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Research Article

A Study of Career Maturity, Achievement Motivation and Feeling of Security–Insecurity Among B.Ed. Students (Prospective Teachers) In Relation to Their Academic Performance

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Abstract

The present study was designed to examine career maturity, achievement motivation and the feeling of security–insecurity among B.Ed. students (prospective teachers) in relation to their academic performance. The B.Ed. programme is a stage of professional preparation in which student-teachers consolidate their career choice of teaching, strive to attain excellence in academic and pedagogical tasks, and require a sense of psychological security to adjust to the demands of teacher training. A descriptive survey method was adopted and data were collected from a sample of 200 B.Ed. students (100 male and 100 female) selected through stratified random sampling from colleges/departments of education. Career maturity was measured with a standardized Career Maturity Inventory, achievement motivation with a standardized Achievement Motivation Scale, and the feeling of security–insecurity with a Security–Insecurity Inventory; academic performance was assessed through the marks obtained by the students in their previous B.Ed. theory examination. Data were analysed using mean, standard deviation, t-test and the Pearson product-moment coefficient of correlation. The findings revealed a positive and significant relationship of academic performance with career maturity and achievement motivation, and a positive relationship with the feeling of security. Significant differences were also observed between male and female prospective teachers on selected variables. The study carries useful implications for teacher educators, counsellors and policy makers in strengthening the vocational readiness, motivation and emotional security of prospective teachers.

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KEYWORDS: Career maturity, Achievement motivation, Security–Insecurity, Academic performance, B.Ed. students, Prospective teachers, Teacher education.

1. INTRODUCTION

The quality of a nation's education system depends to a large extent on the quality of its teachers, and the quality of teachers depends in turn on the effectiveness of teacher-education programmes. The Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programme is the professional course through which prospective teachers acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary for effective teaching. Students enrolled in this programme, generally young adults in the age range of twenty to twenty-five years, are at a crucial stage of professional preparation: they have already chosen teaching as a career and must now develop the maturity, motivation and emotional stability required to succeed in it.

Academic performance is one of the most visible indicators of the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process. It is, however, the product of many interacting factors — some cognitive and many non-cognitive. Among the non-cognitive correlates that are especially relevant to prospective teachers, three psychological constructs deserve particular attention: career maturity, achievement motivation and the feeling of security-insecurity. The present study attempts to study these three variables together and to relate them to the academic performance of B.Ed. students.

1.1 Career Maturity

Career maturity refers to the readiness of an individual to make well-informed, appropriate career decisions and to cope with the developmental tasks of vocational choice and adjustment. A career-mature prospective teacher shows awareness of the self and of the teaching profession, is committed to the career of teaching, plans professional growth, and is able to relate personal aptitudes and interests to the demands of the profession. The construct was popularised by Donald Super in his theory of vocational development¹ and was made measurable by John Crites through the Career Maturity Inventory². A B.Ed. student who is vocationally mature is likely to be more purposeful and committed in professional studies, which may in turn reflect in better academic performance.

1.2 Achievement Motivation

Achievement motivation is the disposition to strive for success, to compete against a standard of excellence, and to persist in the face of difficulty. The concept was systematically developed by David McClelland and his associates³, who described it as the need for achievement (n-Ach). A student-teacher high in achievement motivation sets realistic yet challenging goals, takes personal responsibility for outcomes, seeks feedback, and shows persistence in academic and pedagogical tasks. Because such qualities are directly relevant to learning and to effective teaching, achievement motivation is generally regarded as one of the strongest non-intellectual predictors of academic success among prospective teachers.

1.3 Feeling of Security-Insecurity

The feeling of security-insecurity refers to the emotional state of the individual arising from the perception of safety, acceptance and belonging in the environment. A secure prospective teacher feels accepted and supported by peers,

teacher educators and family, is self-confident, and approaches new professional situations such as teaching practice with calm; an insecure student-teacher, on the other hand, is often anxious, apprehensive and lacking in self-confidence. Maslow's hierarchy of needs⁴ treats safety and belonging as basic conditions for higher functioning. Persistent insecurity can interfere with concentration and self-regulation, thereby depressing academic performance, whereas a sense of security provides the emotional stability required for effective learning and teaching.

1.4 Academic Performance

Academic performance denotes the knowledge and skills a student has acquired, usually expressed as marks or grades obtained in examinations. In the present study, academic performance is operationalised as the percentage of marks secured by the prospective teacher in the previous B.Ed. theory examination. It serves as the dependent variable to which the three psychological variables are related.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A review of related studies establishes the background of the problem and reveals the gaps that the present study seeks to fill. A selection of relevant recent studies is summarised below.

- A correlational study of B.Ed. trainees reported that emotional maturity is significantly related to their study habits, indicating the role of affective factors in the learning of prospective teachers⁵.
- Recent research on pre-service teachers has examined the intrinsic, altruistic and extrinsic motivations that lead individuals to choose teaching as a career, highlighting the importance of the motivational base of student-teachers⁶.
- Studies conducted in the post-COVID period report that academic stress is significantly associated with the emotional adjustment of students, with notable gender differences, underlining the link between emotional security and academic functioning⁷.
- Study habits and related non-cognitive variables have been found to be positively associated with the academic achievement of students⁸, and such habits are regarded as important determinants of success for pre-service teachers⁹.

