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A Conceptual Framework for ICT Competency Development among Pre-Service Teachers

Asst. Prof. Pratibha Kambli ¹, Prof. (Dr.) Sanjay Shedmake ²

¹ MA. M.ED., SET (EDUCATION), DSM, Ph.D. Pursuing, Dnyan Ganga Education Trust's College of Education (B.Ed.), Thane

² I/c Principal P. V. D.T. College of Education for Women, S. N. D. T. Women's University, Mumbai

Abstract

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become central to contemporary education. Teachers are expected to use digital tools for lesson planning, classroom instruction, assessment, communication, and professional development. Therefore, B.Ed. student teachers must develop strong ICT competencies before entering the teaching profession. This conceptual paper presents a framework for understanding ICT competency development among B.Ed. student teachers through three interrelated dimensions: knowledge, skills, and attitudes. ICT knowledge refers to understanding digital concepts, tools, and pedagogical applications; ICT skills involve the practical ability to use technological tools effectively; and ICT attitude reflects beliefs, confidence, and willingness to integrate technology into teaching. The paper discusses the theoretical foundations, conceptual model, and implications for teacher education institutions.

Keywords: ICT competency, B.Ed. student teachers, digital literacy, pre-service teachers, knowledge, skills, attitudes.

1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of technology has transformed educational practices globally. Teachers are now expected to integrate ICT into instructional processes to improve student engagement, collaboration, and learning outcomes. National and international policy frameworks, including the UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers and India's National Council for Teacher Education guidelines, emphasize digital competency as an essential professional requirement.

B.Ed. student teachers, as future educators, must be equipped with adequate ICT competencies. These competencies include not only technical knowledge and operational skills but also positive attitudes toward technology integration. This conceptual paper examines the development of ICT competencies among B.Ed. student teachers using a tripartite framework of knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

2. Rationale of the Study

Teacher education institutions are responsible for preparing future teachers to use ICT effectively. Despite increased access to digital tools, many pre-service teachers face challenges such as inadequate technical knowledge, limited hands-on experience, and apprehension toward technology use. A structured understanding of ICT competency development can help institutions design effective interventions to improve digital readiness. This conceptual paper examines how ICT competency development among pre-service teachers can contribute to educational equity, inclusion, and social justice. In contemporary classrooms, teachers are expected to address the diverse learning needs of students from varying socio-economic, linguistic, cultural, and ability backgrounds.

Developing ICT competencies among pre-service teachers empowers them to:

- Design inclusive digital learning experiences for all learners.
- Use assistive technologies to support students with disabilities.
- Create multilingual and multimodal resources for diverse student populations.
- Reduce the digital divide by promoting equitable access to technology.
- Foster participation and engagement among marginalized learners.
- Encourage culturally responsive and socially just teaching practices.

The framework's three dimensions—ICT Knowledge, ICT Skills, and ICT Attitude—equip future teachers with the capacity to integrate technology in ways that ensure every learner has meaningful opportunities to learn and succeed.

Thus, ICT competency development is not merely a technical goal; it is a critical component of preparing

socially responsible teachers who can advance equity and inclusion in education.

3. Meaning of ICT Competency

ICT competency refers to the ability to use digital technologies effectively, critically, and ethically for teaching, learning, assessment, and professional growth. It includes cognitive understanding, practical application, and affective disposition.

Definitions

- UNESCO defines ICT competency as the integration of technology knowledge, pedagogical understanding, and professional practice.
- European Commission describes digital competence as confident, critical, and responsible use of digital technologies.

4. Components of ICT Competency

Components of ICT Competency

In the present conceptual framework, ICT competency among pre-service teachers is viewed as a multidimensional construct comprising three major dimensions: **ICT Knowledge**, **ICT Skills**, and **ICT Attitude**. Each dimension is examined across five core competency areas adapted from the European Commission DigComp framework: Information Literacy, Communication and Collaboration, Digital Content Creation, Safety and Security, and Problem Solving.

4.1. ICT Knowledge

ICT Knowledge refers to the conceptual and theoretical understanding that pre-service teachers possess regarding digital technologies and their educational applications.

