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A Model for Developing Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Social and Emotional Competencies Through A Gender-Responsive Pedagogical Approach

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Abstract: This article conceptualizes the development of pre-service English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' social and emotional competencies through gender-responsive pedagogy as an integrated socio-pedagogical system. It presents a comparative and critical analysis of Uzbekistan's legislation on education and gender equality, the CASEL framework, UNESCO and OECD approaches, and relevant theoretical and empirical studies published in Uzbek, Russian, and English. The synthesis shows that teacher social and emotional competence, gender-responsive pedagogy, and English language teacher education have generally developed as separate strands of inquiry; a model that integrates them through a coherent mechanism remains insufficiently elaborated. In response, the author proposes a pedagogical model comprising goal-oriented methodological, content, process and technology, organizational and collaborative, and diagnostic and outcome blocks. Its content core encompasses self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and empathy, relationship and collaboration skills, and responsible pedagogical decision-making, while gender reflexivity functions as a cross-cutting regulator. The model specifies a six-stage socio-pedagogical mechanism progressing from gender-reflexive awareness to emotional self-regulation, empathic perspective-taking, equitable communication and collaboration, responsible pedagogical decision-making, and transfer to EFL practice. It also links reflective tasks, critical incidents, role-play, microteaching, peer feedback, and portfolio-based assessment to the distinctive emotional and communicative demands of foreign-language classrooms. As a conceptual contribution, the model establishes theoretically

grounded relationships among objectives, conditions, mechanisms, technologies, assessment criteria, and expected outcomes. Its effectiveness remains to be verified empirically in a subsequent experimental phase.

Keywords: Gender approach, gender-responsive pedagogy, social and emotional competence, pre-service EFL teacher, pedagogical model, socio-pedagogical mechanism, empathy, reflection, equitable communication, EFL.

Introduction: In contemporary higher teacher education, the outcome of professional preparation is measured not merely by the production of subject-matter specialists, but by the development of teachers capable of building equitable and effective relationships with learners who have diverse social experiences, needs, and emotional states. The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Education" establishes equal access to education, assurance of educational quality, and teachers' professional responsibility as core priorities [1]. The Law "On Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men" strengthens the legal foundations for preventing direct and indirect discrimination, creating equal opportunities, and expanding gender impact assessment [2]. These regulatory requirements make it necessary to embed gender equality in pre-service teacher education not as a declarative principle, but as a criterion guiding everyday pedagogical decisions.

UNESCO emphasizes that mainstreaming social and emotional learning (SEL) across all components of an education system is a systemic precondition for academic achievement, psychological well-being, a sense of school belonging, and peaceful social relations [3]. The CASEL framework defines SEL through five interrelated competence areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making [4]. Findings from the OECD Survey on Social and Emotional Skills 2023 indicate differences in how boys and girls self-report certain social and emotional skills: boys reported higher levels on some indicators of emotional regulation and social engagement, whereas girls reported higher levels of empathy, responsibility, and achievement motivation [5]. Such patterns should not be used to support biological determinism or rigid claims that "girls are like this and boys are like that." Rather, they should prompt critical examination of stereotypes, expectations, opportunities for participation, and forms of support within educational settings.

Teachers' social and emotional competence is not an optional embellishment to professional practice. In the Prosocial Classroom Model developed by Jennings and Greenberg, teachers' capacity for emotional self-regulation, social awareness, and relationship management is associated with classroom climate, teacher-student relationships, classroom management, and teachers' occupational well-being [6]. Schonert-Reichl argues that expecting teachers to develop social and emotional skills in their students when teachers themselves have not developed such competencies creates a methodological contradiction [7]. A meta-analysis by Oliveira and colleagues, covering 43 studies and 3,004 in-service teachers, found that teacher-focused social and emotional programmes produced positive effects on competence and well-being and reduced psychological distress [8]. The issue therefore extends beyond the personal well-being of pre-service teachers to their future pedagogical influence and their capacity to foster equity in the classroom.

