted with four IB diploma teachers who meet the interview criteria but were not included in the study to ensure interview questions were worded effectively or edited as needed to execute the planned interview design (Turner, 2010). Additionally, pilot tests allowed the researcher to also ascertain if the interview questions were in the appropriate order and provided teachers the opportunity to give feedback on how questions could be adapted or give suggestions on additional questions. Overall, feedback from the participants in the pilot tests on the questions was positive, although a few questions were edited or rearranged and one additional open-ended question was added at the end.

Interviews for the study began one week after pilot tests were conducted and took place over a five-week period. Participants selected their desired location for the interview so they were at ease with the process and not anxious about sharing their experiences. Two of the interviews took place in the homes of participants, while the other 14 interviews took place on the school campus when teachers were not teaching. All interviews with teachers began with participants signing consent forms to take part in the study. Participants also understood the interviews were being recorded with a digital audio workstation (QuickTime Player) and backed up with a recording on an iPhone 7. Each interview took approximately 40 minutes to conduct. The researcher also took field notes during the interviews. The audio file recordings of the interviews were transcribed within two days of the interviews, and then the audio files were

deleted. The researcher referred to the field notes taken in the interviews to ensure the audio files were transcribed correctly.

To further confirm the accuracy of the transcribed data, member checking was employed throughout the interview process. Creswell (2014) recommended incorporating validity strategies, such as member checking, to certify the findings from participants as well as assure that the methodology and data analysis are credible. Participants received copies of the transcripts of their interviews to review within two days of their interviews. Participants communicated with the researcher through email or face-to-face to verify the transcribed data correctly reflected their perceptions of the questions. Participants were also given the opportunity to add any additional comments that might not have been communicated in their responses to the interview questions. All participants in the study affirmed that the transcribed interviews were accurate and fully captured their views of the questions.

After both the interview and member checking processes were complete, the researcher conducted preliminary analysis by going through each transcript to identify common ideas and concepts. Johnson and Christensen (2014) noted the researcher is looking to find reoccurring words and phrases during this process of open coding. Examples of words repeatedly found during the open coding phase included *training*, *professional development*, *stress*, *curriculum*, *time*, and *schedule*. After the open coding phase, the researcher segmented the data into initial patterns to see what broader themes were revealed (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). During this phase, the researcher also compiled a master list of the emergent themes, with the goal of having no more than seven themes that reflected the main ideas expressed by the participants (Creswell, 2013).

The researcher relied on bracketing to safeguard against any personal bias or preconceptions in analyzing the data for emergent themes. Bracketing allows researchers to reflect specifically on the experiences of the participants in the study while also ensuring interpretations of the data are not skewed (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Given the experiences the researcher had as an IB diploma teacher working with IB diploma students, it was imperative that the researcher utilized bracketing to self-monitor for any partiality during this particular phase.

Six emergent themes were identified and coded with descriptive names reflecting the three research questions designed for this study. The three aspects of this phenomenon under investigation were the perceptions of IB diploma teachers towards social and emotional level for IB diploma students, the ability of IB diploma teachers to teach social and emotional leaning curriculum to IB diploma students, and their school’s overall social and emotional learning intervention program. The six themes and their correlation to the three research questions are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Research Questions and Themes

Research Questions	Themes
How do IB diploma teachers perceive school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs for IB diploma students?	1. Benefits for Students
How do IB diploma teachers perceive their ability to effectively teach social and emotional learning competencies to IB diploma students?	2. Preservice Training 3. Professional Development 4. Pedagogy
How do IB diploma teachers perceive their school’s overall social and emotional learning intervention program?	5. Curriculum 6. Strategic Plans

Summary of the Findings

A phenomenological study was selected to explore the perceptions of IB diploma teachers regarding three research questions focused on the unique social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students in one international school in Southeast Asia. The researcher hoped to identify themes based on the lived experiences of the 16 participants who shared the common phenomenon of having valid teaching licenses and at least three years of experience teaching an IB diploma course to IB diploma students. The research design for this study was standardized open-ended interviews, comprised of highly structured questions to encourage subjects to give rich details while also allowing the researcher to ask clarifying questions if needed.

A total of 18 interview questions were asked to each of the participants, with approximately six questions asked for each of the three research questions driving this study. Interview questions 1, 5, 6, 7, 12 and 13 focused on the participants' perceptions on how IB diploma teachers support students on a social and emotional level. Interview questions 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, and 11 were concerned with the perceptions of the participants regarding their ability to teach social and emotional learning curriculum to students. Interview questions 10, 14, 15, 16 and 17 addressed the perceptions of participants towards their school's overall social and emotional learning intervention program. The final interview question was an open-ended question that gave participants an opportunity to discuss anything else they wanted to share regarding social and emotional learning and the needs of IB diploma students that the other interview questions did not address.

Based on the responses to the 18 interview questions, six broad themes were identified and coded with descriptive names directly related to the research questions designed for this study. The six themes were: benefits for students, preservice training for teachers, on-going

professional development for teachers, pedagogy, curriculum, and school-wide strategic plans. While six themes were identified when analyzing the data, five themes in particular were expressed by a high number of participants in the study. A detailed description of the data and results for all six themes is provided later in this chapter but summaries of the five most prominent themes are included here.

The most prevalent theme concerned pedagogy and confidence to teach IB diploma curriculum to IB diploma students. In 15 out of 16 interviews, teachers expressed a high level of confidence in their ability to teach their specific IB academic curriculum subject area (English, geography, biology, etc.). Teachers noted they were 100% confident or very confident teaching the IB curriculum for several reasons, such as their many years of experience, having previously attended multiple training workshops, and getting positive feedback on the examination results of their IB students in the past.

With respect to the theme of preservice training, 13 out of 16 participants commented that their university teacher preparation programs inadequately trained them to teach social and emotional learning curriculum prior to becoming full-time teachers. Eight participants stated they had no formal training to teach social and emotional curriculum. Five teachers stated they were required to take a course in psychology, educational psychology or adolescent development, but the curriculum in those courses did not address or only minimally touched on the social and emotional learning needs of students. Participants frequently noted that their university teacher preparation programs were at least 15 years ago and they could not recall anything from those programs related to social and emotional learning, even if courses on social and emotional learning were mandated as part of their training preparation programs.

Concerning the theme of on-going professional development, 11 out of 16 participants commented that they needed more training to feel adequately capable of teaching social and emotional learning curriculum to meet the specific needs of IB diploma students. Besides training, participants commonly cited the need for more resources and opportunities to be mentored by other teachers who had more experience or were more comfortable teaching social and emotional curriculum. More professional development was viewed as a way to both alleviate teacher anxiety due to inexperience teaching social and emotional learning as well as help teachers coming from cultures where teaching social and emotional competencies was not expected of teachers.

In terms of IB diploma students needing support, 13 out of 16 participants remarked that IB diploma students had different social and emotional learning needs compared to their classmates in the same grade level who were not in the IB Diploma Programme. Nine teachers stated that stress to meet the academic expectations and workload in an IB diploma class compared to a non-IB diploma class was a difference in the unique social and emotional needs of an IB diploma student. Participants often shared the perception that IB diploma students felt more pressure to get good grades and to be accepted into prestigious universities than students who were not in the IB Diploma Programme. As a result of this pressure, the perception of the participants was IB diploma students needed different social and emotional learning support than their peers who were not in the IB Diploma Programme.

Another theme that was clear from the data involved the benefits of specifically teaching social and emotional learning competencies to IB diploma students. The perception that IB diploma students would have more healthy, balanced lifestyles if they had consistent access to an effective school-based social and emotional learning program was shared by 12 out of 16

participants. Teachers noted that students would be better at self-management, time management and prioritizing tasks with consistent social and emotional learning support. Ten participants specifically mentioned alleviating stress as a benefit IB diploma students would receive from an effective school-based social and emotional learning program.

Presentation of Data and Results

The researcher used a phenomenological design to collect and analyze data for this study. Standardized open-ended interviews gave 16 participants the opportunity to share their perceptions on the social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students. The 18 interview questions were structured to address three research questions regarding the perceptions of IB diploma teachers supporting students on a social and emotional level, their ability to teach social and emotional learning curriculum to IB diploma students, and their school's overall social and emotional learning intervention program.

The results from the data collection revealed six themes related to the research questions. This section of Chapter 4 will present detailed descriptions of the participants perspectives on: the benefits of teaching social and emotional learning to IB diploma students, the preservice training for IB diploma teachers, the on-going professional development for IB diploma teachers, the disparity between the confidence to teach academic curriculum and social and emotional curriculum, the challenges regarding social and emotional learning curriculum, and strategic plans regarding social and emotional learning. The presentation of the data and results are organized by the six themes directly related to the three research questions.

Benefits for IB diploma students. Six interview questions addressed the benefits IB diploma students might experience from an effective school-based social and emotional learning intervention program. Responses indicated unique benefits for IB diploma students, both

academically and personally, but some participants also noted that there were common benefits for both IB diploma students and non-IB diploma students in a strong social and emotional intervention program. The school in this study utilizes an advisory program where students in the same grade level meet weekly in heterogeneous groups with both IB diploma students and non-IB diploma students together to learn social and emotional learning curriculum. Because IB diploma and non-IB diploma students are not together for their other academic courses, this time together in advisory was generally viewed as a good time for students to learn social and emotional skills that benefit all students, such as better communication skills. P3 stated, “Advisory lessons help teach IB diploma students better organizational skills, but those skills are not unique to IB diploma students.” P4 also noted that working on social and emotional competencies with teenagers, regardless of their status as an IB diploma student or not, helped all young people prepare for their adult life. “We are not building robots,” he concluded, “we’re building humans.”

However, participants in this study more frequently noted the academic requirements and expectations of being an IB diploma student posed unique challenges that necessitated separate social and emotional learning strategies than their non-IB diploma peers needed. P6 explained that an effective social and emotional learning program for IB diploma students would “help them better prioritize and balance their academic work schedule.” P1 also discussed deadlines for IB diploma students, clarifying:

I don’t just mean a deadline in the calendar, I mean personally being able to adhere to a deadline and time allocation, having the ability to say that I’ve done my best. I’ve prepared for that test as well as I can in the time that I have and whatever grade I get is

the grade I get. I think for an IB student, in general, that would be the thing that I'd wish for all of them in terms of social and emotional support.

P8 referenced the need to teach students better coping skills as IB diploma students. She explained, "Coping strategies would help students be more effective when faced with the stress or stressors of being an IB diploma student."

