



TEACHING JOB ASPIRATION AMONG B.ED. STUDENTS: A SUBJECT-WISE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Teaching job aspiration plays a vital role in shaping the professional commitment and career endurance of prospective teachers. This study aimed to determine the level of teaching job aspiration among B.Ed. students affiliated with the University of Calicut and to examine differences based on subject specialization. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The sample comprised 146 B.Ed. students selected through a simple random sampling method across six optional subjects. Data were collected using the Teaching Job Aspiration Scale for B.Ed. Students, a five-point Likert scale developed and standardized by the investigator. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, one-way ANOVA, and Tukey's HSD post-hoc test. The findings revealed that majority of B.Ed. students exhibited a highly favorable level of teaching job aspiration. Significant differences were found among students belonging to different subject specializations, with Commerce students displaying the highest mean score and Social Science students displaying the lowest. The study highlights the necessity of strengthening professional motivation through subject-tailored pedagogical practices in teacher education programmes.

Keywords: *Career Aspiration, Teacher Education, Teaching Job Aspiration, Subject Specialization, B.Ed. Students*

Introduction

Teaching is universally recognized as one of the most influential professions, playing a crucial role in shaping the intellectual, social, emotional, and moral development of individuals and, consequently, driving societal progress. Teachers form the bedrock of educational systems;

thus, the quality of education depends directly on their competence, intrinsic motivation, professional commitment, and dedication (Darling-Hammond, 2017; OECD, 2020). The effectiveness of classroom practitioners not only dictates student academic achievement but also fosters the development of responsible citizens capable of navigating a rapidly evolving global landscape.

Teacher education programmes serve as the critical bridge for preparing competent and committed educators. Pre-service teacher education—specifically the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programme—is structured to equip prospective teachers with pedagogical knowledge, instructional skills, ethical values, and positive attitudes toward the teaching profession (NCTE, 2014). Beyond imparting pedagogical techniques, these programmes are tasked with cultivating a strong professional identity and instilling deep-seated career aspirations that encourage prospective teachers to view teaching as a lifelong, fulfilling vocation.

Teaching job aspiration refers to the degree of interest, motivation, willingness, and long-term commitment an individual possesses toward selecting and continuing in a teaching career. It reflects a student teacher's occupational goals, intrinsic drive, and enthusiasm for contributing to the educational landscape. Empirical research indicates that individuals with higher teaching aspirations demonstrate enhanced instructional effectiveness, greater job satisfaction, higher resilience, and persistent retention within the profession (Richardson & Watt, 2006; Watt & Richardson, 2007).

The importance of examining teaching job aspirations has gained strategic momentum under recent educational reforms. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India stresses the critical need to attract, retain, and empower talented individuals within the teaching profession while restructuring pre-service teacher training (Government of India, 2020). Correspondingly, Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) underscores the global urgency for highly qualified and motivated teachers to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all (UNESCO, 2021).

Despite these policy mandates, empirical research specifically addressing teaching job aspirations among pre-service teachers—and how these aspirations vary across academic subject specializations—remains limited in the Indian higher education context. Factors such as subject-specific employment markets, changing economic expectations, and societal perceptions of discipline-specific teaching roles significantly influence a candidate's aspiration. Investigating these patterns provides critical empirical data needed by teacher educators and policymakers to refine recruitment strategies, address discipline-specific motivational gaps, and elevate the standard of teacher preparation.

Review of Related Literature and Background of the Study

Teaching job aspiration and professional motivation have received considerable attention globally because of their direct influence on career selection, instructional performance, and teacher retention. In India, studies on student-teacher attitudes consistently indicate that pre-service training fosters positive professional perceptions. Sharath Kumar and Praveena (2023) and Roy (2021) highlighted that B.Ed. training significantly enhances creative teaching attitudes

and professional commitment. Yadav and Singh (2023) observed that policy alignment and structured institutional training positively mold student teachers' professional outlooks. Furthermore, More (2023) demonstrated that specific pedagogical interventions (such as the Concept Attainment Model) improve teaching proficiency and boost instructional confidence. Examining psychological readiness, Bazmi (2024) and Srivastava and Gupta (2024) reported strong positive correlations between career maturity, academic stress management, and general teaching competency among student teachers. Similarly, Singh et al. (2024) confirmed that prospective teachers generally maintain favorable attitudes toward entering the workforce.

