

The effect of an 8-week service-learning program on traditional sports games courses on the soft skills of pre-service physical education teachers

YAHYA EKO NOPIYANTO¹, DIAN PUJANTO², IRA MAISARAH³, WAYNE COTTON⁴

^{1,2}Department of Physical Education, University of Bengkulu, INDONESIA

³Department of English Education, University of Bengkulu, INDONESIA

⁴Department of Physical Education, University of Sydney, AUSTRALIA

Published online: December 31, 2023

(Accepted for publication : December 15, 2023)

DOI:10.7752/jpes.2023.12400

Abstract:

Soft skills are essential to helping pre-service physical education teachers become successful people after completing their undergraduate education. However, it is miserable that in the lecture process, not all courses integrate improving pre-service physical education teachers' soft skills. This research aimed to examine the effect of 8 weeks of service learning in traditional sports games courses on improving the soft skills of prospective physical education teachers. Experimental research with a one-group pre-test and post-test design was used. The population in this study were prospective physical education teachers for the 5th semester of the 2023 academic year, with 30 students. Sampling was taken using the total sampling technique. In collecting data, an instrument in the form of a questionnaire was used, which was prepared and developed by the researcher. This instrument has a validity value of 0.49 - 0.84 and a reliability of 0.92. Quantitative analysis was used using the ideal standard deviation and ideal average value. Furthermore, to determine the difference between before and after service-learning, paired sample t-test analysis was used. The result of this research showed a significant difference in soft skills between before and after service learning (Sig .000 or < 0.05). This research concluded that the soft skills of pre-service physical education teachers after-service learning have a better score compared to before-service learning. In the service-learning process, pre-service physical education teachers integrated classroom knowledge with actual community practice.

Key Words: service learning, pre-service teacher, soft skills, traditional sport, games.

Introduction

In the current era, the issue of teacher preparation education in Indonesia has become the center of attention of many groups. Several reasons exist, including the low quality of teachers in Indonesia (Listyantari, 2019). The average national teacher competency test result is 53.02, while the government targets an average score of 55. In addition, the average professional score is 54.77, and the average for pedagogical competence is 48.94. The low quality of teachers is influenced by many factors, one of which is teacher education in Indonesia, which needs to prepare teachers according to what teachers need (St. Syamsudduha & Tekeng, 2017).

The learning process in Indonesian tertiary institutions is getting much attention from educational experts because they cannot balance hard and soft skills (Ingsih & Suhana, 2023). Balancing hard and soft skills is needed, especially in learning. Suppose the hard skills dimension emphasizes providing technical and academic skills related to the field of study. In that case, the soft skills dimension emphasizes intrapersonal and interpersonal skills more. However, in reality, the learning process in tertiary institutions is more dominant in emphasizing hard skills (Murti, 2022).

Soft skills have various definitions. Some experts argue that soft skills are interpersonal skills that a person has to build relationships between people (Hendarman & Canther, 2018; Viviers et al., 2016; Wu et al., 2015). Meanwhile, another opinion states that soft skills are intrapersonal and interpersonal skills important for personal and social development and success in the workplace. These skills include communication, collaboration, and adaptation (Charoensap-Kelly et al., 2016). Soft skills are defined as personality traits, goals, motivations, and preferences valued in the job market, at school, and in many other fields (Wesley et al., 2017). Teachers need to have soft skills that include communication skills, the ability to think and solve problems, build cooperation, develop innovation, leadership skills, ethics, and professionalism (AlHouli & Al-Khayatt, 2020). Soft skills are essential for pre-service Physical Education (PE) teachers who will be physical education teachers in the future. The soft skills teachers possess will make a difference in the quality of teaching and effectiveness because teaching is a complex action (Ngang et al., 2015).

The soft skills of pre-service teachers can be optimized with service learning, namely, learning that can facilitate the interrelationships between academic studies and the practice of community service experience (Lake et al., 2015). Service learning (SL) is learning that organically provides opportunities for students to provide services to the community through reflection on implementing course material, small group discussions,

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and presentations (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996). SL is different from internships and practica because experience in internships and practica is not necessarily based on professional educational skills.

The results of previous research indicated that the application of SL can improve the soft skills of pre-service teachers such as learning skills, collaboration, and use of information and communication of technology (Valtonen et al., 2021); improved communication skills, respect for others, increased self-confidence (Lavery & Coffey, 2016); problem-solving skills (Fadli & Irwanto, 2020); improve collaboration skills (Rodrigo & Tan, 2016); enhancing self-efficacy (Grimminger-Seidensticker & Seyda, 2022).