Other academic benefits were also mentioned by participants. P11 noted an effective social and emotional intervention program would allow more forums for IB diploma students to "just kind of manage anxiety, manage or just get perspective on things" by talking with other IB diploma students about the academic anxiety students were experiencing. P2 echoed this sentiment, stating one of the advantages of providing IB diploma students opportunities to share their challenges is, "helping them recognize that they're not alone in it." P7 also discussed the unique difficulties IB diploma students face because of the "holistic nature that they have to do all of these courses in the full IB diploma program which really forces a lot of metacognitive challenges that they wouldn't otherwise have" if they were not IB diploma students. P14 shared the need to teach IB diploma students to recognize the problem in comparing themselves with other IB diploma students. She explained, "This comparison to everybody else is somewhat pointless, so more support would get them to sort of accept that and embrace their own strengths and be okay with it."

Beyond academics, participants frequently reported IB diploma students would also benefit on a personal level from an effective social and emotional intervention program. The most common areas cited were students gaining skills with respect to better sleep patterns, eating habits and exercise routines as they try and meet the many challenging academic requirements of being an IB diploma student. P7 discussed the need for IB diploma students to improve their

self-esteem and feel “a good sense of confidence and pride” to appreciate their accomplishment once they finish the entire IB Diploma Programme. P5 also explained that a school can consider they have a successful social and emotional learning program when IB diploma students “value who they are as individuals, what their goals are and their intrinsic drive to do the IB Diploma Programme.”

Participants discussed other ways IB diploma students would personally benefit from a strong social and emotional program at the school. The school in this study has a student body from approximately 55 different nations. With so much diversity, there is a vast array of social and emotional needs based on the different cultural backgrounds, expectations and norms of students. P15 noted that, “Certain cultures would be interested in learning more about sleep, but other cultures would want down time to just play and bond with their peers.” P11 similarly suggested the best way to offer support for students on a social and emotional level must include students having a voice in the process: “I think we don’t take the time to ask the students what they personally need or how they would feel that they would benefit.” P15 also emphasized if IB diploma students were honest about where they lacked social and emotional well-being, many would probably mention problems having relationships. He explained, “they don’t have time to have relationships, and the relationships that they do have are pretty much only online, digital relationships.”

Many participants also concluded that the importance of equally balancing both the academic demands and personal challenges of being an IB diploma student should be the ultimate goal of an effective school-based social and emotional intervention program. P7 discussed balance in terms of students effectively managing what they would like to do with what they have to do: “IB diploma students would benefit from better time management

strategies so they can better juggle their interests versus responsibilities.” P13 concluded that IB diploma students who had experienced strong social emotional learning were noticeably different from their peers:

They have an ability to balance three integral things - social, emotional, and academics—and have some regulation of that before they go off on their own and have to basically sink or swim, whether it’s in a job, in college, or whatever.

Preservice training for IB diploma teachers. Participant data from interviews revealed that most teachers were not effectively trained to teach social and emotional learning curriculum to students in their university teacher preparation programs before they entered the teaching profession. P2 recalled perhaps two weeks of training but also noted, “It certainly wasn’t a thing where we were told we’re talking now about social and emotional learning. It was not something that was a specific part of the curriculum.” P14 similarly noted a lack of formal teaching:

“Relationships were always discussed and students’ home lives and all that sort of stuff, but it wasn’t a course or anything, it was simply anecdotal, sort of discussion based in the classroom.”

Aware of current trends in social and emotional training in universities, P4 lamented a lack of research in her preservice university preparation: “There was nothing about research on the teenage brain or the common experiences for young adults.”

When participants received some training on how to teach social and emotional learning curriculum, they often said that training was cursory or only lightly touched in a class not specifically designed to teach social and emotional learning curriculum for older teenagers. P7 recalled a required course on adolescent development that “connected the most closely with the explicit teaching of emotional and cognitive development” but noted it was geared more for the needs of middle school students than high school students. P10 similarly said, “the social and

emotional training I received was mostly in educational child development and psychology courses,” but shared that those courses did not address the specific needs of older teenagers. P13 also made a clear distinction between the social and emotional training elementary and secondary teachers experienced: “They did far less social and emotional learning training with secondary teachers in my program than some of my elementary colleagues who took the same program. They did a lot more focused social and emotional work.”

Some participants, such as P8, complemented the approach her teacher education program had towards teaching social and emotional skills to students. She explained, “I was fortunate that social and emotional learning was one of the foci at my school. It was sort of embedded in the entire Masters of Arts curriculum.” However, participant comments regarding ineffective classes were more commonly shared. Remarks from P15 were indicative of teacher programs that only superficially addressed the essential skills needed to teach social and emotional learning competencies: “There was a psychology course that we took, but I think they just kind of hoped that you would figure out. It was like, ‘Ah, you might want to look into that.’ There was very little involved.”

With 13 out of 16 participants having at least nine years of experience teaching an IB diploma course, it was not surprising that a number of teachers commented that they could not recall anything from their university teacher preparation programs related to social and emotional learning training. When asked to discuss the training he received to teach social and emotional learning curriculum in his university teacher preparation program prior to becoming a full-time teacher, P3 laughed before replying:

Seriously? I went to university between 1983 and 1987 which was over 30 years ago. I took an Intro to Psychology or Developmental Psychology course that would be probably

the only actual academic preparation I had. Yeah, it's been a long time, I don't remember.

P6, with 23 years of experience teaching an IB diploma course, recalled, "We took some psychology courses that spoke about the development of the brain at different stages and how that affects learning, but to be honest, I don't remember a whole lot of the social emotional balance."

With participants in the study coming from seven different nations, teachers shared a range of different preservice preparation models for teaching social and emotional learning depending on where they received their teaching certification. P11, from Canada, said the most useful class she ever had was called Play which "focused on play for all ages and the necessity for students to step back and allow for think time and diversion in order to let the cognitive processes of learning actually happen." Like other participants, she noted that the content mainly targeted social and emotional learning strategies for elementary and middle school students, but that she still applied many of the principles she gained with her high school students. Teachers from the United Kingdom had a good deal of training with respect to social and emotional learning prior to becoming a teacher. P16 felt well prepared for social and emotional teaching when he entered the teaching profession:

I already had an unofficial 3-year program of getting familiar with social and emotional learning through the PGCE, which is a British teaching qualification. If my memory serves me correctly, we had dedicated training both in college and then in my placement schools.

While some participants felt they received suitable training, this was not the common sentiment of most participants.

Of the 16 participants, 13 people commented that their university teacher preparation programs inadequately prepared them to teach social and emotional learning curriculum prior to becoming full-time teachers. Half of the participants stated they had no formal training to teach social and emotional curriculum. When asked about his social and emotional preparation, P1 answered, “That’s a long time ago. I would say not very much. In fact, to be honest, I can’t really remember it being part of a formal curriculum.” P12 was more direct when asked about the training she received: “Zero, absolutely none. I had no training at all. Any training I learned was on the job.” More commonly, as P9 noted, teacher preparation programs were focused on teaching academic curriculum to students and not focused on the different skills needed to teach social and emotional learning competencies. “Every single thing was about pedagogy,” she said of her training program, “so when you arrived as a new teacher, you were clueless and you felt totally unprepared [to deal with social and emotional issues] because nobody ever told you that because it wasn’t part of the curriculum.”

Professional development for IB diploma teachers. Six interview questions asked participants their perceptions of their ability to teach social and emotional learning curriculum to IB diploma students. Responses often demonstrated that more professional development was needed for teachers to effectively deliver social and emotional learning curriculum. All but five participants noted they needed more training to feel adequately capable of teaching social and emotional learning curriculum to meet the specific needs of IB diploma students. Teachers discussed a range of experiences and levels of comfort with social and emotional learning, depending on the skills they had acquired through mandated training on professional development days or if they chose to pursue professional development training outside of what the school provided.

Participants shared generally positive comments regarding the school's focus to offer professional development opportunities on campus for teachers to improve their skills teaching social and emotional learning competencies to students. The school schedules approximately seven days each year when students are not on campus so teachers can have professional development days to address any number of strategic initiatives to improve student learning. P2 recalled:

Maybe two of the last three years or three of the past four we had somebody come in to lead workshops on social and emotional learning. So, there's been some training, but I would not say there's been a lot of training for this.

P7 cited more frequent opportunities, noting an increase in time given to social and emotional learning on professional development days: "I think recently has been the most pronounced continuous professional development around social and emotional learning. There's been pretty consistent focus, maybe two or more workshops during professional development days, where we talk about social emotional learning issues."

Participants referenced different stakeholders involved in the process of providing social and emotional learning resources and mentoring opportunities for staff members on professional development days. Before speaking about the school in this study, P16 explained that his two previous schools utilized internal staff members to lead social and emotional learning on professional development days because those schools had more established social and emotional learning programs:

However, at this school, we have had some external professionals come in to train us on social emotional learning. That's largely because this school recently created the program and so it was probably felt outside help was the best way to deliver that.

P15 complimented school counselors for their role in helping the school make strides in social and emotional learning education, although he also acknowledged, “like every school, it’s an area that can definitely improve.”

Although there was a common sentiment that the school continues to provide more professional development time to improve the teaching of social and emotional learning, there was skepticism regarding the overall effectiveness of those opportunities. More specifically, there was a perception that the effectiveness of those training opportunities largely depended on the attitudes of the staff towards the teaching of social and emotional learning, not merely on the quality of the opportunity provided by the school. The importance of teacher attitudes and behaviors towards the teaching of social and emotional learning connects to Ajzen and Fishbein’s (1975) theory of reasoned action (TRA) which emphasized that an individual’s intention to perform a behavior is the biggest predictor of that behavior being performed. Stronger intentions to perform a behavior increase the likelihood of the behavior to be effectively performed. For IB diploma teachers in this study, having positive attitudes towards the teaching of social and emotional learning skills was exhibited not only through their participation in whole-school professional development days but also whether or not they sought professional development opportunities beyond what was provided by the school.

Data from interviews revealed that some participants believed it was important to further develop their ability to teach social and emotional learning by obtaining more professional development without being directed to by the school. Each teacher at the school can access up to \$1,500 a year for their own professional development for reasons such as tuition for university classes and fees for conferences or workshops. Participants noted that requests for money for professional development purposes were usually granted by the school leadership team as long

as there was a clear rationale that the allocated funds would be used to improve teaching practices and student learning. In the end, it is up to teachers to decide if they want to use their professional development funds from the school to improve their ability to deliver social and emotional learning curriculum.