Teaching English as a foreign language further complicates this challenge. When expressing themselves in another language, students may encounter emotional and social barriers such as fear of making mistakes, public-speaking anxiety, social comparison, embarrassment about their accent, and withdrawal in response to dominant voices within the group. Tran found that although pre-service EFL teachers displayed relatively developed knowledge of SEL principles and activities, gaps remained in explicitly naming social and emotional problems, consistently modelling appropriate behaviour, and assessing competence [9]. Megawati, Iswahyuni, and Mukminatien reported that social and emotional reflection during school practicum supports the development of pre-service English teachers' professional identity [10]. A positive association has also been identified between English teachers' social and emotional competence and students' motivation to learn English [11]. Kizildag and Kirmizi, in turn, draw attention to the interrelationships among emotional demands, resilience, and professional identity in EFL practicum settings [12].

At the same time, research on social and emotional competence often treats gender merely as a demographic variable, while studies of gender-responsive pedagogy do not sufficiently explain the mechanisms of emotional self-regulation, empathic perspective-taking, and responsible pedagogical decision-making. The intersection of these two strands is even less visible in research on EFL teacher education. Consequently, a pre-service teacher may endorse "equal treatment" as a value yet lack the analytical tools to determine who speaks most in an actual lesson, how

different students' errors are corrected, to whom group roles are assigned, or which emotional reactions are interpreted as "appropriate."

This contradiction defines the research problem: how should the development of pre-service EFL teachers' social and emotional competencies be integrated with gender-responsive pedagogical decision-making, the emotional and communicative features of EFL classrooms, and transfer between university-based preparation and school practicum? The aim of the study is to provide a theoretical and methodological justification for the foundations, structural blocks, socio-pedagogical mechanisms, technologies, diagnostic criteria, and expected outcomes of a pedagogical model designed to develop pre-service EFL teachers' social and emotional competencies through a gender-responsive pedagogical approach. The study hypothesizes that this development becomes systemic when gender-reflexive awareness is embedded as a cross-cutting regulator across all competence components, active and reflective technologies are adapted to EFL situations, multi-actor collaboration is established, and assessment draws on multiple sources of evidence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of social and emotional competence has developed at the intersection of approaches to emotional intelligence, social competence, emotion regulation, empathy, and responsible decision-making. Durlak and colleagues' meta-analysis of 213 universal programmes demonstrated the positive effects of SEL on skills, behaviour, and academic outcomes [13]. However, evidence centred on student outcomes cannot simply be transferred to teacher education. For teachers, competence includes not only personal skills but also the ability to analyse professional situations, manage emotional labour, and mediate learners' development. Braun and Hooper showed that pre-service teachers' social and emotional competencies predict their occupational health and personal well-being [14]. Choquette and colleagues identified an association between relationship skills and beliefs about SEL, emphasizing the need for teacher education to connect "knowing" with the practical management of relationships [15].

Targeted developmental programmes for pre-service teachers also provide important evidence. A ten-week programme implemented by Palomera and colleagues showed that social and emotional competencies need to be developed through experiential exercises, reflection, and group activity rather than through theoretical lectures alone [16]. In a mixed-methods study by Ozdemir Cihan and Dilekmen, ten weeks of

emotional-intelligence training had a significant effect on the outcomes of pre-service primary teachers [17]. The strength of these studies lies in linking programme design, activities, and outcomes; their limitation is that they do not explain how competence relates to gender-responsive pedagogical behaviour or to the distinctive communicative and emotional situations of the EFL classroom.

Russian-language dissertation research provides detailed accounts of the organizational and pedagogical conditions required to develop emotional competence in pre-service educators. Hakimova identified the enrichment of professional-course content with issues of emotion and competence, the activation of professional self-awareness and self-development, and the use of active and interactive methods as essential conditions [18]. Savchenkov conceptualized emotional stability as a dynamic attribute within professional competence and integrated objectives, principles, stages, and conditions within a single model [19]. Melnik demonstrated the relationship between empathy and the professional communicative competence of pre-service educational psychologists and argued for the purposeful development of empathy through specialized technologies [20]. These studies are methodologically significant for constructing a model according to the logic of objective-condition-process-criterion-outcome; however, neither gender responsiveness nor the distinctive nature of English language education constituted their research focus.

Gender-responsive pedagogy is understood as deliberate pedagogical practice aimed at identifying and eliminating gender stereotypes and inequalities in learning materials, language, classroom management, interpersonal interaction, assessment, and the educational environment. The FAWE toolkit applies this approach across all stages of instruction, from lesson planning to questioning, grouping, resource selection, and assessment [21]. UNESCO IICBA materials associate gender-responsive pedagogy with recognizing equitable needs, identifying discriminatory barriers, challenging stereotypes, enabling equitable participation, and ensuring a safe and inclusive environment [22]. UNICEF's gender-responsive teacher-training package treats the learning environment, language and materials, lesson planning, pedagogical interaction, assessment, leadership, monitoring, and family-community participation as an integrated system [23]. This approach does not reduce gender to an issue concerning only girls or to the documentation of differences between the sexes. Instead, it provides an analytical lens through which educational opportunity, voice, safety, and the fairness of pedagogical decisions can be examined.