Based on previous research, the application of SL can improve the soft skills of pre-service teachers. However, based on the interview results, it was miserable that it was not implemented in traditional sports game courses. Even though this course is a compulsory subject that physical education students at the University of Bengkulu must follow. This course gives pre-service physical education teachers the knowledge and skills to play traditional sports in Indonesia, especially in Bengkulu province. By having the knowledge and skills regarding traditional sports games, the pre-service physical education teacher has the responsibility to introduce traditional sports games to the community.

Referring to the advantages of SL, it is feasible to apply it to the courses followed by pre-service teachers (Carrington et al., 2015). Based on this description, the authors intended to research the development of the soft skills of pre-service PE teachers through service learning in traditional sports game courses. This research is feasible as a step to introduce SL as a pedagogical methodology in physical education, especially in traditional sports games courses. The SL approach will provide an overview of improving soft skills, refuting those who still doubt the benefits of SL for improving soft skills. Moreover, there are still few SL research topics in physical education, especially in traditional sports games courses.

Traditional sports games are a cultural heritage passed down from ancestors from generation to generation through verbal communication or demonstration (Charles et al., 2017; Saura & Zimmermann, 2021). Traditional sports games as cultural heritage also have many benefits for developing soft skills such as cooperation, discipline, responsibility, leadership, respect for others, self-confidence, and honesty (Oboeuf et al., 2020; Nur et al., 2020). Several traditional sports games originating from Bengkulu province include Ramai Game, Pak Pisang Game, Sekimbunan Game, and Cipak or Sepak Raga Game (Department of Education and Culture, 1984).

Various relevant studies have been described in the previous paragraphs, but each study still needs to improve. So, this study offers a new one, namely the application of 8 weeks of SL in traditional sports games courses, using an experiment method, and analyzes the development of soft skills for pre-service physical education teachers. Then, the main objective of this research was to implement the SL program for pre-service PE teachers, thereby generating new and exciting findings regarding applying this methodology in traditional sports games, particularly for promoting soft skills for the pre-service PE teacher. Meanwhile, the urgency or priority of this research is to produce valid and comprehensive data for policy-making for Physical Education study programs in implementing SL into other courses. This research contributed to the achievement of the University of Bengkulu Research Master Plan, which is to improve the quality of education based on local culture in coastal areas. In addition, this research contributed to introducing traditional sports games from Bengkulu Province to world audiences (indigenous knowledge and resources).

Material & methods

This research was a quasi-experiment with a one-group pre-test and post-test design (Dawson, 2007). The participants in this research were 30 pre-service physical education teachers. The time used to implement service learning in this research was 8 weeks divided into 1 week for observing, 1 week for planning, 4 weeks for carrying out actions, 1 week for reflection, and 1 week for demonstrating the results of activities. The research implementation procedures can be seen in Table 1.

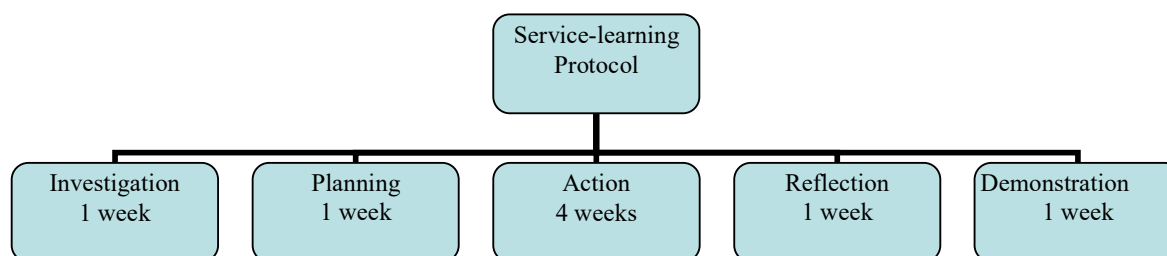


Figure 1. The process of implementing the Service-Learning program

In the SL implementation process, pre-service PE teachers go through several stages. The first stage was investigation. In this stage, pre-service PE teachers identified the needs of the community in predetermined elementary schools, namely (State Elementary School 82 Bengkulu City, State Elementary School 24 Bengkulu City, and State Elementary School 106, Bengkulu City). Community needs were analyzed using site surveys,

interviews with physical education teachers and students, observation, and documentation. The results of the first phase of activities concluded that traditional Bengkulu sports games had yet to be implemented well in the school. The investigation divided prospective physical education teachers into 4 large groups. To carry out the investigation stage, soft skills consist of teamwork between members, verbal communication, leadership, and the ability to understand community needs.