As the grade level coordinator for Grade 11, P13 divulged that the professional development she had recently done on social and emotional learning was “because it wasn’t directly taught in my teacher preparation program.” Similarly, P5 explained, “I’ve devoted much of my professional development money to any courses related to social emotional learning.” P4, who is the grade level coordinator for Grade 10, discussed the lack of systemic social and emotional learning training on a school-wide level led her to seek her own professional development opportunities:

Aside from one in-school workshop we had last year, I’ve not felt like there was something that was whole school that we were required to participate in that was with the intent of preparing us to deliver an advisory or pastoral care program. Everything I have done has been my choice, not school directed.

P1 also noted that his work as a grade level coordinator for Grade 12 meant that he was responsible for providing some of the social and emotional learning curriculum teachers use with students. He shared: “In the last two or three years I have spent many thousands of dollars on different pastoral leadership courses because of my role.”

However, the experiences of participants using their professional development funds for social and emotional learning was more frequently contrasted by participants who chose not use their professional development money for social and emotional learning training. Participants who did not seek additional opportunities to strengthen their ability to teach social and emotional

learning cited a lack of interest to do so as well as feelings of general discomfort in teaching social and emotional learning to students. P3 perceived teaching social and emotional learning to students as incidental or tangential to his work as a science teacher. He added, “In terms of workshops that I use my professional development money for, I have never gone to one like that, mainly because it’s not one of my things that I focus on.” P12 also noted that she had not spent her professional development money to improve her practice as a social and emotional teacher: “I’ve chosen to use my professional development in other ways, to improve my subject teaching, as opposed to social emotional because that’s never been one of my areas, it’s never been one of my jobs.”

More broadly, some participants explained they struggled not only with the school’s approach to professional development around social and emotional learning, but with the school’s expectation that every teacher deliver social and emotional learning curriculum to students. Although P11 acknowledged some of her colleagues take additional social and emotional courses, she had not used her previous money to take additional social and emotional training. She noted an authentic, deeply embedded culture of social and emotional learning across the entire school would mean teachers would not need to seek outside opportunities: “The social emotional program feels a little apart sometimes. It feels that, as a teacher, I have to go and find it or sometimes it feels a little bit artificial.” P6 applauded the school for committing to social and emotional training on professional development days but also admitted, “I must say, I don’t always feel comfortable with all the things that they ask us to do.” P9 echoed the comments of P6 regarding the discomfort she feels about teaching social and emotional curriculum:

I feel that I am not really adequate to do this, partly because maybe of my culture. Some

of the things that we are supposed to, the issues we are supposed to talk about in advisory, I don't feel comfortable with.

Disparity between the confidence to teach academic curriculum and social and emotional learning curriculum. Participant data from the interviews revealed a disparity between the confidence teachers had in their ability to deliver IB diploma curriculum to IB diploma students and their ability to deliver social and emotional learning curriculum to IB diploma students. When asked to describe their level of confidence with respect to teaching academic curriculum to IB diploma students, 15 out of 16 participants said they were confident or very confident. However, when asked to describe their level of confidence with respect to teaching social and emotional learning curriculum to IB diploma students, only three out of 16 participants said they were pretty confident and seven participants said they had very low or no confidence. Considering the theory of reasoned action as the theoretical framework for this study, there is the potential for a negative effect on students if IB diploma teachers have low levels of confidence in their ability to teach social and emotional learning curriculum.

Participants who were confident or very confident in their ability to teach their specific IB academic curriculum subject area often cited experience, training and positive examination feedback as reasons for their confidence. P1 was the only participant who said he lacked confidence to deliver the academic curriculum for the IB diploma because of the amount of content he needed to cover: "I feel like I have to skim the surface of my subject. I feel like there's a real time crunch as an IB diploma teacher to meet the syllabus." However, P1's comments were an outlier compared to those of his colleagues. P5 also discussed the pressure to cover the extensive curriculum for an IB diploma class, but explained:

I feel confident about being able to balance those task and process goals within the

course, but it's taken a number of years. I think I'm learning how to balance the pacing of the course and be able to prune what might be in the syllabus.

With 12 out of 16 participants having at least 11 years of experience as an IB diploma teacher, it was common to hear familiarity with the IB Diploma Programme as the reason why participants felt confident covering the academic curriculum for an IB diploma class. P2 shared, "I feel very familiar with all the curriculum, with all of the processes of the IB, and so I'd say highly confident." P3 similarly said, "I'm 100% confident in my ability to teach students everything that is on the IB curriculum." P12 noted her 15 years of IB diploma experience and confidently asserted, "Awesome, off the charts. Blindfold me, stand me there – definitely. Standing on my head, with my eyes closed backwards, I know that [curriculum]." P15 even implied an expectation that all teachers at the school should feel confident: "I would hope we all feel very confident teaching academics to the IB diploma students. I've been doing it for 15 years."

Besides experience, participants cited other reasons for feeling high-levels of confidence in delivering IB diploma curriculum. P6 referenced his enthusiasm for teaching as an important factor: "I'm very confident because I'm so passionate about it. I've been doing it for 22 years and as a teacher that's proud of my profession, I'm confident delivering the academic material because I love doing it." P10 shared positive examination results from students in the past as a reason why he was confident in his abilities: "My confidence level is very high because of the track record of how students do and the progress they make, so I feel pretty confident about the subject area I teach." P11 also cited her colleagues as a big factor for her confidence:

I am in an excellent department that really works collaboratively and so we rely on each other a lot and I've learned a lot from my colleagues. I feel confident in my own knowledge and understanding of the program, what's expected and how to help students

achieve their best within that sort of context.

P16 considered a combination of a number of factors in his response: “I feel very confident. I have a decade of experience, I’ve been on multiple workshops, I have good feedback in my main subject area.”

On the other hand, the confidence participants felt about teaching academic curriculum to IB diploma students was rarely echoed when they were asked to comment on their confidence teaching social and emotional learning curriculum to IB diploma students. Comments by three participants suggested they had enough previous experiences teaching social and emotional learning or were open to learning and optimistic about their progress in this area to feel a degree of comfort. P11 described herself as mediocre or satisfactory as a teacher of social and emotional learning:

My level of confidence is less than I feel as an academic teacher, but I don’t know that would ever change. I think it’s so individual and the groups change every year and the circumstances change every year, and so I think it would be something that’s quite fluid, some years feeling better than others.

P16 felt confident in terms of being open and honest in his social and emotional work with students, but also explained:

I’m still learning because of the nature of the issues. I don’t always have my own real-life experience to draw upon. I might not necessarily feel versed in the subject, it might be sensitive, I might find some of the things uncomfortable, so that would affect my confidence.

P16's comments were contrasted by P10, who discussed how he has gained confidence as a social and emotional teacher because he has worked with the same group of students for four years:

I feel like I have good relationships with them and we can pretty much talk about whatever they need to talk about. I feel confident that I know ways to try and give them strategies or to send them into the right direction for more help if they need it.

At the same time, P10 noted that he did not feel his current level of confidence four years and questioned why he was being asked to teach social and emotional learning:

At first, I was quite concerned that I didn't have the knowledge, training, skills, etc. to present the material or to deal with students that may approach me about their social and emotional learning needs. And I was wondering why my role needed to become more counselor-oriented.

For half of the participants, there was not only a lack of confidence in their ability to teach social and emotional learning to IB diploma students, but a broader concern that their inability to deliver the curriculum or support students in this manner could have serious implications on the social and emotional health of students. P6 was troubled by the question:

My confidence is less than my confidence with the academics, because I think the consequences of those things are far-reaching and I don't want to make a mistake with that. I think social emotional learning is more important and if you're giving the wrong advice, that could have a domino effect on a lot of different things.

Compared to his work as a math teacher, P2 said, "I do not feel nearly as confident at social emotional simply because I don't have as much training in it, we haven't talked about it much

specifically.” A lack of training was also conveyed by P14 as to why she was not confident in delivering social and emotional learning curriculum:

I guess the fact that I don't really understand it would probably indicate, somewhat, my level of comfort. I feel like I have things that I would do just because of who I am, but I don't feel like I have any sort of qualification or training or any scientifically backed research that would support any of those behaviors.

With students in the school having over 55 different nationalities, another factor shared as an inhibitor to feeling confident to teach social and emotional learning to IB diploma students was a perceived inability to meet the vast spectrum of needs of international school students. P4 was not confident with respect to her abilities as a social and emotional learning teacher:

I think I definitely need more support and more understanding of where kids are at, especially these very diverse students. You can't possibly know every kid from every culture and what they might be dealing with. So, I think we definitely need more help with that.

P12 was even more anxious about her capacity to provide social and emotional skills:

It concerns me that I might say something that could really, really upset some kid and that - especially in international schools where we have kids from a wide range of backgrounds - that I will say something offensive without meaning to that's against their parent's moral code and their own moral code.

P3 offered a 20% confidence level as a social and emotional teacher in trying to meet the needs of all of his students. He offered a final point that also highlighted why the theory of reasoned action can be applied to this study:

I have very low levels of competence because I've never done it and that's really not my

personality. I'm very much not a touchy-feely person and I know that if you don't have a 100% buy-in to the value of a particular curriculum, you're not going to do a very good job teaching it.

Lack of clarity and consistency in delivering social and emotional learning

curriculum. Five interview questions focused on the perceptions of participants regarding their school's overall social and emotional learning intervention program. Responses fell into two broad categories, support for students outside of academic classes and support for students within academic classes. Referencing support outside of academic classes, participants often referenced the school's advisory program, led by the grade level coordinators. Within academic classes, responses on embedding social and emotional curriculum into the IB academic curriculum varied depending on the academic subject area of the IB diploma teacher. Comments from participants also indicated that more strategic direction from the school would strengthen the overall social and emotional learning program in the future.

Participants were asked to describe their experiences teaching social and emotional learning curriculum to IB diploma students in the school for this study. They were also prompted to talk about the resources they used and the content they delivered to meet the students' social and emotional learning needs. Many participants cited the role of the grade level coordinators in helping teachers with resources and curriculum for teaching social and emotional learning in weekly advisory classes. There are four grade level coordinators in the high school, one each for Grades 9–12, who receive a stipend to plan curriculum, activities, etc. for the weekly advisory program. The four leaders work with the staff to create themes for the individual social and emotional learning needs at each grade level.