Research on gender-responsive pedagogy in EFL teacher education is only beginning to expand. By observing the teaching practice of pre-service English teachers, Sukanto, Anugerahwati, and Eliyanah found that, although inclusive materials, classroom management, and encouragement of equitable participation were present, these practices were often intuitive extensions of general inclusive pedagogy; explicit preparation in gender-responsive pedagogy was required for deeper and more deliberate decision-making [24]. Miralles-Cardona found that gender-equality content was only moderately integrated into teacher education, that traditional methods remained dominant, and that specialized preparation was associated with pedagogical self-efficacy. The study consequently recommended renewal of both curricula and teacher-educator preparation [25]. Transformative SEL, meanwhile, places identity, agency, belonging, collaborative problem-solving, and educational justice at the centre of SEL [26]. Gender responsiveness should therefore be understood not as an external "addition" to social and emotional competence, but as an internal regulator that shapes whose emotions are recognized, who is given a voice, and how pedagogical decisions affect different learners.

A synthesis of theoretical approaches supports this conclusion. Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso define emotional intelligence as a system of abilities involving the perception of emotion, the use of emotion to facilitate thought, the understanding of emotion, and the management of emotion [27]. Gross's model of emotion regulation distinguishes processes such as situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive reappraisal, and response modulation [28]. Bandura's social cognitive theory establishes the roles of observation, modelling, self-efficacy, and self-regulation in competence development [29]. Vygotsky's cultural-historical approach demonstrates that higher psychological functions first develop through social interaction and subsequently through individual activity [30]. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory suggests that a pre-service teacher's competence is not solely the product of university coursework; it emerges from interactions among higher education, school practicum, mentors, peers, families, and public discourse [31].

The synthesis of the reviewed literature leads to three methodological conclusions. First, social and emotional competence must be modelled as a multilayered construct linking personal attributes, professional activity, and the educational environment. Second, the gender approach should not

be reduced to a simple comparison of competence levels between female and male students; it should support recognition of stereotypes and implicit bias, organization of equitable participation, and evaluation of the consequences of pedagogical decisions. Third, in an EFL context, competence should be expressed through observable performance indicators related to the management of communication anxiety, responses to error, language-learner identity, intercultural sensitivity, and the balance of voices within the group.

METHODOLOGY

The study is theoretical and conceptual in nature. It employs structural-functional modelling, comparative pedagogical analysis, categorical content analysis, theoretical synthesis, pedagogical design, and scientific abstraction. The source corpus comprised three groups: first, the regulatory and legal documents of the Republic of Uzbekistan concerning education and gender equality; second, conceptual and methodological documents produced by UNESCO, OECD, CASEL, FAWE, and UNICEF; and third, peer-reviewed articles and dissertations addressing social and emotional competence, pre-service teacher education, gender-responsive pedagogy, and EFL education. Sources were selected on the basis of direct relevance to the topic, conceptual clarity, methodological transparency, contribution to pedagogical model development, and applicability to the EFL context.

The analysis followed a concept-factor-mechanism-condition-technology-indicator-outcome matrix. First, the conceptual boundaries of social and emotional competence and gender-responsive pedagogy were delineated. Their points of intersection, the functional relationships within existing models, and units of assessment were then compared. At the next stage, emotional and communicative situations specific to EFL classrooms - making errors, speaking in public, being assessed, allocating group roles, using an accent, navigating intercultural difference, and managing conflict - were modelled as professional tasks. Finally, the necessary relationships among objectives, methodological foundations, content components, socio-pedagogical mechanisms, technologies, collaborating actors, diagnostic criteria, and expected outcomes were integrated according to the principle of constructive alignment.