The second stage was planning to act. Each group member collaborates to develop an implementation plan. Pre-service PE teachers collaborated with the community to arrange implementation times, what will be done, how to do it, and develop a program implementation schedule. From the results of the second stage, it can be concluded that each team will implement the SL program by providing services to students regarding traditional sports games from Bengkulu. The implementation time was scheduled for 4 weeks. In preparing an implementation plan, patience, the ability to solve problems, verbal and written communication, and the ability to appreciate differences were needed.

After community service was carried out for 4 weeks, it continued with the reflection stage. At this stage, all group members were reflected by sharing experiences, knowledge, and skills obtained while participating in the SL program.

The final stage was the demonstration. Each group member demonstrated the influence and values obtained during the SL process, what was obtained during the activity, and how to obtain it.

Data collection

The data in this research was collected using an instrument in the form of a questionnaire consisting of 43 statement items. The validity of the instrument was 0.49 - 0.84, and the reliability of the instrument was 0.92.

Table 1. Instrument

No	Indicator	Item
1	Verbal communication	1, 2
2	Teaching skills	3, 4, 5
3	Leadership	6, 7
4	Teamwork	8, 9, 10
5	Patience	11, 12, 13
6	Self-potential	14, 15, 16
7	Writing communication	17, 18, 19
8	Problem-solving	20, 21, 22, 23
9	Administration	24, 25, 26
10	Community needs	27, 28
11	Accept differences	29, 30
12	Help others	31, 32
13	Career understanding	33, 34
14	Course understanding	35, 36, 37, 38
15	Academic development	39, 40, 41, 42, 43

Statistical analysis

To find out the level of pre-service PE teachers' soft skills, the researcher compiled criteria using a formula that can be seen in Table 2. An Independent sample t-test assisted by SPSS Software variant 22 was used to analyze data on differences between the pre-test and post-test.

Table 2. Formula of Categories

No	Interval	Category
1	$> (Mi + 1.8 SD) - (Mi + 3 SD)$	Very High
2	$> (Mi + 0.6 SD) - (Mi + 1.8 SD)$	High
3	$> (Mi - 0.6SD) - (Mi + 0.6 SD)$	Moderate
4	$> (Mi - 1.8 SD) - (Mi - 0.6SD)$	Low
5	$(Mi - 3SD) - (Mi - 1.8 SD)$	Very Low

$$Mi = \frac{ST+SR}{2}$$

$$SD = \frac{ST-SR}{6}$$

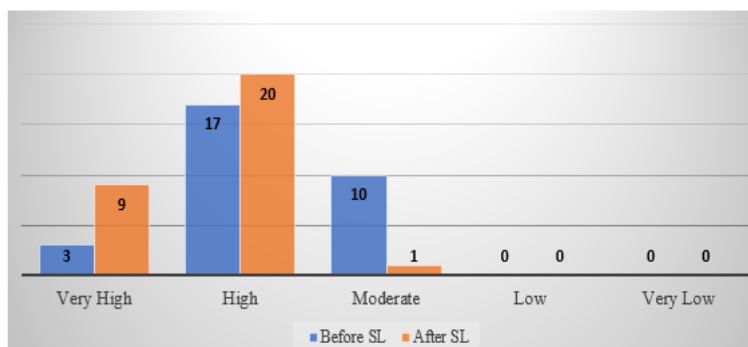
Note : Mi = Mean Ideal, ST = Maximum Score, SR = Minimum Score, SD = Standard Deviation

Results

Information regarding the soft skills of pre-service PE teachers during the pre-test and post-test is presented in Table 3. There are five categories of soft skills for pre-service PE teachers, SL there were soft skills in the moderate category as many as 10 pre-service PE teachers, soft skills in the high category as many as 17 pre-service PE teachers, and soft skills in the very high category as many as 3 pre-service PE teacher. Meanwhile, in the post-test, there was an increase in the soft skills of pre-service PE teachers, wherein in the high category there were 20 pre-service PE teachers, in the very high category there were 9 pre-service PE teachers, and in the moderate category there was only 1 pre-service PE teacher.