Comments regarding the work of the grade level coordinators in helping the overall social and emotional learning program at the school were generally positive. P6 discussed the important role of the grade level coordinators in providing clear direction: “The grade level coordinators are in charge of building the advisory program, based on different themes. Grade 11 is identity. Grade 12 is preparing for life after university. They build the curriculum, so I use that as a resource.” P10 referenced the helpful information from the grade level coordinators, although he questioned if the content met the actual needs of students: “All content is provided in our meetings that we have early in the week. Most of the material is information that provides students with knowledge about what the school believes are their needs.” P16 also noted the resources from the grade level coordinators spur good discussions and conversations, but like P10, he was concerned that the curriculum might be ineffective because it is too broad: “There are generic needs being met, if you agree with what has been identified. Individual needs, I think, are far harder to pin down and not always predictable.” P12 also talked positively about the general topics for discussion coming from the grade level coordinator, but she did not concur with the views on shared resources:

Activities or specific resources don’t tend to be provided here, in my experience. In some schools I’ve worked in, it’s been, ‘Here is the lesson, just deliver it.’ But that’s not been my experience here, my experience has been, ‘This is the theme go at it, discuss it, do what you need to do.’

With respect to addressing social and emotional learning within the academic environment of an IB diploma class, there were divergent views on whether social and emotional curriculum could be embedded into the academic curriculum. Participants shared the perception that academic subject areas that offered more opportunities for students to have discussions, such

as languages and the arts, were environments where it was possible to embed social and emotional learning competencies within the academic curriculum. Conversely, subject areas that had more academic content to cover and less time for discussions, such as math and science, were perceived to be more difficult to embed social and emotional learning within the academic curriculum. Many participants noted that there were no expectations or guidelines from the IB Diploma Programme to address social and emotional learning issues within the curriculum for any academic courses in the IB Diploma Programme.

Without direction from the IB Diploma Programme, it was up to the discretion of IB diploma teachers to introduce social and emotional learning curriculum into any class. P14 made the decision to address social and emotional issues in her classes:

Luckily, I have some quite small classes, so I can have individual conversations. I know where they're at, what's going on in their world so that I can help with it. That's not, I wouldn't say, curriculum, however it does allow me to sort of help them.

More participants, though, said they addressed social and emotional learning competencies because those competencies complemented or dovetailed with the academic curriculum they were already teaching, even if the connection was only tangential. As an English teacher, P8 discussed incorporating social emotional curriculum in the IB Language and Literature course but also noted that incorporating social and emotional curriculum depended on teacher preference: "We have a lot of freedom in the texts that we teach in the IB course, so I think that's something that we consciously try to embed in our curriculum, but again that's not provided by IB specifically." P9 was outspoken that the only authentic way to teach social and emotional learning curriculum was to naturally blend it into her Spanish classes: "With the IB diploma curriculum, there are so many opportunities to discuss the social emotional curriculum, it is

embedded in my classes and I think it is more effective, it is more natural.” P7 offered a pragmatic assessment of how social and emotional learning fit into her IB dance classes:

I create learning opportunities and activities that hopefully develop social emotional learning skills, just through the classroom environment, but it’s not something that is explicitly part of the assessed curriculum. It’s not really the focus of our curricular delivery in the IB course, more like a tacit kind of experiential continuum that you want to embed throughout the learning opportunities and the learning experiences.

Given the subjective nature of embedding social and emotional learning curriculum in an IB diploma course, there were also a number of participants who either informally addressed or chose not to address social and emotional learning in their classes. Even though P11 is an English teacher where there was a perception that social and emotional learning could more easily be taught, she disagreed on being able to address social and emotional learning given the extensive IB English course syllabus she needed to cover with students: “I feel I don’t do a lot of that [social and emotional learning] in my classroom. We have limited time with the students, we have a lot of curriculum to get through.” P3 commented on supporting students in informal ways in class, but he was clear:

My primary goal is to teach them to think scientifically, to learn to be scientists, so any issues that I see with social and emotional issues within the students or within my relationship with the students, is dealt with on an individual basis.

P13 has the dual role of being a science teacher and a grade level coordinator with past training in social and emotional learning strategies. Not surprisingly, she talked about taking a blended approach to teaching academic curriculum and social and emotional curriculum in more recent years:

Some of the science skills I'm trying to embed by forcing the curriculum within a social emotional context. This is the first time that I've actually taken the social-emotional part and made that the kind of ground work and found a way to tie the science curriculum into that. But most of the social emotional teaching I do is on the spot with whatever is coming up with those kids.

However, the measured response from P2, a math teacher, was more typical of other math and science teachers:

Any social emotional things that I'm doing are essentially informal where I'm talking to kids, seeing what's going on, trying to figure out if they're super, super stressed or things like that. But it's not a case where we've got a type of curriculum that we're trying to get the students to understand and specifically doing that for our IB diploma classes, that is not something that I've done.

Strategic plans for the social and emotional learning program need to be clarified. Comments from participants about the overall perception of the school's social and emotional learning program were slightly more positive than negative. However, participants often discussed the need for the school leadership team to clarify the strategic direction of the program in several different areas. A lack of a clearly defined vision and rationale for the school's social emotional learning were perceived as areas that needed to be addressed. Participants also emphasized the importance of getting the entire school community to actively support and participate in the social and emotional learning program across all three school divisions. Lastly, teachers discussed the need for the school leadership team to create a schedule that better accommodated social and emotional learning.

When asked about their perceptions of the school's overall social and emotional learning program, six participants gave positive comments about the improvement and growth of the program in the past few years. P5 focused on the ongoing work that has been done to build the social and emotional culture through the school's advisory program: "I think it's a work-in-progress. I think we've got, in practice, social emotional learning as a foundation to the way we think and do things." P6 similarly noted the social and emotional program is improving: "I'm happy we have it because it was such a gaping hole for such a long time, so I'm glad it's started. There's great will, you know, and good intent and everyone is trying their best." P10 also complemented the will of the staff to move social and emotional learning forward, commenting:

I think we're trying really hard. There's a lot of time and effort spent by the people that are planning the curriculum and presenting it. I think, for the most part, students have accepted it as being a part of their regular learning school day, and they understand the purpose of this is to have adults there for them, if they need them.

P14 discussed the growth of the program to the point that it is "being acknowledged as, if not the most important area of schooling, then certainly very important. And as a result, I feel like it's beginning to get some traction." P7 talked about ongoing "speed bumps" and the need for "making tweaks" to the social and emotional learning curriculum, but estimated the school is only two or three years away from a school-wide acceptance of the program. "I don't think we're there yet, but I think it's close," she shared, "I think it's still a work in progress, but it's kind of like on its maybe third or fourth draft, out of seven or eight drafts."

Other participants also recognized the effort being made to develop the school's social and emotional learning program, but cited various reasons as to why their overall assessment was less positive compared to some of their peers. P16 noted the genuine attempt of the school to

grow the program, but his overall perception was “Poor. I think it’s been largely ignored, I think it’s under-developed.” P2 believed that the structure of the program is right, but questioned the effectiveness of the program’s objectives and curriculum: “I don’t see us being as intentional right now as we were three years ago I’m not sure if we’re still doing the stuff that we said we wanted to do when we first implemented this.” Other participants were more direct with their dissatisfaction. P12 said, “I don’t think we do a very good job. I feel like the perception of the students is that advisory is a thing that has to be done and we just have to get through it for half an hour.” P1 was also critical in his evaluation:

The program, I believe, is not good enough for a school that charges this much money and has these many professionals wanting to do a good job for their students. As somebody in the school that runs our pastoral team meeting for Grade 12, I find myself apologizing for it not being as good as what I would like.

P13 summed up what she perceived as both the strengths and areas for growth regarding the social and emotional learning program: “I think our school definitely prioritizes it, we want it to be important, but right now, there’s still a disconnect between the actual execution of that and our statement that we think it’s important.”

The prioritization of social and emotional learning and the supporting statements that go with it were largely perceived as an area that the school’s administration needed to take more deliberate steps to lead. When asked what specific factors impact the most effective way to develop a social and emotional learning program, school leadership was commonly cited as a factor that needed to be addressed. P4 discussed leadership not prioritizing the time for social and emotional learning as one reason impacting the effectiveness of the program: “Leadership doesn’t have time. I’d say the will is definitely 100% present. The time to commit to it is not

available and that makes it difficult to create a really strong program.” P14 also referenced the prioritization of time: “The leadership team has to buy-in and value it and prioritize it and make time for it and pay for it.” P16 addressed the role of leadership in giving people clear direction: “I place importance upon leadership and how a vision can help a group of teachers really trying to achieve a common goal, opportunities to reflect, and adapt or change as a result of that reflection.”

Participants also frequently referenced the need to have a clear rationale explaining a specific commitment to social and emotional learning in the school’s mission and vision statement as a way to strengthen the school’s overall social and emotional learning program. P4 perceived the overall social and emotional program as not very strong because “we haven’t fully identified where we’re going and what our purposes are.” She emphasized the need to ask the right questions: “We very rarely start our conversations with, ‘What do we believe? Why are we doing this?’ I think if we start a conversation there, then that’s going to help us develop an effective program.” P7 discussed some of the positive steps the school has made to ensure stakeholders were using similar language when they addressed social and emotional learning:

I think they’re creating common wording, now encompassing a lot more of the vocabulary that we want to try to imbed within our social emotional learning curriculum, but it takes time. There’s an awareness of that, trying to make everybody part of the same team.”

P6 also reflected on rationale and mission when recommending how the school could improve:

The first thing the school needs to do is have a purpose or reason why they’re doing it that is articulated to the teachers that deliver it and in the mission statement. I don’t believe

that you're going to get buy-in for anything unless people know why they're doing it.

The "buy-in" idiom was used by many participants as a key factor in moving the social and emotional learning program forward. For P16, buy-in meant "effectively winning over your staff and training them up" so they actively participate in the social and emotional learning program. However, comments regarding the need for buy-in by other participants often focused on the entire school community, not just the staff. Because families in the school come from over 55 nations, P1 noted buy-in from parents as a significant factor for the success of the program: "Certain groups of people value sensitivities and vulnerabilities more than others. It needs, I think, the buy-in from your whole school community. It needs the buy-in from the very top of administration in the school to prioritize that." P16 echoed the comments of P1 regarding the buy-in from the parent community as to why the school is investing time and resources into social and emotional learning: "More communication with key stakeholders is needed. Parents, in our data, appear to be unconvinced by the usefulness of advisory, so making the aims more widely known or shared is important." P9 also mentioned the need to educate parents on social and emotional learning so students are supported at an early age both at school and at home: "I think that's something that you start since the kids are little. Also, I think you can't do that alone. It is hard when at home the parents or the family doesn't do anything about social and emotional learning."

