

# The Mediating Effect of Self-Motivation on the Relationship Between Social Skills and Competence of Teachers

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## ABSTRACT

Competence in teaching ensures that educators can effectively convey knowledge, engage students in meaningful learning experiences, and foster a deeper understanding of the subject matter. However, the poor competence in teaching can often stem from a lack of self-motivation in teachers, compounded by weak social skills, which hinder their ability to connect with students, collaborate with peers, and maintain a dynamic, engaging classroom environment. This study determined the mediating effect of self-motivation on the relationship of social skills and competence of teachers in a certain public high school. Participants in the study were the 174 public school teachers randomly chosen to respond to the survey conducted. Quantitative non-experimental descriptive correlation was the design utilized in this study. Survey questionnaires were used in the collection of data. Pearson-r, regression analysis, and mediation analysis were used to analyze the gathered data. It was found out that social skills significantly influence the competence of teachers. Also, social skills significantly influence self-motivation. Further, self-motivation significantly influences the competence of teachers. Self-motivation mediates the significant relationship between social skills and competence of teachers. This implies that the mediating effect of self-motivation on the relationship between social skills and teacher competence suggests that while social skills contribute to competence, the internal drive of self-motivation significantly enhances this connection, potentially amplifying the positive outcomes in teaching effectiveness. Further studies are recommended to be conducted to explore other factors mediating the relationship between social skills and competence of public-school teachers.

**Keywords:** social skills, competence, self-motivation, public school teachers, mediating effect.

## INTRODUCTION

The issue of poor teaching competence among educators has been a long-standing concern, with significant implications for student learning outcomes. Recent studies highlight that a lack of professional development and inadequate pre-service training are primary contributors to this issue (Darling-Hammond et al., 2022). Furthermore, teachers often face challenges in adapting to new pedagogical approaches due to insufficient support from educational institutions (Schleicher, 2023). Additionally, research by Smith and Jones (2023) indicates that many teachers struggle with classroom management and the implementation of effective instructional strategies, which negatively impact student engagement and achievement. Consequently, addressing these gaps through targeted training and continuous professional development programs is crucial for enhancing teaching competence and fostering better educational environments (Wang & Lee, 2022).

Competence in teaching is a critical factor that directly impacts the quality of student learning and overall educational success. Recent research underscores that teachers who possess strong pedagogical skills and content knowledge are better equipped to create effective learning environments and improve student outcomes (Harris & Jones, 2020). Competent teachers can adapt instructional strategies to meet diverse student needs, ensuring inclusivity and equity in the classroom (Darling-Hammond et al., 2021). Moreover, teaching competence is linked to greater teacher self-efficacy, which enhances motivation and reduces burnout, leading to sustained professional growth (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2022). Continuous professional development plays a key role in maintaining and enhancing teaching competence, as it enables educators to stay abreast of evolving pedagogical approaches and innovations in educational technology (OECD, 2023). Thus, teacher competence is foundational to achieving quality education and fostering student achievement.

Teachers with strong social skills can create a supportive classroom environment that fosters student engagement and motivation (Zhou & Kim, 2021). Research shows that educators who exhibit empathy, active listening, and conflict resolution skills are better equipped to manage classroom dynamics and address student behavioral challenges (Jennings & Greenberg, 2019). Moreover, social skills contribute to teacher leadership and the ability to work collaboratively with peers, which is essential for professional growth and shared instructional practices (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2020). Developing social skills through professional development can significantly enhance teaching competence, leading to more effective classroom management and improved student outcomes (Beltman et al., 2021).

Self-motivation acts as a critical mediator between social skills and teaching competence, amplifying the positive effects of social skills on an educator's ability to teach effectively. Teachers who possess high levels of self-motivation are more likely to apply their social skills consistently, leading to better classroom management and stronger relationships with students and colleagues (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Studies show that motivated teachers are proactive in refining their social skills, which in turn enhances their teaching competence by fostering a more engaging and supportive learning environment (Lee & Kim, 2021). Furthermore, self-motivated educators are more inclined to pursue continuous professional development, utilizing their social skills to collaborate with peers and adopt innovative pedagogical approaches (Beltman et al., 2021). The combination of self-motivation and social skills creates a synergistic effect that significantly improves teaching outcomes, contributing to both teacher effectiveness and student success (Roth et al., 2022).

The mediating effect of self-motivation on the relationship between social skills and teaching competence remains underexplored, despite its potential to offer crucial insights into teacher development. Although research has highlighted the importance of social skills in enhancing teaching competence (Zhou & Kim, 2021; Beltman et al., 2021), and the role of self-motivation in driving teacher performance (Ryan & Deci, 2020), few studies have examined how self-motivation bridges these two constructs. This research gap is urgent, as understanding the motivational mechanisms that enable teachers to leverage their social skills for greater teaching effectiveness is essential in designing comprehensive professional development programs (Roth et al., 2022). Without such insights, current interventions may fail to address the full range of factors that contribute to teacher competence, particularly in complex, modern classrooms where both social and motivational dynamics play critical roles (Lee & Kim, 2021). Addressing this gap could lead to more tailored support strategies that enhance both intrinsic motivation and social skill application in educators.

With the abovementioned, it is still difficult to draw an established conclusion since various literature would provide diverse treatments and research designs. The issue continues to persist and has considerably affected teachers in terms of their competence in teaching. In addition, the researchers encountered limited studies that have been conducted using the variables mentioned above in the Philippines. The study aims to add to the growing literature and develop new insights that will hopefully point to new directions in the field of educational management.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Does self-motivation have a mediating effect on the relationship between social skills and competence of teachers?

## HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis that self-motivation has no mediating effect on the relationship between social skills and competence of teachers was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

## METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researcher utilized a quantitative non-experimental design research method. First, it will use the descriptive-correlational form of research in which this method is a measure of associations of variables with varying levels of measurement. Alicay (2014) cited that descriptive-correlational studies present an understanding of what is in a specific situation with an identified population and examine the extent to which

two or more variables are related. Statistical used in the computation and analysis of data was Sobel Test in testing the mediating effect of self-motivation on the relationship between social skills and competence.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Shown in Table 1 are the four steps in testing the mediating effects of self-motivation to the relationship between social skills and competence in teaching.

Table 1. The Mediating Effect of Self-motivation to the Relationship Between Social Skills and Competence of Teachers

Step	Path	b	S.E.	Beta
Step 1	c	0.4	0.105	0.54
Step 2	a	0.96	0.033	0.933
Step 3	b	0.21	0.101	0.291

$\alpha = 0.05$

In Step 1, social skills significantly influence the competence of teachers. In Step 2, social skills significantly predict self-motivation. In Step 3, self-motivation significantly predicts competence of teachers.

As shown above, based on Step 4 the combined effect of social skills on competence of teachers was found to be significant after mediated by self-motivation. This is then partial mediation took place since the effect was found to be still significant ( $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ ). In addition, the causal relationship between social skills and competence of teachers has been reduced from 0.40 to 0.21, which is still significant when self-motivation is included. Furthermore, the result of the computation of mediating effect is presented in the figure below. The Sobel test yielded a z-value greater than 1.96 with a p-value of 0.001, which is significant at 0.05 level. This means that the partial mediation attributed by self-motivation on the significant relationship between social skills and competence of teachers is revealed. In the figure below, it was shown that the computation of the effect size in the mediation test conducted between the three variables is about 52.5% percent of the total effect of social skills on the competence of teachers goes through self-motivation, and about 47.5% percent of the total effect is either direct or mediated by other variables not included in the model.

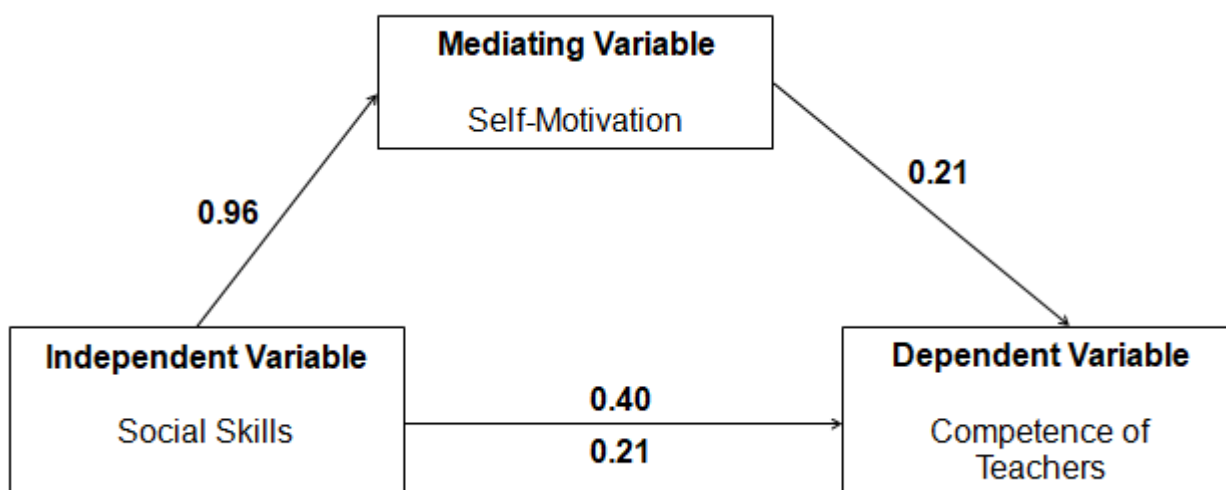


Figure 1. Medgraph Showing the Variables of the Study

The mediation results show that self-motivation strengthens the significant relationship between social skills and competence of teachers. This result from significant partial mediation is supported by Zimmerman, Matinez-Pons, and Bandura (1992) that the causal role of self-motivation in the relationship among variables is very important for further analysis which is based on social cognitive theory of academic self-motivation.

Further, this is supported by Mendoza (2011) that knowing how to effectively motivate oneself all the difference and that self-motivation plays significant role in strengthening other sets of competence that people have. Moreover, he added in his proposition that instead of losing time and energy in procrastination, indecision, doubt, or trying to 'push through,' with these secrets to self-motivation, taking action comes naturally. Additionally, Mangarin and Chan (2021) emphasized that teachers are recommended to maintain their competence to achieve effective instructional delivery.

## CONCLUSION REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, social skills significantly influence the competence of teachers. Also, social skills significantly influence self-motivation. Further, self-motivation significantly influences the competence of teachers. Lastly, self-motivation mediates the significant relationship between social skills and competence of teachers. Based on the results and conclusions, school heads are recommended to initiate programs that will enhance social skills of teachers to enhance competence of teachers. Moreover, self-motivation of teachers must be enhanced to strengthen the effect of social skills to competence of teachers. Also, teachers are recommended to involve themselves in activities that promote development of social skills, self-motivation, and competence in teaching, and collaborating with the community. Further research studies may be directed in exploring other factors that significantly mediate the relationship between social skills and teaching competence. Moreover, replication of this study is encouraged to test and validate results in other settings.

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