



# Impact of Soft Skills Training on Prospective Teachers' Social Competency

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## Abstract:

*Pre-test and post-testing are used in this study to investigate how soft skills instruction has affected prospective teachers' social competence. The experimental method and one-group pre-test post-test design were both used in this study's experiment as part of a quasi-experimental research setup. The sample size consisted of 90 aspiring teachers enrolled in a two-year teacher training program (B.Ed.) at three of the training institutions of Bundelkhand University in Jhansi, India. The participants' Social Competency is evaluated using the standardized assessment instruments prior to the Soft Skills training. A paired sample t-test is used to statistically examine the changes in the participants' competence from the pre-test to the post-test. The findings suggest that the soft skills training or intervention had a very big impact on social competency. The findings emphasize the need of adding soft skills in teacher training programs to give future teachers the interpersonal and social intelligence required for successful instruction.*

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**Keywords:** *Soft Skills, Social Competency, Prospective Teachers*

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## 1. Introduction

In the realm of education, the role of teachers extends far beyond the mere dissemination of knowledge; they are key architects of future generations, shaping the intellectual, emotional, and social landscapes of their students. As education continues to evolve in response to the demands of an interconnected and rapidly changing world, the significance of soft skills in teaching has garnered heightened attention. Soft skills, encompassing a range of interpersonal and intrapersonal attributes, are increasingly recognized as vital components of effective teaching and social competency. This is particularly evident in the context of prospective teachers, who are on the cusp of entering a profession that demands not only academic expertise but also the ability to cultivate positive relationships, navigate diverse environments, and foster inclusive learning spaces.

The term "soft skills" refers to a set of non-technical, personal qualities that enable individuals to interact effectively with others, exhibit emotional intelligence, and navigate complex social dynamics. While the emphasis on hard skills, such as subject knowledge and pedagogical techniques, remains pivotal in the field of education, the complementary role of soft skills has gained prominence as research underscores their impact on teaching efficacy and the overall development of students. Soft skills encompass a wide spectrum of attributes including communication, empathy, adaptability, teamwork, conflict resolution, and cultural competence. These attributes not only facilitate constructive classroom management but also empower teachers to address the diverse needs and backgrounds of their students.

Prospective teachers, as they transition from students to educators, find themselves at a juncture where the fusion of academic proficiency and soft skills holds immense potential for shaping their effectiveness as educators. The journey of becoming a teacher is marked by the acquisition of

pedagogical knowledge and the cultivation of a professional identity. In this process, the integration of soft skills becomes instrumental in determining how prospective teachers engage with their students, colleagues, parents, and the community at large. As the educational landscape becomes increasingly multicultural and digitally mediated, teachers must possess the ability to connect with students on both cognitive and emotional levels. This necessitates a keen understanding of the influence that soft skills wield over the social competency of prospective teachers.

This study embarks upon an exploration of the multifaceted relationship between soft skills and the social competency of prospective teachers. By delving into the empirical dimensions of how various soft skills influence the interpersonal interactions and instructional practices of future educators, we seek to illuminate the nuanced ways in which these skills contribute to enhanced classroom management, student engagement, and overall teaching effectiveness. Furthermore, this investigation aims to shed light on the methods by which educational institutions can integrate the development of soft skills within teacher preparation programs, equipping aspiring teachers with a holistic skill set that transcends traditional academic domains.

## 2. Literature Review

**Sahaya Mary & Manorama, Samuel (2011)** had studied the influence of social competence on attitude towards teaching of student teachers in Salem district, revealed that there is a significant difference between qualifications. There is no significant difference between gender, subject, community, previous teaching experience and social competence of the student teacher. There is significant relationship between social competence and attitude towards teaching profession of student teachers.

**Morgan Joseph John (2011)** made a study on teaching Online Social Skills to Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders. The results indicated that neither of the interventions was significantly effective at teaching the online social skills to students with emotional and behavioral disorders across time, and neither of the interventions was significantly better than the other..

**Ohl, Madeleine; Fox, Pauline; Mitchell, Kathryn (2013)** conducted a study on strengthening Socio-Emotional Competencies in a School Setting: Data from the Pyramid Project. Results: As measured by the two SDQ difficulty sub-scales of Emotional and Peer problems and the SDQ strength sub-scale of Pro-social behaviour, post-intervention improvements in the Pyramid attendee group were of greater magnitude than those of the comparison group.

**Sanwal (2013)** had studied that the Social Competence is the ability of an individual to behave in ways that are skilled and effective. The major findings of the study revealed that the percentages of 120 adolescents that falls in low and very low category (93.33%) of social competence level.

**Baliya and Bhagat (2015)** had studied to compare social competence and self-esteem of secondary school students. The results of the study showed that female students having positive self, negative self and balanced self have found socially more competent than their counterparts.