Other participants echoed the comments from P9 on the active participation of parents and educating students from a young age as essential for developing an effective school-wide social and emotional learning program. P15 was clear that social and emotional learning should not begin in a school setting:

It all starts at home, so this is something that not only the students need to be trained in

but the teachers need to be trained in, the parents need to be trained. You need to have all the stakeholders involved with this and it needs to start early, I'm talking pre-kindergarten.

P14 similarly said, "I think it needs to start early by having kids talk about feelings and expressing all those sorts of things, being comfortable being uncomfortable and understanding that's normal, and sort of developing that as you progress through the school." P13 also noted the importance of a whole-school approach to social and emotional learning, but identified getting buy-in from parents of older students as the key factor:

I think our elementary program is amazing at developing social emotional learning. And I know in our middle school program, we have more of it. And then it just seems to putter out. I think what our school struggles with is having parents believe that it's important in high school.

For ten participants in the study, a lack of time in the high school schedule for social and emotional learning was perceived as a significant factor impacting the school's ability to have an effective social and emotional learning program. Given the huge time commitment needed for the academic curriculum in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, scheduling time for social and emotional learning is a challenge for the school leadership team.

Nevertheless, participants felt that time had to be prioritized if social and emotional learning was an important strategic plan for the school. The current approach of one 30-minute lesson for social and emotional learning in advisory class each week was perceived as not enough to help IB diploma students. P11 felt that the advisory program lacked authenticity because it was just "tacked on" and "ticking a box" in its current form. P16 also noted that the minimal amount of time given to the advisory program resulted in students not seeing the value in it:

I think our kids need regular contact for them to just psychologically realize that this is an important thing. Once a week feels a bit of an afterthought, a bit of a squeeze in, so scheduling, for me, that's at the heart of many issues.

P13 similarly reflected on the need for more time to build an effective program: "You can't teach social and emotional stuff or at least help develop those skills in a 30-minute, one time a week session. That is not enough time to develop those things." P4 also added in time in the schedule for teachers to work on lessons as important to strengthening the social and emotional learning program:

There's not much space in our schedule to actually fit in the time for a social emotional program. And then there's also not much time for teachers to meet and talk about it and create it. The time to commit to it is not available and that makes it really difficult to create a really strong program.

Chapter 4 Summary

In Chapter 4, the data from interviews with 16 IB diploma teachers from one international school in Southeast Asia were presented and analyzed. The use of a phenomenological design allowed for an examination of the shared perceptions of those IB diploma teachers with respect to the social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students. The research design for this study was standardized open-ended interviews, comprised of highly structured questions to encourage subjects to provide rich details of their experiences.

Applying Ajzen and Fishbein's (1975) Theory of Reasoned as the theoretical framework for this study, three research questions focused on the perceptions of IB diploma teachers to support students on a social and emotional level, their ability to teach social and emotional leaning curriculum to IB diploma students, and their school's overall social and emotional

learning intervention program. In analyzing the data from participants to the 18 interview questions, six broad themes were identified and given descriptive names directly related to the three research questions designed for this study. Based on the initial and secondary coding process, the six themes were: the benefits of teaching social and emotional learning to IB diploma students, a lack of preservice training for IB diploma teachers, more on-going professional development for social and emotional learning, the disparity between the confidence to teach academic curriculum and the lack of confidence to teach social and emotional curriculum, curriculum challenges teaching social and emotional learning to IB diploma students, and further clarity on the school-wide strategic plans regarding social and emotional learning.

Overall, participants agreed that IB diploma students have different social and emotional learning needs compared to their classmates who are not in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. Participants also believed that IB diploma students would have more healthy, balanced lifestyles if they had consistent access to an effective school-based social and emotional learning program. Although participants overwhelmingly expressed a high level of confidence teaching IB academic curriculum in their specific subject area, the majority of participants commented on their need for more training to feel adequately capable of teaching social and emotional learning curriculum to IB diploma students. A prevalent reason why participants felt they needed more social and emotional training was due to their university teacher preparation programs inadequately providing them the necessary skills to effectively teach social and emotional learning.

This chapter provided a description of the sample, followed by the research methodology, data analysis, and then a summary of the findings. This chapter also presented the data, the

results based on the data, and a gave a summary of the key findings. Chapter 5 further discusses the results, including limitations, implications, and recommendations for further research based on the results.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

Previous literature indicated high school students faced greater challenges accessing effective social and emotional learning intervention programs than students in elementary schools and middle schools. (Bridgeland et al., 2013; Dymnicki et al., 2013; Suldo et al., 2009). The purpose of this phenomenological study was to investigate effective approaches to support the unique social and emotional learning needs of a particular group of high school students,

Grade 11 and 12 students in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. While other studies have focused on the social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students, this study was significant to the growing body of literature on social emotional learning because it focused specifically on the perceptions of 16 IB diploma teachers from one international school in Southeast Asia.

Ajzen and Fishbein's (1975) theory of reasoned action provided the framework for coding participants' comments based on their perceptions supporting IB diploma students on a social and emotional level, their ability to teach social and emotional learning curriculum to IB diploma students, and their school's overall social and emotional learning intervention program. Overall, this study found that the participants perceived IB diploma students have unique needs that need to be supported through strategic school-based social and emotional learning program. At the same time, participants expressed concern that they lacked the teaching skills and professional development time necessary to provide IB diploma students with the social and emotional support they need.

Chapter 5 begins with a brief summary of the results of this study followed by a more comprehensive discussion of those results, including a discussion of the results as they relate to the literature review from Chapter 2. The limitations associated with this phenomenological study precede a section on the implications of the results for practice, policy and theory. The chapter concludes with recommendations for further research as related to the field of social and emotional learning.

Summary of the Results

In this phenomenological study, a purposeful sampling method was utilized to interview 16 participants from one international school in Southeast Asia on their perceptions of social and

emotional with respect to the needs of IB diploma students. The participants came from seven different countries and were delimited to having valid teaching licenses and at least three years of experience teaching an IB diploma course. A retrospective data collection method was utilized for this study, allowing participants to revisit previous events days, weeks, months or years after the lived experiences (Longhofer, Floersch, & Hoy, 2012). Interview questions were designed to answer the following three research questions regarding social and emotional learning:

RQ1. How do IB diploma teachers perceive school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs for IB diploma students?

RQ2. How do IB diploma teachers perceive their ability to effectively teach social and emotional learning competencies to IB diploma students?

RQ3: How do IB diploma teachers perceive their school's overall social and emotional learning intervention program?

Chapter 2 examined previous studies and found that IB diploma students often struggled to manage not only demanding academic expectations, but also the complex social and emotional challenges of being in Grade 11 and 12 (Shaunessy-Dedrick et al., 2014; Suldo & Shaunessy-Dedrick, 2013). Schools often asked untrained teachers to teach IB diploma students social and emotional skills or failed to provide systemic opportunities for students to gain social and emotional learning skills (Bouffard, 2018; Jones & Bouffard, 2012; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017; Sklad et al., 2012). Other studies concluded that the stressful demands for IB diploma students were further exasperated when students were not supported with appropriate coping skills through school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs (Shaunessy & Suldo, 2010; Suldo & Shaunessy-Dedrick, 2013a; Suldo & Shaunessy-Dedrick, 2013b; Suldo et al., 2008).

More recent studies published since this present study was completed indicate ongoing concerns about inadequate social and emotional support programs for students in accelerated academic courses. O'Brennan et al. (2019) evaluated individual coaching programs that support the social and emotional challenges of students taking demanding International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Their interviews with students and coaches concluded that there were "no selective interventions aimed specifically at AP/IB students that address their unique curricular and social-emotional needs." Suldo et al. (2018) suggested that the social and emotional needs of AP and IB students can be overlooked when students appear healthy and they are academically achieving at a high level. They recommended that schools can only be assured that high achieving students were getting the specialized social and emotional support they needed through comprehensive, ongoing programs that were mandatory for all students.

In this present study, researching the experiences of the participants through purposeful sampling provided rich data and themes about the phenomenon under investigation. After the initial and secondary coding process, the researcher segmented the data into patterns which revealed six themes. Analysis of the data showed that participants had inadequate or no training to teach social and emotional learning curriculum prior to entering the teaching profession. Moreover, participants expressed only minimal or limited professional development support to adequately teach social and emotional learning curriculum once they entered the teaching profession. Participants also acknowledged that the social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students were unique compared with similar students who were not in the IB Diploma Programme.

Participants further shared that IB diploma students would benefit from direct instruction regarding social and emotional learning competencies through an effective school-based social

and emotional learning program. Lastly, while 15 out of 16 participants expressed a high level of confidence teaching IB academic curriculum in their specific subject area, only three participants expressed a high level of confidence to teach social and emotional learning curriculum and seven participants said they had very low or no confidence. Applying Ajzen and Fishbein's (1975) theory of reasoned action as the theoretical framework for this study, there is the potential for a negative effect on students when IB diploma teachers have low levels of confidence in their ability to teach social and emotional learning curriculum.

Discussion of the Results

Interview questions were strategically crafted to encourage thoughtful, honest reflection on the part of participants with the goal of identifying patterns or themes that would come from their responses. All participants demonstrated clear knowledge and competency working with IB diploma students, teaching within the IB Diploma Programme, and understanding the strengths and areas for improvement regarding their school's social and emotional learning program. The interview conversations yielded six broad themes on the benefits for students, preservice training for teachers, on-going professional development for teachers, pedagogy, curriculum, and school-wide strategic plans. Those six themes were each connected to one of the three research questions for this study.

Benefits of social and emotional learning for IB diploma students. The first research question for this study sought the perceptions of participants relative to school-based social and emotional learning programs for IB diploma students. Data from 12 out of 16 of participants revealed a clear belief that IB diploma students needed social and emotional learning support and benefitted from an effective school-based social and emotional learning program. For three participants, including P1, all teenagers faced similar life challenges as they approached high

school graduation: “A high school student is a high school student, it doesn’t matter what his course of study is. He or she faces challenges particular to his or her own interests and skills.” However, 13 out of 16 participants disagreed and explained specific differences existed between the social and emotional needs of IB diploma students and their peers who were not IB Diploma students.

Unique challenges for IB diploma students included heavier academic workloads in IB diploma classes, more pressure to get good grades, and higher expectations to be accepted into prestigious universities. Specific academic areas where participants in this study perceived students would benefit from social and emotional learning included self-management, time management, and prioritizing tasks as well as alleviating stress which was specifically mentioned by 10 participants. Comments from P13 reflected those of others:

For non-IB students, it’s not to say that they also don’t feel stress, but when you have a program that has a required number of courses, and a handful of those are required at a very advanced level, it ups that level of stress astronomically.