International studies emphasize the psychological drivers behind career choices. Richardson and Watt (2006) introduced the FIT-Choice (Factors Influencing Teaching Choice) framework, establishing that intrinsic value, perceived ability, and altruistic desires are primary motivators for entering teaching. Their follow-up longitudinal research (Watt & Richardson, 2007) demonstrated that prospective teachers with high initial career aspirations show substantially higher professional engagement and lower burnout rates. Klassen and Chiu (2011) and Guo and Xu (2024) verified that self-efficacy, emotional regulation, and basic psychological need satisfaction directly predict occupational commitment across career stages. Reports by the OECD (2020) reinforce these findings, noting that high career motivation among teachers correlates with superior system-wide educational outcomes.

Looking beyond teacher education, broader vocational research shows that career aspirations develop through complex socio-cognitive processes. According to Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent et al., 1994), self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and contextual supports collectively shape career choices. Studies among undergraduate and postgraduate students in non-teaching disciplines (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Savickas, 2013) demonstrate that career aspirations are heavily moderated by academic specialization, domain-specific job market prospects, and perceived societal prestige.

Research Gap

While prior literature extensively examines general teaching attitudes, self-efficacy, and career maturity, a notable empirical gap exists regarding teaching job aspiration as a standalone quantitative construct among B.Ed. candidates in Kerala, particularly within the University of Calicut. Furthermore, comparative analysis evaluating how teaching job aspiration varies across distinct optional subjects (e.g., Science vs. Humanities vs. Commerce) remains under-researched. The present study directly addresses this research gap.

Research Questions

The research is framed up on the following research questions;

- What is the teaching job aspiration level among B.Ed. students of the University of Calicut?
- Has there any significant difference in teaching job aspiration among B.Ed. students across different subject specializations?

Objectives of the Study

The research objectives of the study are:

- To determine the levels of teaching job aspiration among B.Ed. students
- To examine whether significant differences exist in teaching job aspiration among B.Ed. students based on their subject specialization.

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey design, which allowed the investigator to collect quantitative data from a representative sample of student teachers without manipulating any existing variables.

Sample

The sample comprised 146 B.Ed. students randomly selected from teacher training colleges affiliated with the University of Calicut. The sample includes representation across six optional subjects. Table 1 details the sample distribution.

Table 1 *Subject-wise Distribution of the Sample*

Optional Subject	Sample Size (N)	Percentage (%)
Mathematics	25	17.12%
English	24	16.44%
Commerce	24	16.44%
Natural Science	24	16.44%
Physical Science	24	16.44%
Social Science	25	17.12%
Total	146	100.00%

As shown in Table 1, the sample is balanced across all six subject specializations, ensuring representative subgroup analyses.

Tool Used: Standardization Process

Data were gathered using the Teaching Job Aspiration Scale for B.Ed. Students, developed and standardized by the investigator.

Initial Draft: The preliminary version contained 40 items covering key dimensions such as intrinsic interest, professional status preference, career dedication, and pedagogical commitment.

Item Analysis: The initial draft was administered to a trial sample of 50 student teachers. Item-total correlations and discrimination indices (t-values) were calculated. Items with t-values ≥ 1.75 and item-total correlations $r \geq 0.30$ were retained.

Final Draft: The final scale retained 25 items (18 positively phrased and 7 negatively phrased).

Validity and Reliability: Content and face validity were established through expert review by teacher educators. The reliability coefficient was computed using Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.88$), indicating high internal consistency.

Scoring Procedure

Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

Positive Items: SA = 5, A = 4, U = 3, D = 2, SD = 1

Negative Items: SA = 1, A = 2, U = 3, D = 4, SD = 5

Total scores ranged from a minimum of 25 to a maximum of 125. Higher scores represent stronger teaching job aspirations.

Classification Criteria

To interpret the quantitative scores, participants were categorized into five distinct levels of teaching job aspiration based on percentage cut-offs, as defined in Table 2.