ICT Knowledge Areas

Information Literacy

Understanding how to search, identify, evaluate, and organize digital information.

Knowledge of credible online sources and strategies to verify information.

Communication and Collaboration

Understanding digital communication tools such as email, discussion forums, and video conferencing.

Knowledge of online collaboration platforms and netiquette.

Digital Content Creation

Understanding principles of creating presentations, documents, videos, and interactive learning materials.

Awareness of copyright, licensing, and citation norms.

Safety and Security

Knowledge of cyber safety, privacy, password protection, and responsible digital behavior.

Problem Solving

Understanding troubleshooting methods and selecting appropriate digital tools for educational tasks.

4.2. ICT Skills

ICT Skills refer to the practical ability to use digital tools and technologies effectively in academic and teaching contexts.

ICT Skill Areas

Information Literacy

Searching for information using search engines and educational databases.

Downloading, organizing, and managing digital resources.

Communication and Collaboration

Using email, cloud platforms, messaging apps, and video conferencing tools.

Participating in collaborative work through shared documents and online discussion spaces.

Digital Content Creation

Designing presentations, worksheets, videos, quizzes, and e-content.

Editing multimedia and creating interactive learning resources.

Safety and Security

Applying secure passwords, antivirus tools, privacy settings, and safe browsing practices.

Problem Solving

Troubleshooting common hardware/software issues.

Installing applications and adapting tools to meet instructional needs.

4.3. ICT Attitude

ICT Attitude refers to the beliefs, perceptions, confidence, and willingness of pre-service teachers to use ICT for teaching and learning.

ICT Attitude Areas

Information Literacy

Valuing the importance of accessing and critically evaluating information.

Communication and Collaboration

Positive disposition toward using digital tools for interaction and teamwork.

Digital Content Creation

Interest and enthusiasm in developing digital teaching-learning materials.

Safety and Security

Commitment to ethical, responsible, and secure use of technology.

Problem Solving

Confidence in exploring and resolving technology-related challenges independently.

5. Theoretical Foundations

5.1. Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK)

Developed by Punya Mishra and Matthew J. Koehler, this framework explains how teachers combine technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge.

5.2. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

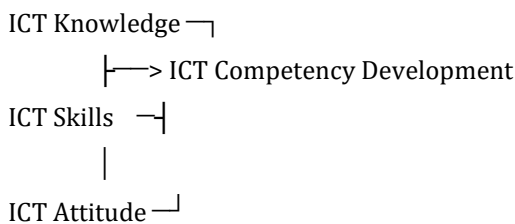
Proposed by Fred Davis, TAM suggests that perceived usefulness and ease of use shape attitudes and behavioral intentions.

5.3. UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers

Provides competency standards for integrating ICT into education systems.

6. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual model proposes that ICT competency is developed through interaction among three domains.



Explanation

- Knowledge provides theoretical understanding.
- Skills enable practical application.
- Attitude determines motivation and acceptance.
- Together they lead to effective ICT integration.

7. Variables in the Study

Independent Variable

- ICT Competency Development Program / Intervention

Dependent Variables

- ICT Knowledge
- ICT Skills
- ICT Attitude
- Overall ICT Competency

Moderator Variables (Optional)

- Gender
- Educational qualification
- Medium of instruction
- Prior computer exposure

8. Research Instruments Used

1. **ICT Attitude Scale**
2. **ICT Knowledge Test**
3. **ICT Skill Scale / Performance Checklist**

These instruments collectively assess cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions of competency.

9. Significance of the Study

The conceptual framework can:

- Guide curriculum design in B.Ed. programs.
- Support ICT training interventions.
- Help institutions assess digital readiness.
- Inform policy decisions on teacher preparation.

10. Implications for Teacher Education

Teacher education institutions should:

- Integrate ICT across pedagogy courses.
- Provide hands-on digital training.
- Encourage reflective practice.
- Promote ethical and responsible technology use.

11. Conclusion

ICT competency is an essential professional requirement for future teachers. The development of these competencies among B.Ed. student teachers depends on balanced growth in knowledge, skills, and attitudes. A multidimensional conceptual framework offers a robust basis for assessment, intervention, and research in teacher education.

12. Suggested References

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