Beyond academics, there were important points made from participants on how IB diploma students would personally benefit with better sleep patterns, eating habits and exercise routines through regular access to an effective social and emotional learning program. The school’s weekly advisory program was rightly cited as an asset to ensure there is consistent time in the schedule to access social and emotional learning support for students. At the same time, concerns about the school’s schedule, which allotted only one 30-minute advisory lesson a week to address a vast array of academic and personal needs, seemed warranted. Overall, data for this study suggested that IB diploma students clearly had unique social and emotional learning needs

and more should be done to effectively support those students to ensure their needs were addressed.

Lack of preservice training for IB diploma teachers. The second research question for this study focused on the perceptions of participants with regard to their ability to effectively teach social and emotional learning competencies to IB diploma students. Participants had the opportunity to discuss previous training, ongoing professional development, and the most effective approaches to teaching social and emotional learning. Given prior research on the lack of preservice social and emotional training for teachers, it was not surprising that 13 out of 16 participants in this study revealed their university teacher preparation programs inadequately prepared them to teach social and emotional learning curriculum prior to becoming full-time teachers. For half of the participants, they had no formal preservice training. Other participants referenced a university course that superficially addressed social and emotional learning, although the focus of those lessons was more commonly aimed at teachers teaching elementary school or middle school. Collectively, participant comments on their lack of training prior to entering the teaching profession were concerning but expected.

That data also revealed that over half of the participants in this study had taught an IB diploma class for at least 15 IB years, therefore their teaching preparation programs were sometimes 20 or 30 years ago. Participants in this category often shared comments similar to P6:

I went to university from 1989 to 1993 and I don't remember too much about social emotional learning. I remember having a lot of discussions about how classroom discipline seemed to be important and how to calm people, but not the social emotional aspect.

In this regard, the findings from highly experienced participants, who were decades removed from their preservice training programs, was problematic if they also admitted they had only limited social and emotional training since becoming full-time teachers. Given the unique social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students, the data from participants indicated that more training was needed at the university level to adequately prepare teachers to address the social and emotional learning needs of students before they entered the teaching profession.

Ongoing professional development for social and emotional learning. With respect to professional development for social and emotional learning after becoming full-time teachers, 11 out of 16 participants believed they needed more training to feel adequately capable of teaching social and emotional learning curriculum to meet the specific needs of IB diploma students. Although participants frequently applauded the recent focus of the school to strengthen the social and emotional learning capabilities of the staff through targeted professional development opportunities on campus, there were a range of views on the effectiveness of those opportunities. Comments were typical of those offered by P8:

We need more commitment in terms of professional development. I think we are working towards that and we've made great strides, but I think it can always be improved, especially as its integrated in the high school and the IB Diploma Programme.

P4's comments further reflected concerns about staff perceptions towards teaching social and emotional learning curriculum:

I think a lot of people have shifted from some outright hostility at teaching social and emotional learning to tolerance, but people are still very cautious. I think they feel really uncomfortable with it and I think that's due to the lack of training.

A key difference in the need for professional development occurred between participants who were in leadership positions for social and emotional learning, such as the grade level coordinators, and those who were not. Participants who sought additional professional development training off campus were typically individuals who led the social and emotional learning curriculum in the school's advisory program and were strong believers in the need to support students through an effective social and emotional learning program. P1, one of the four grade level coordinators, noted that he had spent many hours in the last few years on social and emotional professional development, but also acknowledged, "I think I'm atypical of other teachers in this school because I am meant to be one of the people who delivers training on such things." As expected, participants more frequently stated they did not seek professional development for social and emotional learning beyond what was mandated of them on campus. These last two data points suggested that the opportunities the school provided for teachers, both on and off campus, helped increase the collective teaching efficacy of social and emotional learning but that the pace of growth was incremental.

Differences between academic curriculum and social and emotional curriculum.

There were marked differences between the confidence that teachers had to deliver academic curriculum and the confidence to deliver social and emotional learning curriculum. With so many highly trained and experienced IB diploma teachers in this study, it was anticipated that a large number of responses would indicate a high degree of confidence teaching IB academic curriculum; the data revealed this was true for 15 out of 16 individuals. However, when given a similar question on teaching confidence but in relation to teaching social and emotional learning, it was surprising that so few individuals - only three participants - felt a high degree of confidence in their ability to effectively teach social and emotional curriculum. The disparity in

confidence implied a different set of teaching skills and knowledge was needed to teach social and emotional learning compared to teaching academic curriculum to IB diploma students. For P5, though, it was not possible to find success as an academic teacher without also supporting students on a social and emotional level:

When I first taught the IB diploma, I was a new teacher and I was just developing my own confidence in a new profession, but I cannot see how you teach anything without some kind of emphasis on social emotional learning and social emotional needs.

Although P5's comments implied that IB diploma teachers needed to equally address the academic as well as social and emotional needs of students to be truly effective as a teacher, the data from other participants rarely supported this assertion.

Curriculum challenges teaching social and emotional learning. The final research question for this study focused on the perceptions of participants in terms of developing, accessing and implementing curriculum for social and emotional learning. Participants often shared an appreciation for the effort made by program leaders to provide the necessary information, resources and lesson plans for weekly advisory classes, but they also frequently questioned the degree to which the curriculum was developed enough to meet the practical social and emotional learning needs of the diverse body of students. Moreover, the disparity on whether or not IB diploma teachers could integrate and embed social and emotional learning competencies within the context of their own IB diploma classes was unexpected. An unforeseen dividing line appeared between language and arts classes, where it was perceived more time was available to discuss issues like social and emotional learning, and math and science classes, where there was perceived less time available for discussions due to the breadth of academic curriculum mandated by the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme for those particular

disciplines. At the same time, all participants commented on a lack of direction regarding social and emotional learning because there are no social and emotional learning requirements mandated by the IB Diploma Programme for any IB course. P6 discussed the negative ramifications of this missed opportunity for IB diploma students: “I think the IB Diploma Programme has a great thing, about how you have to pursue this high academic standard, but it doesn’t always help students know how to do it.” In the end, participants were clear that the school’s overall social and emotional learning program would be improved if there were mandatory social and emotional learning standards implemented by the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme.

Clarifying school-wide strategic plans regarding social and emotional learning. Data from this study revealed broad support for the school’s recent emphasis on social and emotional learning, but it was also evident that there was a lack of clear direction from school leaders on the short-term and long-term plans for social and emotional learning. Rather than having a single, unified program from kindergarten through Grade 12, participants saw the elementary, middle and high school social and emotional learning programs as stratified and lacking cohesion. As a result, participants believed students did not experience an effective program that taught them progressive social and emotional skills as they aged. Because the IB Diploma Programme requires schools to schedule extensive hours of academic curriculum time for each IB diploma course, it was expected that participants would state there was not enough time in the current school schedule to develop an effective school-wide social and emotional learning program. This view was affirmed by P13:

We prioritize a lot of things that are based on academics, so there is a lack of confidence and prioritization for social emotional learning, a lack of confidence on both the

administrator and teacher side, that they just don't feel comfortable implementing the program.

Without a clear rationale or statement about the strategic direction regarding social and emotional learning in the school's mission statement, it was understandable why participants targeted this as an area that needed clarification for the program to grow in the future. The data also revealed concerns toward the parent community who were perceived to be skeptical about the need to support high school students on a social and emotional level. Taken collectively, it was positive to see participants applaud the recent work of school leaders to develop the school's social and emotional learning program but the number of areas that were perceived as inadequate was troubling.

Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature

Few studies have focused on social and emotional learning and the needs of IB diploma students and even less have focused specifically on the social and emotional needs of IB diploma students in international schools. Additionally, this researcher found a lack of qualitative studies that sought the perceptions of IB diploma teachers on the social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students. Considering the time IB diploma teachers spend with IB diploma students over two years and the knowledge IB diploma teachers have regarding the stress and anxiety IB diploma students face, this study filled a gap in the literature on social and emotional learning. At the same time, this section of Chapter 5 will address some of the findings in this study that relate and build on aspects of the literature previously completed by researchers in the social and emotional learning community.

The first research question for this study focused on the perceptions of IB diploma teachers toward social and emotional learning intervention programs for IB diploma students.

The data from participants in this study that concluded IB diploma students need support and benefit from learning social and emotional strategies was in line with earlier studies that argued social and emotional learning skills were teachable and helped students from all backgrounds (Bridgeland et al., 2013; DePaoli et al., 2017). Conclusions from participants that IB diploma students had demanding personal and academic challenges different from their peers not in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme also echoed previous studies that found IB diploma students faced excessive and unmanageable academic expectations that often led to elevated levels of stress (Shaunessy and Suldo, 2010; Suldo and Shaunessy-Dedrick, 2013a; Suldo & Shaunessy-Dedrick, 2013b; Suldo et al., 2008). Additionally, the social and emotional benefits for IB diploma students identified by participants in this study were similar to previous meta-analysis studies that cited short-term and long-term benefits students experienced through effective social and emotional intervention programs in schools (Klapp et al., 2017; Sklad et al., 2012; Taylor et al., 2017).

Six interview questions were based on the second research question which addressed the perceptions of IB diploma teachers with regard to their ability to teach social and emotional learning strategies to IB diploma students. A prevalent theme that surfaced from these interview questions dealt with the lack of preservice social and emotional training for participants prior to becoming full-time teachers. Previous literature on the social and emotional training of teachers was limited and focused mainly on the different standards and coursework each state in the United States required as well as the need to better prioritize social and emotional learning in university training programs for the future (Bouffard, 2018; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017). These prior findings on the need for more effective preservice training to teach social and emotional learning were also frequently shared by participants in this study. Participants often admitted

having no or only minimal formal social and emotional learning training prior to entering full-time teaching. Consequently, there was a common refrain that more professional development was needed to effectively teach social and emotional learning.

However, several participants expressed concerns that the effectiveness of social and emotional professional development was less dependent on the quality of the opportunity provided by the school and more dependent on the overall attitudes of teachers towards their ability and confidence to teach social and emotional learning. These concerns were important findings when considering the theoretical framework for this study, Ajzen and Fishbein's (1975) theory of reasoned action (TRA). Utilized in previous educational studies, the TRA framework states that an individual's attitude toward performing a behavior is the biggest predictor of that behavior being performed (Bernstein and Lysniak (2015). If IB diploma teachers feel unprepared and poorly trained, there is the potential for a negative approach to teaching social and emotional learning and the growth of the school's entire program faces major challenges.