Table 2 *Classification Criteria for Levels of Teaching Job Aspiration*

Category	Percentage Criterion	Score Range
High Aspirant	85% and above	106 – 125
Moderate Aspirant	75% – 84%	94 – 105
Partial Aspirant	65% – 74%	81 – 93
Least Aspirant	50% – 64%	63 – 80
Poor Aspirant	Below 50%	Below 63

Data Collection and Analysis

The scale was administered directly to B.Ed. students with prior institutional permission. Statistical processing was performed using Jamovi software (v2.3), utilizing descriptive metrics (Mean, SD, Percentages), inferential metrics (One-Way ANOVA), and Tukey's HSD Post-Hoc tests.

Results and Interpretation

Level of Teaching Job Aspiration

To address Objective 1, raw scores were categorized according to the criteria defined in Table 2. The distribution of B.Ed. students across aspiration levels is presented in Table 3.

Table 3 *Levels of Teaching Job Aspiration among B.Ed. Students (N = 146)*

Level of Aspiration	Score Range	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
High Aspirant	106 – 125	12	8.22%
Moderate Aspirant	94 – 105	83	56.85%
Partial Aspirant	81 – 93	47	32.19%
Least Aspirant	63 – 80	4	2.74%
Poor Aspirant	Below 63	0	0.00%
Total	—	146	100.00%

Interpretation of Level Analysis

The data in Table 3 indicate that a clear majority of the students (56.85%, $f = 83$) fall into the Moderate Aspirant category, followed by 32.19% ($f = 47$) categorized as Partial Aspirants. Furthermore, 8.22% ($f = 12$) demonstrated high career drive (High Aspirants), while only a minor fraction (2.74%, $f = 4$) were Least Aspirants. Significantly, no students fell into the Poor Aspirant group (0.00%).

These results confirm that the vast majority of B.Ed. candidates at the University of Calicut maintain a highly positive, favorable orientation toward pursuing a teaching career.

Subject-Wise Comparison of Teaching Job Aspiration

To address Objective 2, descriptive statistics were calculated for each optional subject, followed by a One-Way ANOVA.

Table 4 Subject-Wise Descriptive Statistics for Teaching Job Aspiration

Optional Subject	N	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Standard Error (SE)
Commerce	24	100.20	7.00	1.429
English	24	95.70	4.83	0.987
Mathematics	25	95.20	5.58	1.116
Physical Science	24	94.90	5.44	1.110
Natural Science	24	94.30	8.06	1.646
Social Science	25	93.20	7.37	1.475

Interpretation of Descriptive Findings

As illustrated in Table 4, Commerce students recorded the highest mean teaching job aspiration score ($\bar{X} = 100.20$, $SD = 7.00$), whereas Social Science students recorded the lowest mean score ($\bar{X} = 93.20$, $SD = 7.37$). Despite these variations, all subject groups recorded mean scores above 93.00, confirming high baseline career aspirations across all discipline specializations.

Inferential Analysis (One-Way ANOVA)

To determine whether the observed mean differences between subject specializations were statistically significant, a One-Way ANOVA was performed.

Table 5 One-Way ANOVA Results comparing Teaching Job Aspiration by Subject Specialization

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Mean Square (MS)	F-value	p-value
Between Groups	701.32	5	140.26	3.34	.007
Within Groups	5873.68	140	41.95	—	—
Total	6575.00	145	—	—	—

Interpretation of ANOVA

As shown in Table 5, the One-Way ANOVA yielded a statistically significant main effect for subject specialization, $F(5, 140) = 3.34$, $p = .007$. Because $p < .05$, the null hypothesis was

rejected. This confirms that teaching job aspiration varies significantly depending on a student teacher's academic subject specialization.

Post-Hoc Analysis (Tukey's HSD)

Because the overall F-test was statistically significant, a Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) post-hoc test was performed to pinpoint specific pairwise group differences.

Pairwise Post-Hoc Analysis (Tukey's HSD Matrix)

To determine the exact pairwise differences between subject streams, Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) post-hoc test was conducted. Table 6 presents the standardized matrix output.

