

Occupational Aspirations of B.Ed. Students: A Comprehensive Study in Teacher Education

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ABSTRACT

Occupational aspiration is a critical psychological and sociological construct that significantly influences an individual's career trajectory and professional identity. In the context of teacher education, understanding the aspirations of B.Ed. students is particularly important, as they represent the future teaching workforce. The present study aims to examine the occupational aspirations of B.Ed. students and analyze their relationship with gender and academic achievement. A descriptive survey method was employed, and data were collected from 120 B.Ed. students using a standardized Occupational Aspiration Scale. Statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, t-test, and correlation were used for analysis. The findings reveal that most B.Ed. students exhibit moderate to high levels of occupational aspiration, with no significant gender differences. However, academic achievement was found to have a moderate positive correlation with aspiration levels. The study underscores the importance of structured guidance and career counseling programs in teacher education institutions to help students align their aspirations with realistic career opportunities and professional growth.

Keywords: Occupational aspiration, teacher education, B.Ed. students, academic achievement, career guidance

INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving educational landscape, the role of teachers has expanded beyond traditional classroom instruction to include mentorship, innovation, and leadership. Consequently, the aspirations of future teachers play a vital role in determining the quality and effectiveness of education systems. Occupational aspiration refers to an individual's ambitions and expectations regarding their future career, influenced by personal interests, abilities, socio-economic conditions, and environmental factors.

For students enrolled in Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programs, occupational aspiration is not merely about securing employment but also about achieving professional fulfillment, social recognition, and personal growth. These aspirations shape their motivation, engagement in teacher training programs, and long-term commitment to the teaching profession.

In India, teaching has traditionally been regarded as a noble profession; however, changing socio-economic dynamics, technological advancements, and evolving career opportunities have influenced students' perceptions and aspirations. Therefore, it becomes essential to explore the occupational aspirations of B.Ed. students to ensure that teacher education programs effectively nurture motivated and competent educators.

Theoretical Framework

The study of occupational aspiration is grounded in several theoretical perspectives:

1. Super's Career Development Theory

Super (1990) emphasized that career development is a lifelong process influenced by self-concept. According to this theory, individuals choose careers that align with their self-perception and aspirations.

2. Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)

Proposed by Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994), SCCT highlights the role of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and environmental influences in shaping career aspirations.

3. Wisconsin Status Attainment Model

This model suggests that occupational aspirations are influenced by family background, academic performance, and social interactions.

These frameworks collectively suggest that occupational aspiration is a multifaceted construct influenced by both internal and external factors.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A substantial body of research has explored occupational aspirations across different educational levels, highlighting its significance in career development.

Chauhan et al. (2024) found that a majority of students exhibit moderate levels of occupational aspiration, emphasizing the need for career guidance interventions. Similarly, Sharma and Chopra (2020) reported no significant gender differences in occupational aspirations, indicating a shift toward gender equality in career ambitions.

Beal and Crockett (2010) demonstrated that adolescents with higher occupational aspirations are more likely to achieve higher educational and career outcomes. Their study highlighted the long-term impact of aspirations on life trajectories. Research by Genicot and Ray (2019) introduced the concept of “aspiration windows,” suggesting that individuals’ aspirations are shaped by their exposure to role models and opportunities within their social environment.

In the Indian context, studies have shown that socio-economic status, parental education, and peer influence significantly affect students’ occupational aspirations. However, limited research has specifically focused on B.Ed. students, despite their critical role in shaping future generations.

This gap underscores the need for focused research on teacher trainees to understand their career motivations and expectations.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the level of occupational aspiration among B.Ed. students
2. To examine gender differences in occupational aspiration
3. To analyze the relationship between academic achievement and occupational aspiration
4. To identify factors influencing occupational aspirations among B.Ed. students

Hypotheses

- H1: There is no significant difference in occupational aspiration between male and female B.Ed. students.
H2: There is no significant relationship between academic achievement and occupational aspiration.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a **descriptive survey design**, which is appropriate for analyzing current trends, attitudes, and aspirations among a specific population.

Sample

The sample consisted of **120 B.Ed. students** (60 males and 60 females) selected through random sampling from teacher education institutions.