Table 3. Soft skills Before and After SL

No	Interval	Category	Pre-test Frequency	Post-test Frequency
1	182 – 215	Very High	3	9
2	147 – 181	High	17	20
3	113 – 146	Moderate	10	1
4	69 – 112	Low	0	0
5	42 – 68	Very Low	0	0
Total			30	30

**Figure 2.** Soft Skills of Pre-service PE teacher Before and After SL**Table 4.** Descriptive Soft Skills Data

No	Indicator	Pre-test		Post-test	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Verbal communication	7.10	1.75	8.60	1.45
2	Teaching skills	10.77	2.91	13.13	2.33
3	Leadership	6.87	1.85	8.30	1.44
4	Teamwork	12.93	2.13	13.47	1.61
5	Patience	11.67	2.04	12.53	1.81
6	Self-potential	11.70	2.23	12.63	1.99
7	Writing communication	9.60	2.13	10.03	1.63
8	Problem-solving	13.07	2.13	12.87	2.23
9	Administration	10.23	2.60	12.03	2.31
10	Community needs	7.10	2.01	8.30	1.58
11	Accept differences	7.83	1.60	8.47	1.43
12	Help others	6.47	0.94	6.37	1.07
13	Career understanding	5.87	1.01	6.10	0.88
14	Course understanding	14.53	2.73	16.40	2.36
15	Academic development	18.10	3.81	20.70	2.88

In general, from the descriptive data displayed in Table 4, it can be seen that there were differences in the mean values and standard deviations of each indicator used in this research. In general, the mean value and standard deviation on the post-test have a value that is greater than the pre-test value.

To find out the differences in the soft skills of pre-service PE teachers before and after participating in the SL program, a statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS version 22. The results of the normality test analysis were displayed in Table 5.

Table 5. Test of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig	Statistic	df	Sig
Pre-test	.131	30	.200	.969	30	.514
Post-test	.101	30	.200	.981	30	.840

From the normality analysis in Table 5, it is known that the sig value in the pre-test data is 0.514, which means it was greater than 0.05, so it can be concluded that the pre-test data was normally distributed. Furthermore, it was also informed that the sig value in the post-test data was 0.840, which indicated it was greater than 0.05, so it could be concluded that the post-test data was normally distributed. Because both data were normally distributed, we continued with data homogeneity analysis, the results of which are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Levene statistic	df1	df2	Sig
1.753	1	58	.193

The sig value shown in Table 6 is 0.193, which indicated that it was greater than 0.05, so it can be concluded that the research data were homogeneous in distribution. Because the two analysis prerequisites have been met, we continued with the paired sample test analysis shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Paired Sample Test

Paired Differences							
Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		mean	Lower	Upper			
-22.800	27.131	4.953	-32.931	-12.669	-4.603	29	.000

From the results of the paired sample test in Table 7, the 2-tailed sig result is 0.000, which showed less than 0.05, so it is concluded that there was a significant difference.

Discussion

The most significant finding was the 8-week SL program can generally improve the soft skills of pre-service PE teachers. The learning process was said to be successful if there was a change from not knowing to know, from having a negative attitude to a positive attitude, and from being self-centered to serving others (He et al., 2023). SL is a learning strategy that can make pre-service PE teachers into people who are helpful to others by serving others to increase awareness. SL is a way of teaching and learning in higher education that connects positive and meaningful societal action with academic learning, personal development, and responsibility as a national color (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995). SL is a form of experiential education where students are involved in activities related to human and community needs with deliberately planned opportunities to improve student development and learning (Weigert, 1998).

The increase in soft skills in this research can be seen from the quantitative descriptive results in Table 4. In the communication indicators, there was an increase in verbal and written communication skills. Verbal and written communication is essential for pre-service teachers to interact socially in their environment (Coogole et al., 2015). Through the SL program, pre-service PE teachers have a lot of social interactions with colleagues and teachers in the school environment, which is the location for implementing the SL program (Peralta et al., 2016). Increasing the soft skills of pre-service PE teachers in verbal and written communication indicators is demonstrated by communication skills in socialization and program planning. Pre-service PE teachers can improve communication by carrying out an SL program that includes teaching and reflection activities (Najmr et al., 2018). In the classroom learning process, pre-service PE teachers are equipped with various practical and theoretical teaching skills (Valério et al., 2018). Lecturers usually apply peer teaching to help pre-service PE teachers acquire teaching skills (Pazo et al., 2018). However, they have not yet practiced the knowledge gained in the classroom to people outside the campus or community. Through the SL program, for 8 weeks, pre-service PE teachers practice directly and contribute positively to teaching learning material, especially traditional sports games from Bengkulu, namely Ramai Game, Pak Pisang Game, Sekimbunan Game, and Cipak or Sepak Raga Game. In implementing SL, pre-service PE teachers carry out learning planning and assessments and evaluate and strategize the learning material delivered to students. The strategy used by pre-service PE teachers in delivering the material is one of the keys to students' successful acceptance of the material (Nicolosi et al., 2023). Through this process, there will be an increase in the teaching skills of pre-service PE teachers.