Gender differences were not treated in this study as prescriptive statistical profiles or ready-made formulas for pedagogical "special treatment." The group-level tendencies reported by the OECD were interpreted not as a basis for drawing conclusions about individual students, but as signals prompting examination of the learning environment, expectations, and the

distribution of opportunities [5]. Accordingly, the model does not prescribe methods specifically "for girls" or "for boys." It instead adopts a universal but barrier-sensitive design that enables every student to express emotions, learn from errors, experience both leadership and caring roles, participate with an equitable voice, and receive feedback.

Four validity criteria guided the construction of the conceptual model: content validity, referring to the grounding of components in established theories; structural validity, referring to the coherence of causal and functional relationships among the model's blocks; ecological validity, referring to the applicability of the model across university, school-practicum, and community-partnership settings; and diagnostic validity, referring to the assessment of expected outcomes through observable indicators and evidence. The present article establishes content and structural validity at the theoretical level. The model's measurement properties, effect size, and sustainability of outcomes must be determined through the planned experimental study; consequently, no indicators of empirical effectiveness are reported at this stage.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The theoretical analysis enabled refinement of the concept of a pre-service EFL teacher's social and emotional competence. It is defined as an integrative professional-personal capacity to recognize and regulate one's own emotions; analyse learners' social and emotional states in a gender-responsive manner; organize safe and equitable communication in English; manage collaboration; evaluate the effects of pedagogical decisions on different groups; and act responsibly. This definition integrates three levels of competence: self-awareness and self-management at the level of the self; empathy and relationship management at the level of the other; and gender-responsive analysis and pedagogical decision-making at the level of the situation or system.

A gender-responsive pedagogical approach, in turn, is defined not as dividing learners into fixed groups on the basis of biological sex, but as a system of pedagogical decisions aimed at identifying hidden or explicit barriers to equality in curriculum content, language, participation, relationships, assessment, and resources; critically examining stereotypes; and supporting every student's agency and safety. This interpretation makes it possible to incorporate the gender approach into social and emotional competence not as an "additional topic," but as a criterion regulating how competence is enacted and for whom.

The central proposition of the author's model is as

follows: for social and emotional competence to be enacted effectively in gender-responsive pedagogical practice, students must do more than regulate their own emotions. They must understand how social interpretations of emotion and behaviour are shaped by gendered expectations, view the situation from the perspectives of other participants, equalize opportunities for communication, examine the consequences of decisions, and justify those decisions in EFL practice. This logic integrates the model's goal-oriented methodological, content, process and technology, organizational and collaborative, and diagnostic and outcome blocks into a coherent system.

The model's goal-oriented methodological block translates society's and the education system's need for gender-responsive, socially and emotionally competent pre-service EFL teachers into a specific pedagogical objective. The competency-based approach defines the outcome not as a body of knowledge, but as a capacity demonstrated in authentic situations. The learner-centred approach recognizes students' individual experience and agency. The activity-based approach develops competence through tasks, communication, and reflection. The gender-responsive approach examines the fairness of educational opportunities and impacts. The ecological-systems approach connects the university, school practicum, and social environment. Finally, the reflective approach transforms implicit expectations and automatic reactions into deliberate professional decisions.

The principles underlying this block are equality and non-discrimination, emotional safety, subject-subject interaction, integration, active participation, continuity, contextual relevance, collaboration, and diagnostic transparency. These principles are not a declarative list; each serves as a criterion for methodological decision-making. Emotional safety, for example, requires that errors be treated as sources of learning rather than as grounds for punishment. Equality extends beyond assigning the same task to every student and requires attention to barriers to participation. Diagnostic transparency requires assessment criteria to be disclosed in advance and precludes reliance on a single self-report measure.

The model's content core consists of five components. The first, self-awareness, entails recognizing one's emotional state, values, strengths and limitations, and automatic gender-related assumptions. The second, self-management, does not mean suppressing emotion in situations involving stress, error, conflict, or evaluation; rather, it involves reappraising, expressing, and regulating emotion in ways consistent with professional goals. The third, social awareness and empathy, is the capacity to understand another

person's emotional state, perspective, and social position without substituting stereotypical assumptions for evidence. The fourth, relationship and collaboration skills, encompasses active listening, clear and respectful expression, conflict resolution through negotiation, and balanced distribution of voice and roles within a group. The fifth, responsible pedagogical decision-making, involves anticipating the ethical, educational, and gender-related consequences of a decision, comparing alternatives, and justifying the selected course of action.