Tools Used

- Occupational Aspiration Scale by Dr.J.S.Grewal(1998)
- Academic performance records

Procedure

Data were collected through direct interaction with students. The respondents were assured of confidentiality to ensure honest responses.

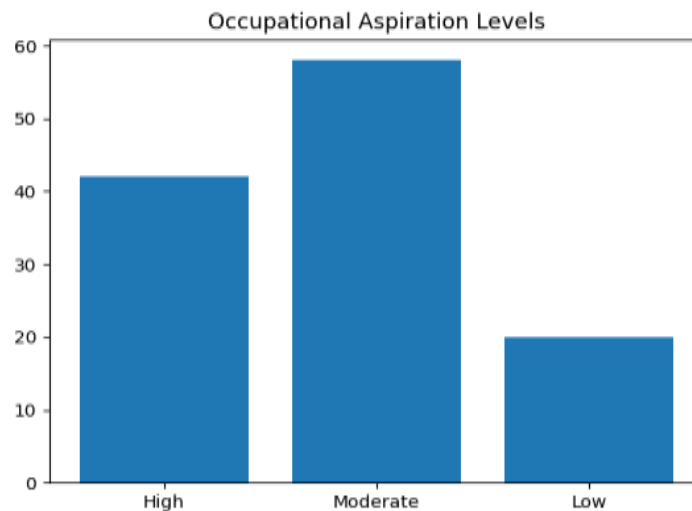
Statistical Techniques

- Mean
- Standard Deviation
- t-test
- Pearson’s Correlation

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Distribution of Occupational Aspiration Levels

Level of Aspiration	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
High	42	35%
Moderate	58	48%
Low	20	17%



Interpretation:

The majority of students (48%) fall under the moderate category, indicating balanced but not exceptionally high aspirations. This suggests that while students are motivated, there is room for enhancing their career vision.

Table 2: Gender-wise Comparison

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Male	60	72.4	8.5	1.12
Female	60	73.8	7.9	

Interpretation:

The t-value indicates no significant difference between male and female students, supporting the hypothesis of gender equality in occupational aspirations.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

Variables	Correlation (r)
Academic Achievement & Aspiration	0.42

Interpretation:

The moderate positive correlation suggests that academically stronger students tend to have higher occupational aspirations.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study provide valuable insights into the occupational aspirations of B.Ed. students.

First, the predominance of moderate aspiration levels indicates that students have a basic level of career awareness but may lack clarity or confidence in achieving higher professional goals. This could be due to limited exposure to diverse career opportunities within the teaching profession.

Second, the absence of gender differences reflects a progressive shift in societal attitudes. Unlike earlier times, female students are equally ambitious and career-oriented.

Third, the positive relationship between academic achievement and occupational aspiration highlights the role of academic success in shaping career ambitions. Students who perform well academically are more likely to aim for higher positions, such as administrative roles, educational leadership, or specialized teaching fields.

However, the presence of students with low aspiration levels is a matter of concern. These students may lack motivation, guidance, or support, which could hinder their professional growth.

Factors Influencing Occupational Aspiration

The study identifies several key factors influencing occupational aspirations:

1. **Family Background:** Parental education and support play a crucial role
2. **Academic Performance:** Higher achievement boosts confidence and ambition
3. **Peer Influence:** Interaction with motivated peers enhances aspirations
4. **Institutional Environment:** Exposure to quality training and mentorship
5. **Socio-economic Status:** Availability of resources and opportunities

Educational Implications

The findings of the study have important implications for teacher education:

- Institutions should establish **career counseling cells**
- Workshops on **career planning and professional development** should be organized
- Internship programs should provide **real-world exposure**
- Faculty should act as **mentors and role models**
- Policies should focus on enhancing **teacher motivation and status**

Suggestions for Future Research

- Conduct studies with larger and more diverse samples
- Use mixed-method approaches
- Explore the impact of digital learning on aspirations
- Compare aspirations across different professional courses

CONCLUSION

Occupational aspiration is a key determinant of professional success and satisfaction. The present study concludes that B.Ed. students generally possess moderate to high aspirations, with no significant gender differences. Academic achievement plays a significant role in shaping these aspirations.

To prepare competent and motivated teachers, it is essential to strengthen guidance and counseling services within teacher education programs. By fostering realistic and ambitious career goals, institutions can contribute to the development of a dynamic and effective teaching workforce.

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