These challenges were troubling when considering the findings of Bingimlas (2009) who established that teachers had difficulty integrating technology into their curriculum when lacking competence and confidence. Participant comments on this topic were also concerning because they supported the conclusions of Schonert-Reichl (2017), who found teacher attitudes had a large influence on the effectiveness of social and emotional learning programs in schools. However, the data also suggested that there had been gradual progress in teacher attitudes towards social and emotional learning. Since 11 out of 16 participants stated they wanted more professional development to effectively teach social and emotional learning, the data implied that teacher attitudes towards teaching social and emotional learning were improving as teachers experienced more professional development opportunities.

The results additionally revealed 13 out of 16 participants felt very low to no confidence in their ability to deliver social and emotional curriculum to IB diploma students. Participants frequently cited challenges helping students on a social and emotional level because of a lack of systemic training and professional development. The reasons for diminished levels of confidence supported the results from the meta-analytic research of Taylor et al. (2017) on data from 120 different school-based social and emotional learning programs. The broader problem of systemic training cited by participants in this study connected to the third research question on the perceptions of participants toward their school's overall social and emotional learning program.

Findings in this study reinforced previous literature on the disconnect between the desire of school leaders to support social and emotional learning programs and their ability to successfully integrate those programs into schools (DePaoli, Atwell, and Bridgeland, 2017). The comments from P8 were representative of the views of many other participants:

I think the school wants to do the right thing, but we need to focus more specifically on it, in terms of what that it looks like pre-kindergarten to Grade 12. My perception is there's been more attention given to it in the elementary school and middle school, but I think, in the high school specifically, it continues to be important and implementation needs to continue all the way through Grade 12 in the IB diploma program.

The views of participants on the diminishing school-wide focus on social and emotional learning as students progress through elementary, middle and high school aligned with the research findings from Dymnicki, Sambolt, and Kidron (2013) as well as Bridgeland, Bruce, and Hariharan (2013).

Participants shared a range of reasons why their school struggled to prioritize a systemic approach to social and emotional learning that were similar to reasons cited in previous research

on social and emotional learning barriers in schools. The list of challenges in this study and prior studies included a lack of social and emotional learning training for teachers prior to entering the teaching profession, a lack of time for social and emotional learning professional development after entering the teaching profession, and a priority of academic curriculum over social and emotional learning curriculum (Bouffard, 2016; DePaoli et al., 2017; Durlak et al., 2015; Dusenbury & Weissberg, 2016; Dusenbury & Weissberg, 2017; Jones et al., 2013). However, given the international school context of this study, a challenge that was often discussed by participants that differed from prior research was the role of culture in developing an effective school-wide social and emotional learning program.

The perceptions of IB diploma teachers for this study were limited to one international school in Southeast Asia where students come from more than 55 different countries. Attempts to develop an effective social and emotional learning curriculum for all elementary, middle and high school students must account for the diverse backgrounds of students who have a range of different social customs, religious beliefs, and family traditions. This researcher found no prior studies that addressed the role of culture in developing a social and emotional learning program, an important gap in the literature considering the growing diversity of students in schools around the world. Awareness of culture, however, was commonly referenced by participants in this study, as exemplified by P3:

We are dominantly a Western school but the students are not dominantly Western. What is social and emotional health for an American might not be the same as it is for a Korean. Levels of stress that are acceptable are going to be very different. How the stress is shown and dealt with is very different. Any healthy or unhealthy issues are all going to be culturally dependent. It is tricky just because of the mix of cultures.

P13 similarly addressed the challenge of culture, in particular her perceptions on the expectations of Asian parents of high school students:

Most of the parents don't believe it is our job to do social and emotional learning, that our job is based on academic content and if we're not doing that, then we're not really doing our job. Now those same families, when their kids were in elementary school, were desperate for their children to develop some social emotional skills, but there seems to be a cut off when it is considered appropriate and important for social emotional skills to be a priority. I don't know where that cutoff is but it is certainly before high school.

Based on the concerns from participants in this study, further research is needed to understand how to best address the impact of culture when developing effective school-based social and emotional learning programs.

Limitations

This phenomenological study relied on semistructured interviews to understand the lived experiences of individuals with at least three years of teaching experience in the IB Diploma Programme. No data was gathered from watching participants interact with students or their colleagues. Additionally, students, parents, counselors and school leaders were not interviewed for this study. The study also did not obtain data from teachers without teaching licenses or teachers that had less than three years of experience working with IB diploma students. The purposeful sample for this study included participants only from Australia, Canada, Colombia, New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States. Additionally, all participants came from one international school in Southeast Asia. Replications of this study in the future could be improved if the sample population reflected a broader range of educators who

came from more diverse geographic locations and worked at different international schools around the world.

The researcher conducted 16 interviews for this qualitative study, which was in line with the recommendations of 15 to 30 interviews by other researchers (Marshall et al., 2013). Although typical of a phenomenological study, the smaller sample size delimited the overall research findings and prevented the data from being generalized to larger populations. The potential to transfer the results from this study was also limited due to the unique context of the data which came exclusively from the subjective perceptions of 16 participants and what they chose to share during interviews. The goal of the interviews was to obtain a collective perception of the phenomenon but that relied on participants being candid and honest in responses to questions. The degree to which participants were open and sincere in sharing all aspects of their experiences was a limitation regarding the data that was obtained. Despite measures taken by the researcher to ensure clear interview protocols, an additional limitation to the research was the inability to guarantee participants were not sharing information and influencing each other outside of the interviews that took place with the researcher.

The researcher for this phenomenological study worked in International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme schools for over 15 years and witnessed the unique social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students. As a result, several measures were taken to limit researcher bias so the researcher's personal views and experiences did not result in the misrepresentation or manipulation of data from participants (Creswell, 2014). Bracketing was employed while analyzing the data to ensure research findings reflected only the lived experiences of the participants as shared in their interviews. Throughout the data analysis process, the researcher also utilized reflexivity when reflecting on the interactions with

participants to avoid any unintended filtering of their responses. Lastly, member checking helped to limit researcher bias by confirming with participants that the transcribed data from interviews was accurate, complete and fully captured their views on the topics that were discussed.

Implication of the Results for Practice, Policy, and Theory

The results of this study further confirmed the findings of numerous meta-analytical studies investigating thousands of students in hundreds of schools as far back as 1970 on the range of benefits school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs provide for students (Durlak et al., 2011; Klapp et al., 2017; Sklad et al., 2012; Taylor et al., 2017; Wiggelsworth et al., 2016). Participants in this study were keenly aware of the need to support students through an integrated, school-based social and emotional learning program. At the same time, data from this study revealed that high school students received less social and emotional learning support compared to elementary and middle school students, findings that extended the conclusions from previous studies (Bridgeland et al., 2013; Dymnicki et al., 2013; Suldo et al., 2009).

This study addressed a gap in the literature on social and emotional learning by examining the specific experiences of IB diploma teachers and their work with IB diploma students. Participant data revealed the need to socially and emotionally support teenagers was particularly important for IB diploma students due to their unique social and emotional learning needs. Yet, there are no standards or documentation from the International Baccalaureate Organization requiring schools to provide IB diploma students any social and emotional learning support. Given the well-documented and highly demanding expectations for students completing the rigorous International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, it is necessary for the International Baccalaureate Organization to address this missing support network for the health

and well-being of students (Shaunessy & Suldo, 2010; Suldo et al., 2008; Suldo & Shaunessy-Dedrick, 2013).

Perceptions from participants that their preservice, teacher preparation programs inadequately prepared them to teach social and emotional learning to students also confirmed prior findings by Bouffard (2018) as well as Schonert-Reichl, Kitil, and Hanson-Peterson (2017). However, the researcher for this study was surprised to discover the extent to which the participants were unprepared to teach social and emotional learning after completing their university teacher preparation programs. Half of the participants had no formal training to teach social and emotional curriculum prior to becoming full-time teachers. Without this training, participants often felt they lacked the confidence to effectively teach social and emotional learning competencies to IB diploma students. This lack of confidence contrasted with high levels of confidence to teach academic curriculum to IB diploma students, implying that a separate set of teaching skills and knowledge was needed to effectively teach social and emotional learning.

At the same time, the researcher was concerned when some participants concluded that the effectiveness of the school's social and emotional learning program was largely dependent on the overall attitudes of teachers towards teaching social and emotional learning to students. In alignment with Ajzen and Fishbein's (1975) theory of reasoned action (TRA), which emphasized that an individual's intention to perform a behavior is the biggest predictor of that behavior being performed, these findings implied that teachers who felt they did not have the training, ability, confidence or desire to teach social and emotional learning were more likely to have an ineffective or negative approach to teaching social and emotional learning to students. Based on

these findings, the arbitrary access students might have to effective social and emotional teachers calls for expanded studies by future researchers.

With respect to parents, it was not clear from the data the extent to which participants viewed parents as supporting time for social and emotional learning at the high school level. However, participants often mentioned cultural backgrounds as a factor on whether parents did or did not support social and emotional learning for IB diploma students. If confirmed, these findings would be in contrast to previous research that concluded parents, regardless of cultural background, valued time spent on social and emotional learning for their children (Langer Research Associates, 2017). Because this study did not attempt to investigate the perceptions of parents, more research on cultural backgrounds and parent perceptions would expand conversations on how to best develop social and emotional learning programs in schools.

Participants acknowledged that more professional development was key to their ability to improve as social and emotional learning teachers and applauded their school leaders for providing a range of continuous professional development opportunities on campus. Furthermore, participants believed their school leaders were sincere in their efforts to build the overall social and emotional learning program, but the lack of strategic direction regarding short-term and long-term plans was hindering the ability of the school to move forward with a unified plan that would allow students to experience seamless and effective social and emotional learning from kindergarten through Grade 12. These findings on the disconnect between the broad support for social and emotional learning programs and the inability of school leaders to successfully integrate these programs into practice confirmed similar conclusions by DePaoli, Atwell, and Bridgeland (2017).

Recommendations for Further Research

This phenomenological study was focused on the perceptions of 16 teachers with regard to the social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students. As a result, a delimiting factor in this study was the small sample size. Expanded studies on the perceptions of IB diploma teachers are recommended to better understand how to support IB diploma teachers to teach social and emotional learning competencies to IB diploma students. More broadly, there is little research from previous studies on the perceptions of elementary, middle and high school teachers on teaching social and emotional learning. It is recommended that researchers examine a range of elementary, middle and high school teachers to further investigate the concerns teaching social and emotional learning that were raised by the IB diploma teachers in this study.