The results of this research were relevant to various previous studies, which revealed that the SL program could improve leadership (Egan et al., 2023; Stafford et al., 2023). The SL program connects pre-service PE teachers with partner communities to identify problems, solve problems together, reflect on activities, and discuss with group members and partner communities. With the various activities carried out during the SL process, pre-service PE teachers will continue to strive to provide the best for themselves and society so that thinking like this will continue to grow their leadership. Experience and reflection will help someone develop their ability to lead (Tzeni et al., 2019). Most of the stages pre-service PE teachers have gone through in implementing the SL program cannot be separated from the cooperation of various parties. For example, the stages in identifying partner problems and needs are carried out collaboratively between pre-service PE teachers and the partner community. This activity will have a positive impact on improving skills in working together. Identifying partner problems can improve the skills of pre-service PE teachers in understanding community needs, developing potential in partner communities (Herold & Waring, 2018), and developing cultural competency (Winslade, 2016). At the end of the SL program activity process, pre-service PE teachers can feel and understand the meaning of the courses they have taken, feel an increase in interest in becoming physical education teachers in the future, and the most important thing is that there is academic improvement (Lleixà & Ríos, 2015). Academic improvement of pre-service PE teachers can occur due to positive integration between the knowledge gained in the classroom and its exemplary implementation in society (Bettencourt, 2015).

Conclusions

Service Learning is part of an educational process where students are directed to study lecture material and apply it to make it worthwhile for the surrounding community. This learning model applies knowledge development through projects and activities. In implementing lectures in service learning, lecturers and pre-

service PE teachers must collaboratively determine objectives and assessment criteria and prepare learning plans. The process is then directed at preparing an analysis of location selection, determining pre-service PE teachers' roles and responsibilities in the project being carried out, as well as determining an applicable form from the pre-service PE teacher's perspective so that they can demonstrate what has been learned.

Soft skills are personal and interpersonal behaviors that can help individuals develop and optimize individual performance in society, whether for the individual themselves, in groups, or with God. The soft skills referred to in this research were verbal communication, teaching skills, leadership, teamwork, patience, self-potential, writing communication, problem-solving, administration, community needs, accepting differences, helping others, career understanding, course understanding, and academic development.

This research concluded that integrating SL in traditional sports games courses is the right strategy to help pre-service PE teachers improve soft skills. Through SL, pre-service PE teachers can learn to communicate verbally and in writing, learn to be administratively orderly, identify community needs, solve problems faced by the community, help the community develop their potential, help understand the courses they are taking, and help to increase interest become a teacher, and the most important thing is to develop the academics of pre-service PE teachers.

The results of this research provided theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, it can provide empirical justification for the SL model's significance in improving pre-service PE teachers' soft skills. This justification can strengthen the theory or concept of the SL model, especially its effectiveness in developing soft skills in traditional sports game lectures and the truth or coherence of the SL model. Practically, this research can be helpful to lecturers, pre-service PE teachers, and institutions, namely that it can be used as a reference and alternative for selecting innovative learning models to improve the soft skills of prospective physical education teachers.

However, it is essential to realize the limitations of this research in that the soft skills that are part of this research are general. Each indicator of soft skills needs to be studied in more depth. Apart from that, the samples used in this research were fifth-semester physical education teacher candidates, and the partner communities involved were the community at state elementary schools. This study used only one sample, so comparisons with the control group were not carried out. Furthermore, it is necessary to carry out a more comprehensive sample and compare it with the control group so that the comparison between the soft skills of pre-service PE teacher teachers is known.

Funding

The Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Bengkulu, funded the research through an international collaboration scheme in 2023 with contract number 8427/UN30.7/PP/2023.

Conflicts of interest: In this study, no conflicts of interest were declared by the research team.

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