The purpose of the study of **Ahmed, Ibrahim; Hamzah, Aswati Binti; Abdullah, Melissa Ng Lee Yen Binti (2020)** is to examine the effect of social and emotional learning approach on student social-emotional competence. The results obtained from the analysis of covariance revealed that students in social and emotional learning approach classroom had positively demonstrated significant social-emotional competence compared to students in the traditional teaching approach group. Therefore, the utilized (social and emotional learning- RULER) has provided substantial procedures on how students can integrate and apply RULER's strategies in enhancing their social emotional competence. The implication for introducing social and emotional learning approach into teaching and learning was discussed.

**Kaur, Sukhminder; Ayana, Thomas and Kaur, Harmilan (2021)** conducted a study to assess social-emotional competencies among Indian and Ethiopian undergraduates. Significant mean differences in social-emotional competence were observed between the Indian and Ethiopian young adults; male and female samples of the two countries. The Indian sample was greater in Social-emotional competence than the Ethiopian sample. Similarly, male and female participants from the Indian sample were greater in social-emotional skills than that of the Ethiopian sample, except for emotional sensitivity with the female participants, where the mean difference was non-significant.

**Bhatnagar, Ruchi and Many, Joyce (2022)** conducted a case study of 23 novice teachers prepared by our college we examined teachers' perception about the use of social-emotional learning (SEL) in their teaching, strategies for impacting student learning and development, and challenges faced due to online or hybrid teaching modalities. Results indicated that teachers felt a great need to focus on fostering supporting relationships with students, building trust, creating a positive classroom climate, acknowledging the trauma students had been through, and building strong home-school connections.

The assessment and development of teachers' socio-emotional competence has become a topic of interest in education. Within the classroom, this competence is demonstrated not only in teaching but also in student development. The study of **Carmen, Romero-García; Olga, Buzon-García; Beatriz, Marcano (2022)** addressed the relationship between socio-emotional competence and self-efficacy, as perceived by prospective secondary-school teachers (n = 285) studying for a master's degree in teacher training, and possible differences according to the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample. The results showed an adequate level in most of the socio-emotional competencies studied and a high perception of self-efficacy, and both scales correlated positively.

The literature reviewed here underscores the inseparable relationship between soft skills and the social competency of teachers. As education continues to evolve in response to the demands of an interconnected world, the cultivation of soft skills is paramount in equipping teachers to navigate the diverse challenges of the classroom. By fostering effective communication, empathy, adaptability, and collaboration, teachers can create learning environments that empower students not only academically but also emotionally and socially. As future research and educational initiatives continue to explore the intersections of soft skills and teaching, the educational landscape stands poised to embrace a more comprehensive and student-centered approach to pedagogy.

Despite the evident importance of soft skills, there is a research gap concerning the systematic exploration of the impact of dedicated soft skills training on the social competency of prospective teachers. Limited empirical studies have thoroughly examined how structured training interventions can improve the social skills of teachers in training, thereby leaving an essential aspect of teacher education relatively unexplored.

### **3. Objective of the study**

To Study the effect of Soft Skills training on Social Competency of Prospective Teachers by administering pre and post test

### **4. Hypothesis of the study**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of pre and post-test of Social Competency of Prospective Teachers

### **5. Design of the experiment**

The investigator has adopted the experimental method as the method of studying the effectiveness of Soft Skills training on Social Competency of Prospective Teachers. In the experimental method the investigator has adopted the one-group pre-test post-test design within the realm of quasi-experimental research for the experiment. Here's a brief explanation of this experimental design :

**Selection of Participants:** Size of the sample consisted of 90 prospective teachers pursuing two-year teacher’s training programme (B.Ed.) under various colleges of Bundelkhand University, Jhansi. The prospective teachers who will participate in the study are selected based on certain criteria, such as their willingness to take part in the training and their availability for the duration of the study.

**Pre-Test Measurement:** Before the Soft Skills training is administered, the participants' Social Competency is measured using appropriate assessment tools. This initial measurement is referred to as the "pre-test."

**Intervention (Soft Skills training):** The Soft Skills training is provided to the selected group of prospective teachers. This training is designed to enhance their teaching skills, emotional understanding, and social interactions.

**Post-Test Measurement:** After the Soft Skills training has been completed, the participants' Social Competency is measured again using the same assessment tools that were used in the pre-test. This measurement is referred to as the "post-test."

**Data Analysis:** The changes in the participants' competencies from the pre-test to the post-test are analyzed statistically by paired sample t-test.

## 6. Result and discussion

The testing of this hypothesis has been done by comparing the mean scores of pre and post-test of Social Competency of Prospective Teachers. The data was analyzed with the help of paired t-test. The results are given in table-1 tot 3.