The gender-reflexive regulator is not a sixth, independent "subject" added to the five components. Rather, it is a set of inquiry prompts embedded within each component: "Why did I interpret this emotion as a sign of strength or weakness?"; "Whose voice was not heard?"; "Is the tone I use to correct errors consistent across students?"; "Does the allocation of roles reproduce stereotypes?"; "Does the assessment criterion measure oral participation under equally enabling conditions for everyone?"; and "How will my decision affect different individuals in the short and long term?" These questions connect emotional processes with their social context and move the pre-service teacher from intuitive "good intentions" to evidence-informed professional decision-making.

The model's central scientific contribution is a six-stage socio-pedagogical mechanism. The first stage is gender-reflexive awareness: the student identifies stereotypes, expectations, power relations, and personal automatic reactions within a situation. The second is emotional self-regulation: the student recalibrates their reaction in line with the pedagogical objective. The third is empathic perspective-taking: the situation is reconstructed from the standpoint of other participants' experiences and needs. The fourth is equitable communication and collaboration: voice, roles, feedback, and opportunities for participation are balanced. The fifth is responsible pedagogical decision-making: alternative actions are compared in terms of their ethical, didactic, and gender-related consequences. The sixth is transfer to EFL practice: the decision is enacted in microteaching, school practicum, or an authentic lesson and then re-examined through evidence-based reflection.

This mechanism is neither linear nor a one-off algorithm. Consider a microteaching situation in which a male student repeatedly assumes the role of moderator while a female student is assigned the role of recorder. Gender-reflexive awareness identifies the recurring pattern in role allocation. Self-regulation enables the teacher to discuss the situation without blame. Empathic perspective-taking helps clarify the students' consent, anxiety, and prior experience in

relation to the roles. Equitable communication is supported by rotating roles and making selection criteria explicit. Responsible decision-making then considers the effects of this change on language practice and psychological safety. Evidence from subsequent observation initiates a new cycle of reflection.

The process and technology block consists of three stages. At the diagnostic and motivational stage, students use self-assessment, situational tasks, group discussion, and baseline observation to examine their social and emotional profiles, gender-related beliefs, communication barriers, and responses to professional situations. The purpose of this stage is not to assign a "low" or "high" label, but to establish individual development goals. At the content and development stage, conceptual knowledge is integrated with critical incidents, role-play, dialogic laboratories, empathy mapping, emotional reappraisal, conflict mediation, gender auditing, and microteaching. At the reflective transfer stage, students collect evidence from school practicum, compile a portfolio, compare feedback from mentors and peers, explain their developmental trajectory, and set subsequent individual goals.

Activities are designed in accordance with the CASEL-recommended SAFE principles: sequenced, active, focused, and explicit [4]. However, transfer is weakened when generic SEL activities are not adapted to EFL content. Role-play is therefore situated in responding to ridicule following an error in English, involving a shy learner without coercion, or balancing a dominant voice during discussion. Microteaching focuses on revising gender-stereotyped texts, distributing questioning turns equitably, and managing the emotional tone of feedback. Reflective journals follow the prompt: "What did I feel? What did I assume? Who was affected and how? What will I do differently next time?"

The organizational and collaborative block reveals the model's socio-pedagogical nature. The university teacher provides conceptual content and a safe space for experimentation. The school mentor supplies observation and professional feedback in authentic lessons. A psychologist or tutor provides consultative support in relation to emotional strain, conflict, and individual needs. Peers act as partners in collaborative learning and peer assessment. Civil-society organizations contribute authentic cases and resources concerning gender equality, violence prevention, inclusion, and youth engagement. Collaboration with families is not intended to intrude upon students' private lives; it is organized as a dialogue about values and a social environment that supports professional development. Consistent with Bronfenbrenner's ecological approach, coordination among these actors enhances the sustainability of the model's outcomes

[31].

Five groups of pedagogical conditions were identified: first, vertical integration of social and emotional and gender-responsive content across professional courses, methodology, teaching practicum, and tutoring rather than its confinement to a standalone event; second, development of teacher educators' and mentors' own gender reflexivity and social and emotional competence; third, an environment free from discrimination and humiliation that is tolerant of error and safeguards confidentiality and respect; fourth, gender auditing of textbooks, tasks, examples, visual materials, language, and assessment criteria; and fifth, formative assessment, regular feedback, and documentation of transfer to practice. A breakdown in any one of these conditions fragments the model. For example, if a teacher educator who routinely uses stereotypical language facilitates a gender-responsive task, the hidden curriculum contradicts the formal

content.