Participants in this study were outspoken with respect to the lack of social and emotional training and professional development they experienced before they entered the teaching profession and after becoming full-time teachers. Deficiencies in training and professional development are concerning if schools expect educators to teach social and emotional learning skills but teachers feel they do not have the confidence or ability to do so. It is recommended that research is expanded on the policies of universities to adequately prepare teachers to teach social and emotional learning prior to entering the teaching profession. Similarly, more research into the practices of international schools and how they provide on-going training to teachers could lead schools to review their social and emotional learning programs and ensure teachers have the latest tools to effectively teach social and emotional learning to students.

Furthermore, this study did not investigate the perceptions of IB diploma students on social and emotional learning. Lacking the benefit of previous life experiences, teenagers often struggle to navigate an array of complex social and emotional issues as they approach college. The expansion of social media in recent years has created more areas of stress for many students.

Cultural factors toward social and emotional learning can further impede students from getting the support they need. Given the additional academic challenges IB diploma students face, it is recommended that future research be extended to include the voices of IB diploma students. Their comments are important to determine the most effective approaches in schools to address their unique social and emotional learning needs.

Participants in this study were often critical of the International Baccalaureate Organization, who oversee all aspects of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, for not doing more to support the social and emotional needs of IB diploma students. Numerous studies have documented that the extreme academic rigor of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is far greater than traditional high school graduation requirements (Shaunessy & Suldo, 2010; Suldo et al., 2008; Suldo & Shaunessy-Dedrick, 2013). However, there are no curriculum expectations within the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme that specify the teaching of social and emotional learning skills to students (International Baccalaureate, 2019). This researcher concurs with the recommendations of the participants in this study that the International Baccalaureate Organization needs to conduct more research on how to support the social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students.

Lastly, the findings in this study implied that the ability of school administrators to establish and execute a clear strategic plan that reflects buy-in from the entire school community was a key factor to determine if a school's overall social and emotional learning program was effective. Because there is a lack of literature in this area, these comments regarding school leaders and their role in fostering systemic social and emotional learning success should encourage future researchers to examine this particular phenomenon further. More research is

recommended to confirm if these perceptions from participants can be extended into practice and guide other international schools in their strategic approaches to social and emotional learning.

Conclusion

This phenomenological study investigated the perceptions of IB diploma teachers toward school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs for IB diploma students, their ability to effectively teach social and emotional learning competencies to IB diploma students, and their school's overall social and emotional learning intervention program. Because of the reflective, candid, and thoughtful responses from participants, this researcher believes this study accomplished its purpose. The collective knowledge, competency and experience of the participants with regard to understanding the unique needs of IB diploma students was impressive.

Comments that could be perceived as critical of the International Baccalaureate Organization or their school with regard to supporting IB diploma students on a social and emotional level were shared in the sincere manner of a parent who cares deeply for his or her own child. Teachers spend hundreds of hours a year working with children, learning the best ways to meet not only their academic needs but their diverse social and emotional needs as well. Future studies by researchers need to account for the significant voices they bring to advance more effective policies and practices toward social and emotional learning.

This researcher worked with IB diploma students for 15 years and he concurs with many of the themes that surfaced in interviews with the participants in this study. The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is incredibly difficult for the most responsible, organized and intelligent students. Those who successfully graduate with an IB diploma seldom do so without a strong social and emotional support network that includes their teachers. However, not enough is

being done to prepare teachers to teach social and emotional learning before they become full-time teachers. Once teachers enter the workforce, they often receive minimal professional development to teach social and emotional learning. Not surprisingly, the IB diploma teachers in this study felt a lack of confidence in their ability to teach social and emotional learning.

At the same time, more is being expected of teachers to provide students with the social and emotional learning support they might not be experiencing at home. School leaders want to provide professional development opportunities for teachers to share ideas and develop curriculum for social and emotional learning but limited time and resources pose huge challenges. When given the chance to develop social and emotional learning curriculum, teachers must then balance the unique and diverse cultural backgrounds, social customs, religious beliefs, and family traditions that exist within the context of an international school setting. Given all of these issues, it was not a surprise to sense anxiety and frustration from participants about their perceptions regarding social and emotional learning.

Prior to this study, this researcher spoke with dozens of educators over a period of 18 months to determine what teachers, counselors, and school leaders perceived was the most important challenge facing international schools in the next decade. It was quickly evident that they were concerned by the increasing need to teach children many of the life skills that were traditionally taught by parents at home. Their comments indicated that the conventional perception that schools need only focus on reading, writing and arithmetic was a naïve perspective that ignored the reality of the changing world around us. Perceptions that teachers provide knowledge regarding things like the causes of World War II or the process of photosynthesis fail to recognize that students can find those answers within seconds through a simple Google search on their cellphones.

However, the ability of a child to be competent in the areas of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making is a complex and growing challenge for schools to address. For many older students, the ability to successfully navigate extremely rigorous academic programs such as the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme often depends on how well they can apply the social and emotional skills they have learned in previous years. Successful social and emotional policies and programs will take a coordinated effort from a range of stakeholders to ensure students obtain the age-specific skills they need when they are young, but also account for the unique social and emotional challenges students face before entering adulthood. Hopefully this study has brought more awareness to those challenges and they can be further investigated by future researchers.

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Appendix A: Statement of Original Work

The Concordia University Doctorate of Education Program is a collaborative community of scholar-practitioners, who seek to transform society by pursuing ethically- informed, rigorously-researched, inquiry-based projects that benefit professional, institutional, and local educational contexts. Each member of the community affirms throughout their program of study, adherence to the principles and standards outlined in the Concordia University Academic Integrity Policy. This policy states the following:

Statement of academic integrity.

As a member of the Concordia University community, I will neither engage in fraudulent or unauthorized behaviors in the presentation and completion of my work, nor will I provide unauthorized assistance to others.

Explanations:

What does “fraudulent” mean?

“Fraudulent” work is any material submitted for evaluation that is falsely or improperly presented as one’s own. This includes, but is not limited to texts, graphics and other multi-media files appropriated from any source, including another individual, that are intentionally presented as all or part of a candidate’s final work without full and complete documentation.

What is “unauthorized” assistance?

“Unauthorized assistance” refers to any support candidates solicit in the completion of their work, that has not been either explicitly specified as appropriate by the instructor, or any assistance that is understood in the class context as inappropriate. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Use of unauthorized notes or another’s work during an online test
- Use of unauthorized notes or personal assistance in an online exam setting
- Inappropriate collaboration in preparation and/or completion of a project
- Unauthorized solicitation of professional resources for the completion of the work.

Statement of Original Work (continued)

I attest that:

1. I have read, understood, and complied with all aspects of the Concordia University–Portland Academic Integrity Policy during the development and writing of this dissertation.
2. Where information and/or materials from outside sources has been used in the production of this dissertation, all information and/or materials from outside sources has been properly referenced and all permissions required for use of the information and/or materials have been obtained, in accordance with research standards outlined in the *Publication Manual of The American Psychological Association*.



Digital Signature

Brad Augustine

Name (Typed)

February 20, 2020

Date

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. Describe your familiarity with social and emotional learning and how you perceive it.
2. Describe the training you have received to teach social and emotional learning curriculum in your university teacher preparation program prior to becoming a full-time teacher.
3. Describe the ongoing support or professional development you have received to teach social and emotional learning curriculum after becoming a full-time teacher?
4. Describe your experience with teaching social emotional learning curriculum to IB diploma students. What resources and materials do you use? How is content delivered? How do you meet the students' needs?
5. How are the social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students similar or different compared to non-IB diploma students?
6. How effective are IB diploma students at balancing what is expected of them on an academic, social and emotional level?
7. Describe any possible social and emotional benefits IB diploma students might experience from an effective school-based social and emotional intervention program.
8. Describe your level of confidence with respect to your ability to teach social and emotional learning curriculum to IB diploma students.
9. Describe your level of confidence with respect to teaching academic curriculum to IB diploma students.
10. How can IB Diploma teachers be supported to effectively teach social emotional learning curriculum to IB diploma students?
11. How could social and emotional learning curriculum most effectively be taught to IB diploma students?

12. How do you identify specific areas where IB diploma students might need social emotional support?
13. Describe your level of confidence with respect to identifying specific areas where IB diploma students might need social emotional support.
14. What are your perceptions of the school's overall social and emotional learning program?
15. What is the most effective way to develop a school-based social and emotional learning program?
16. What are the factors impacting the most effective way to develop a school-based social and emotional learning program?
17. How should a school assess the effectiveness of a school-based social and emotional learning program?
18. Is there anything else that you'd like to share regarding social and emotional learning and the needs of IB diploma students that these questions today did not address?

Appendix C: Consent Form

Research Study Title: The Social and Emotional Learning Needs of IB Diploma Students:
A Phenomenological Study of the Perceptions of IB Diploma Teachers
Principal Investigator: Brad Augustine
Research Institution: Concordia University–Portland
Faculty Advisor: Christopher Jenkins, Ph.D.

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to conduct a dissertation research project at Concordia University–Portland in the doctoral program. This phenomenological study will invite you to share your perceptions and experiences regarding school-based social and emotional learning intervention programs for IB diploma students, the teaching of social and emotional learning competencies to IB diploma students, and your school’s overall social and emotional learning intervention program. At any point during this process, you can decide not to participate or withdraw from this study without penalty or affecting your relationship with the principal investigator, Brad Augustine. Data collection for this study will involve one face-to-face interview of approximately 45 minutes between August and September 2019. Transcripts of the interviews are available for your review throughout the data collection phase of the project which ends in September 2019. Interview sessions will be recorded. Recordings will be deleted immediately following transcription and member-checking. All other study-related materials will be kept securely for 3 years from the close of the study and will then be destroyed.

Risks:

Other than providing your information, there are no risks to participating in this study. Any information you provide will be protected at all times and be coded so it cannot be linked to you. Any name or identifying information you give will be kept secure via electronic encryption or locked inside a desk. When anyone looks at the data you provide, the data will not have your name or any identifying information to you. Your data will be referred to with a code that only the principal investigator, Brad Augustine, knows is linked to you. I will not identify you or the school by name in any publication or report. Your information will be kept private at all times and then all information will be destroyed three years after the conclusion of this study.

Benefits:

This study will investigate social and emotional learning support for IB diploma students by learning more about the perceptions and experiences of IB diploma teachers. As an IB diploma teacher, your information will provide a better understanding of how to best address the unique social and emotional learning needs of IB diploma students.

Confidentiality:

This information will not be distributed to any other agency and will be kept private and confidential. The only exception to this is if you tell us about abuse or neglect that makes us seriously concerned for your immediate health and safety.