**Table 1: Paired Samples Statistics for Pre and Post Test of Social Competency**

Variable	Paired Sample Statistics			
Social Competency	N	Mean	SD	Standard Error
Pre-Test	90	102.667	6.472	0.682
Post Test	90	108.489	6.362	0.671

**Table 2: Paired Samples Correlation between Pre and Post test of Social Competency**

Variable	Paired Sample Correlation		
Social Competency	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pre-Test	90	0.622	< .01
Post Test	90		

**Table 3: Paired Sample t-Test for Pre and Post Test of Social Competency**

Variable	Paired Differences			Paired Sample Test			Effect Sizes
Social Competency	Mean	SD	Standard Error	t	df	p	Cohen's d
Pre-Test	5.822	5.578	0.588	9.902	89	<.01	5.578
Post Test							

### 6.1 Interpretation of the Mean Values

The obtained mean value for pre-test score of Social Competency is 102.667, and for post-test score is 108.489, as shown in table No.-1. The average performance of people on the Social Competency assessment prior to Soft Skills training is shown by the mean pre-test score of 102.667. The average performance of the same individuals on the Social Competency assessment following the application of the soft skills intervention or training is shown by the mean post-test score of 108.489. It appears that scores increased from the pre-test to the post-test when comparing the mean pre-test and post-test results.

The average improvement in scores of Social Competency following the intervention or treatment of

soft skills is shown by the difference between the mean pre-test and post-test scores ( $108.489 - 102.667 = 5.822$ ). The rise in mean scores indicates that, after receiving the intervention or treatment of soft skills, prospective teacher's Social Competency have improved.

The data's central tendency can be understood by looking at the mean scores, but it's also critical to ask whether the observed difference is statistically significant. The paired t-test was used for this purpose.

### **6.2 t-Value interpretation**

From Table-3, it is evident that the t-value for Pre and Post Test of Social Competency is 9.902. The number of observation pairs determined the degrees of freedom (df) for a paired sample t-test is 89. The t-value is significant at the 0.01 level of significance.

The calculated test statistic is the t-value, which is 9.902. In relation to the variability within the groups, it measures the variation between the means of the paired groups. Since the estimated t-value is higher than what would be predicted under the null hypothesis (no significant difference), the resultant t-value is significant at the 0.01 level of significance. With 89 degrees of freedom and an extremely high t-value of 9.902, there is a significant difference between the means of the paired groups. This offers compelling evidence that the null hypothesis is rejected.

The statistically significant difference between the means of the Social Competency pre-test and post-test scores is indicated by the significant t-value. As a result, the null hypothesis ( $H_0-1$ ) "There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test of Social Competency of Prospective Teachers" is rejected.

This finding has practical ramifications because it shows that the Social Competency scores of individuals were significantly impacted by the soft skills training used between the pre-test and post-test assessments. Thus, it can be said that Social Competency enhancement among B.Ed. trainees is facilitated by soft skill training.

### **6.3 Interpretation of correlation Value**

It is clear from Table No.-2 that there is a 0.622 significant correlation between the pre-test and post-test scores of social competencies, which denotes a strong positive linear correlation between pre-test and post-test Social Competency scores. Social Competency pre-test and post-test scores show a good association (significant correlation = 0.622), indicating a strong relationship between the two measures.

### **6.4 Cohen 'd' interpretation**

The last column of table No.-3 displays the effect size (Cohen 'd') of the social competency pre- and post-test scores. The value of Cohen's 'd' obtained is 5.578. A pre- and post-test of social competency with a Cohen's 'd' value of 5.578 points to a very substantial effect size. This shows a strong and substantial improvement in social competency scores between the pre-test and post-test results. The calculated Cohen 'd' value shows that there has been a significant difference between the two time points (pre-test and post-test) in the measured variable social competency.

The shift in social competency from pre-test to post-test is not only statistically significant, but also extremely practically significant, according to a Cohen's d value of 5.578. It suggests that over the course of the soft skills intervention or training, there has been a significant improvement or change in the prospective teachers' social competency.

Such a significant effect size could have important ramifications for the participants as well as for any training or educational initiatives designed to improve social competency. It implies that the social competency of the participants was significantly impacted by soft skills intervention or treatment was

given between the pre-test and the post-test.

In conclusion, a Cohen's  $d$  value of 5.578 shows a significant gain in social competency between the pre- and post-test, pointing to a highly successful soft skills intervention or training program that significantly changed the participants' abilities. Therefore, we may conclude that soft skill training has a considerable impact on potential teachers' social competency.

## 7. Recommendations

**Integration of Soft Skills Training:** Teacher education programs should integrate dedicated soft skills training modules into their curriculum. These modules can cover areas such as effective communication, empathy, active listening, conflict resolution, and cultural sensitivity. This integration should be accompanied by practical exercises and real-life simulations to ensure the application of learned skills.

**Longitudinal Studies:** Conduct longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of soft skills training on the social competency of prospective teachers. Tracking their performance and interactions in real classrooms over an extended period can provide insights into the sustainability of the training effects.

**Customization of Training:** Recognize that prospective teachers may have varying levels of baseline social competency. Design training programs that cater to these differences and offer tailored guidance to help each individual teacher-in-training improve their specific areas of weakness.

**Collaboration with Schools:** Collaborate with schools and educational institutions to provide opportunities for practical application of soft skills training in real classroom settings. This collaboration can offer a more comprehensive understanding of the training's effectiveness and identify potential challenges.

**Incorporation of Feedback:** Gather feedback from both teacher trainees and the students they interact with during training. Incorporating this feedback in the design and refinement of the training program can enhance its relevance and impact.

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