The model's diagnostic and outcome block is designed to overcome the limitations of measuring competence exclusively through self-report questionnaires. In the assessment of social and emotional competence, self-awareness does not always correspond to behaviour in authentic situations. The model therefore provides for triangulation of evidence: a validated self-report instrument captures the subjective profile; situational judgement tasks reveal decision-making logic; observation of microteaching and practicum documents behavioural enactment; and a reflective portfolio demonstrates development and transfer over time. The OECD's technical approach to standardized procedures and comparability provides important methodological guidance for diagnostic protocols, translation and adaptation, data quality, and between-group comparisons [32].

Table 1. Model components, developmental mechanisms, and diagnostic evidence

Component	Core content	EFL-specific activity	Gender-reflexive question	Diagnostic evidence
Self-awareness	Recognizing emotions, values, strengths and limitations, and automatic assumptions	Analysing language anxiety and responses to error in a reflective journal	Which gendered expectation shaped my interpretation of this person's behaviour?	Reflective writing, self-assessment, concept map
Self-management	Reappraising stress and regulating impulses and expression in line with professional goals	Responding to an unexpected error, silence, or conflict during microteaching	Am I judging the same emotional expression differently depending on the learner's gender?	Observation rubric, critical-incident protocol
Social awareness and empathy	Understanding another perspective on the basis of evidence and distinguishing it from stereotypes	Creating an empathy map for a shy, lower-proficiency, or marginalized learner	Am I making assumptions, or am I listening to the participant's own voice?	Empathy map, interview, situational task
Relationship and collaboration skills	Active listening, equitable voice, role rotation, and conflict mediation	Balancing participation in an English-language discussion or group project	Who is speaking most, whose ideas are being overlooked, and why?	Video observation, peer assessment, sociometric evidence
Responsible pedagogical decision-making	Evaluating the ethical, didactic, and gender-related implications of alternative actions	Decisions about text selection, error correction, assessment, and grouping	How will my decision affect different learners' opportunities, safety, and agency?	Situational judgement task, decision tree, portfolio, and mentor evaluation

The diagnostic criteria were aligned with the functional manifestations of the model's components. The cognitive and gender-reflexive criterion evaluates understanding of concepts and the analysis of stereotypes and situations. The emotional and regulatory criterion assesses emotion recognition, reappraisal, and professional expression. The empathic and perceptual criterion evaluates the ability to identify another perspective and respond appropriately to need. The communicative and

collaborative criterion assesses listening, equitable voice, conflict resolution, and feedback. The responsible action criterion evaluates the justification and implementation of decisions and reflection on their outcomes. Each criterion should be operationalized through behavioural descriptors for high, medium, and low levels. A high level is characterized not by the ability to reproduce theoretical terminology accurately, but by the independent and consistent transfer of competence to a novel situation. At a medium level, the behaviour is

demonstrated with support. At a low level, stereotypes may remain unrecognized, emotional responses may be impulsive, or a gap may persist between declarative knowledge and actual decision-making.

Assessment data should be disaggregated by gender; however, two methodological risks must be avoided. The first is projecting an average group difference onto every individual. The second is interpreting findings without verifying that an instrument measures the same construct in the same way across groups. Future empirical validation should therefore examine measurement invariance, internal consistency, intercriterion associations, inter-rater agreement, and missing data. Results should be analysed not only by female/male group, but also in relation to year of study, baseline level, practicum experience, and educational setting. This approach prevents gender analysis from reproducing the stereotypes it is intended to challenge.

The proposed model differs from existing approaches in four respects. First, it does not merely position social and emotional competence alongside gender-responsive pedagogy; it introduces gender reflexivity as a cross-cutting regulator operating across all five competence areas. Second, competence is operationalized not as a general psychological attribute, but within professional EFL situations involving error, speaking anxiety, public performance, accent, intercultural communication, and group participation. Third, the developmental mechanism is articulated as a chain extending from internal awareness to external pedagogical decision-making and transfer to practice. Fourth, outcomes are not confined to university coursework but are reinforced through ecological collaboration among school mentors, psychologists or tutors, peers, and community actors.