Table 6: Tukey Post-Hoc Test Matrix – Pairwise Mean Differences and p-values

Subject Stream	Commerce	English	Mathematics	Natural Sci.	Physical Sci.	Social Sci.
Commerce	—	4.542 (p = .155)	5.048 (p = .077)	5.875* (p = .025)	5.292 (p = .059)	6.973** (p = .003)
English		—	0.507 (p = 1.000)	1.333 (p = .980)	0.750 (p = .999)	2.432 (p = .780)
Mathematics			—	0.827 (p = .998)	0.243 (p = 1.000)	1.925 (p = .901)
Natural Science				—	-0.583 (p = 1.000)	1.098 (p = .992)
Physical Science					—	1.682 (p = .945)
Social Science						—

* Statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level. | ** Statistically significant at the $p < .01$ level.

Post-Hoc Interpretation

As illustrated in the post-hoc matrix (Table 6), the Tukey HSD analysis pinpoints the specific pairwise differences responsible for the significant overall ANOVA outcome:

Commerce vs. Social Science ($p < .01$): Commerce students ($\bar{X} = 100.20$) recorded a mean difference of 6.973 compared to Social Science students ($\bar{X} = 93.20$). This difference is statistically significant at the $p < .01$ level ($p = .003$). This represents the primary source of overall variance in teaching job aspiration across discipline groups.

Commerce vs. Natural Science ($p < .05$): Commerce students also exhibited significantly higher teaching job aspirations than Natural Science students ($\bar{X} = 94.30$), with a mean difference of 5.875 ($p = .025$), which is statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level.

Other Comparisons with Commerce: Although Commerce students recorded higher mean aspiration scores compared to Physical Science (Mean Diff = 5.292, $p = .059$) and Mathematics

(Mean Diff = 5.048, $p = .077$), these pairwise comparisons approached but did not achieve statistical significance at $\alpha = .05$.

Inter-Disciplinary Homogeneity: Pairwise comparisons among all other subject combinations (English, Mathematics, Natural Science, Physical Science, and Social Science) revealed no statistically significant differences ($p > .05$), indicating a homogenous baseline of career aspiration among non-commerce disciplines.

Major Findings

High Overall Aspiration: A major proportion of B.Ed. students (56.85%) demonstrated a Moderate level of aspiration, while 8.22% were High Aspirants and 32.19% were Partial Aspirants.

Absence of Negative Aspiration: Zero percent (0.00%) of participants were classified as Poor Aspirants, indicating positive career inclination across the sample.

Subject-Wise Hierarchy: Commerce student teachers recorded the highest mean aspiration score ($\bar{X} = 100.20$), whereas Social Science student teachers recorded the lowest mean score ($\bar{X} = 93.20$).

Statistically Significant Differences: The One-Way ANOVA confirmed significant differences across subjects ($F(5, 140) = 3.34$, $p = .007$). Tukey's HSD post-hoc test highlighted that Commerce students possessed significantly higher career aspirations compared to their peers in Social Science and Natural Science.

Educational Implications

Targeted Motivation in Humanities and Basic Sciences: While all groups displayed positive scores, Social Science and Natural Science streams recorded relatively lower mean aspirations. Teacher education institutes should implement targeted career counseling and professional identity workshops tailored to these disciplines.

Curriculum & Internship Enhancement: Practical exposure during school internships should be structured to enhance domain-specific confidence, reinforcing professional identity early in pre-service training.

Contextualizing Career Guidance: Higher education institutions should offer dedicated career development channels that inform prospective teachers about professional pathways, higher research opportunities, and career progression under NEP 2020 guidelines.

A Conclusion

This study demonstrates that B.Ed. candidates under the University of Calicut possess strong teaching job aspirations, reflecting high baseline motivation toward entering the workforce. However, academic specialization significantly impacts these levels, as demonstrated by the variance between Commerce candidates and candidates from Humanities or Natural Sciences. Addressing these discipline-specific variances through structured pre-service interventions will help ensure a motivated, well-prepared, and long-term teaching workforce across all disciplines.

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