The model extends, within a unified system, Jennings and Greenberg's link among teacher competence, classroom climate, and student outcomes [6]; Jagers and colleagues' argument for enriching SEL through identity, agency, and justice [26]; and Sukamto and colleagues' conclusion that gender-responsive preparation should be intentionally strengthened in EFL practice [24]. Unlike these approaches, however, the present model identifies the pre-service EFL teacher's micro-decisions - whom to invite to speak, how to correct an error, how to allocate roles, which language to use in managing conflict, and how to make assessment criteria transparent - as directly observable units of social and emotional competence.

The model cannot be implemented effectively by adding a single short course to the curriculum.

Corcoran and O'Flaherty demonstrate the need to address SEL and well-being at the programme level in pre-service teacher education [33]. Teacher educators' positioning toward gender-responsive pedagogy is also important because their implicit expectations and routine practices become models for pre-service teachers [34]. The proposed model therefore requires a combination of a dedicated module, cross-curricular integration, teaching practicum, tutoring and reflection, and institutional monitoring. The dedicated module establishes the conceptual foundation; cross-curricular integration links it to methodology and language courses; practicum tests behavioural transfer; tutoring provides emotional support; and monitoring reveals recurring patterns of inequality within the system.

The limitations of this theoretical contribution must be stated explicitly. First, the model is grounded in literature synthesis and pedagogical modelling but has not yet been tested in Uzbekistan's higher education context. Second, the linguistic and cultural adaptation of international instruments requires separate psychometric examination. Third, although comparison between female and male students remains practically relevant in gender analysis, intersections with personal experience, region, language proficiency, socioeconomic position, and other factors must not be overlooked. Fourth, the sustainability of the model's outcomes requires follow-up measurement after teaching practicum and during the early stage of employment. These limitations do not weaken the model; they define the methodological boundaries and specific agenda for subsequent empirical testing.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The theoretical and comparative analysis demonstrates that developing pre-service EFL teachers' social and emotional competencies through a gender-responsive pedagogical approach is not a standalone training course or a collection of topics. It is a socio-pedagogical system that establishes functional relationships among objectives, content, mechanisms, technologies, collaboration, assessment, and outcomes. The competence areas of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and empathy, relationship and collaboration skills, and responsible pedagogical decision-making were reconceptualized in relation to specific emotional and communicative situations in the EFL classroom.

The study's principal scientific contribution is the conceptual justification of a gender-reflexive regulator and a six-stage socio-pedagogical mechanism. The sequence gender-reflexive awareness → emotional self-regulation → empathic perspective-taking → equitable communication and collaboration → responsible

pedagogical decision-making → transfer to EFL practice connects personal emotional skills with social justice and professional activity. The gender approach thereby moves beyond demographic comparison or formal equality and becomes an analytical and practical instrument guiding teachers' everyday micro-decisions.

The author's model comprises goal-oriented methodological, content, process and technology, organizational and collaborative, and diagnostic and outcome blocks. Its operation is supported by vertical integration of curriculum content, preparation of teacher educators and mentors, an emotionally safe environment, gender auditing of materials and assessment, active and reflective technologies, multi-actor collaboration, and assessment based on triangulation of evidence. If any of these relationships is disrupted, competence may remain at the level of declarative knowledge or fail to transfer to authentic pedagogical situations.

The following recommendations are proposed for practical implementation: (1) introduce a dedicated module on social and emotional competence and gender-responsive pedagogy into pre-service EFL teacher curricula and integrate its elements into methodology, practical language, pedagogy, and practicum courses; (2) develop teacher educators' and school mentors' gender reflexivity, emotional self-regulation, and competence in providing psychologically safe feedback; (3) standardize EFL-based applications of critical incidents, role-play, microteaching, empathy mapping, reflective journals, and portfolios; (4) develop an assessment package combining self-report, situational judgement, observation, and portfolio evidence; (5) examine measurement invariance and contextual factors so that findings for female and male students are interpreted without stereotyping; and (6) institutionalize university-school-mentor-psychologist/tutor-community collaboration within teaching-practicum programmes.

At the next stage of research, the model's content validity should be examined through expert review, the reliability of the diagnostic instruments through a pilot study, and its pedagogical effectiveness through a longitudinal experiment involving experimental and control groups. Baseline equivalence, attrition, between-group and within-group change, effect sizes, interactions by gender and year of study, and indicators of transfer to practice should be reported transparently. Such empirical verification would transform the conceptual model into an evidence-based, replicable technology adapted to the context of higher teacher education in Uzbekistan.

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