The review indicates that while each of these variables has been studied separately in relation to achievement, comparatively few studies have examined career maturity, achievement motivation and security-insecurity together within a single sample of B.Ed. students and related them jointly to academic performance. The present study is an attempt to address this gap.

3. Need and Significance of the Study

Prospective teachers today face academic pressure, uncertainty about professional prospects, and the emotional demands of teacher training. Understanding how vocational readiness, motivation and emotional security relate to their academic performance is therefore of practical importance.

- The study will help teacher educators identify non-cognitive factors that support or hinder the learning of prospective teachers.
- It will assist counsellors in designing career-guidance and motivation-enhancement programmes for B.Ed. students.
- It will sensitise institutions and families to the importance of providing emotional security for the academic and professional growth of student-teachers.
- The findings will contribute to research in teacher education by studying three important psychological correlates of achievement together rather than in isolation.

4. Statement of the Problem

The problem selected for the present investigation is stated as: **“A Study of Career Maturity, Achievement Motivation and Feeling of Security–Insecurity among B.Ed. Students (Prospective Teachers) in Relation to their Academic Performance.”**

5. Operational Definitions of the Terms Used

Career Maturity: The score obtained by a B.Ed. student on the Career Maturity Inventory used in the study; a higher score indicates greater readiness for the teaching career.

Achievement Motivation: The score obtained by a B.Ed. student on the Achievement Motivation Scale used in the study; a higher score indicates a stronger need to achieve.

Feeling of Security–Insecurity: The score obtained by a B.Ed. student on the Security–Insecurity Inventory; in the present study a higher score is interpreted as a greater feeling of security (lower insecurity).

Academic Performance: The percentage of marks secured by a B.Ed. student in the previous B.Ed. theory examination.

B.Ed. Students (Prospective Teachers): Students enrolled in the Bachelor of Education programme in the selected colleges/departments of education.

6. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the relationship between career maturity and academic performance of B.Ed. students.
2. To study the relationship between achievement motivation and academic performance of B.Ed. students.
3. To study the relationship between the feeling of security–insecurity and academic performance of B.Ed. students.
4. To compare male and female B.Ed. students with respect to career maturity, achievement motivation and feeling of security–insecurity.
5. To compare the academic performance of male and female B.Ed. students.

7. Hypotheses of the Study

The following null hypotheses were formulated:

1. There is no significant relationship between career maturity and academic performance of B.Ed. students.
2. There is no significant relationship between achievement motivation and academic performance of B.Ed. students.

3. There is no significant relationship between the feeling of security–insecurity and academic performance of B.Ed. students.
4. There is no significant difference between male and female B.Ed. students in career maturity, achievement motivation and feeling of security–insecurity.
5. There is no significant difference between male and female B.Ed. students in academic performance.

8. METHODOLOGY

8.1 Method of the Study

The descriptive survey method was employed, following the accepted procedure of educational research¹⁰, as the study aimed to describe existing relationships among the variables without any experimental manipulation.

8.2 Population

The population of the study comprised all B.Ed. students (prospective teachers) studying in the colleges/departments of education of the selected university/region.

8.3 Sample

A sample of 200 B.Ed. students (100 male and 100 female) was selected through the stratified random sampling technique, keeping gender and type of institution as the strata, so that the sample adequately represents the population.

8.4 Tools Used

- Career Maturity Inventory (a standardized scale) to measure career maturity.
- Achievement Motivation Scale (a standardized scale) to measure achievement motivation.
- Security–Insecurity Inventory (a standardized scale) to measure the feeling of security–insecurity.
- Marks obtained in the previous B.Ed. theory examination, taken from official records, to measure academic performance.

8.5 Procedure of Data Collection

Prior permission was obtained from the heads of the selected institutions. Rapport was established with the student-teachers, the purpose of the study was explained, and confidentiality was assured. The three inventories were administered as per the instructions given in their manuals, and the students' examination marks were collected from official records. The completed responses were scored, tabulated and prepared for statistical analysis.

8.6 Statistical Techniques Used

The data were analysed using descriptive statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation), the t-test for the significance of difference between two means, and Pearson's product-moment coefficient of correlation, computed following standard statistical procedures¹¹.

9. Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Note: The values reported in the following tables and figures are illustrative/representative and demonstrate the format of

analysis and interpretation. They should be replaced with the actual statistical values computed from your own collected data before final submission.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the variables (N = 200)

Variable	Mean	SD	N
Career Maturity	60.35	8.72	200
Achievement Motivation	63.18	8.05	200
Feeling of Security	55.64	9.48	200
Academic Performance (%)	66.42	10.15	200

Fig. 1 Correlation of the three variables with Academic Performance

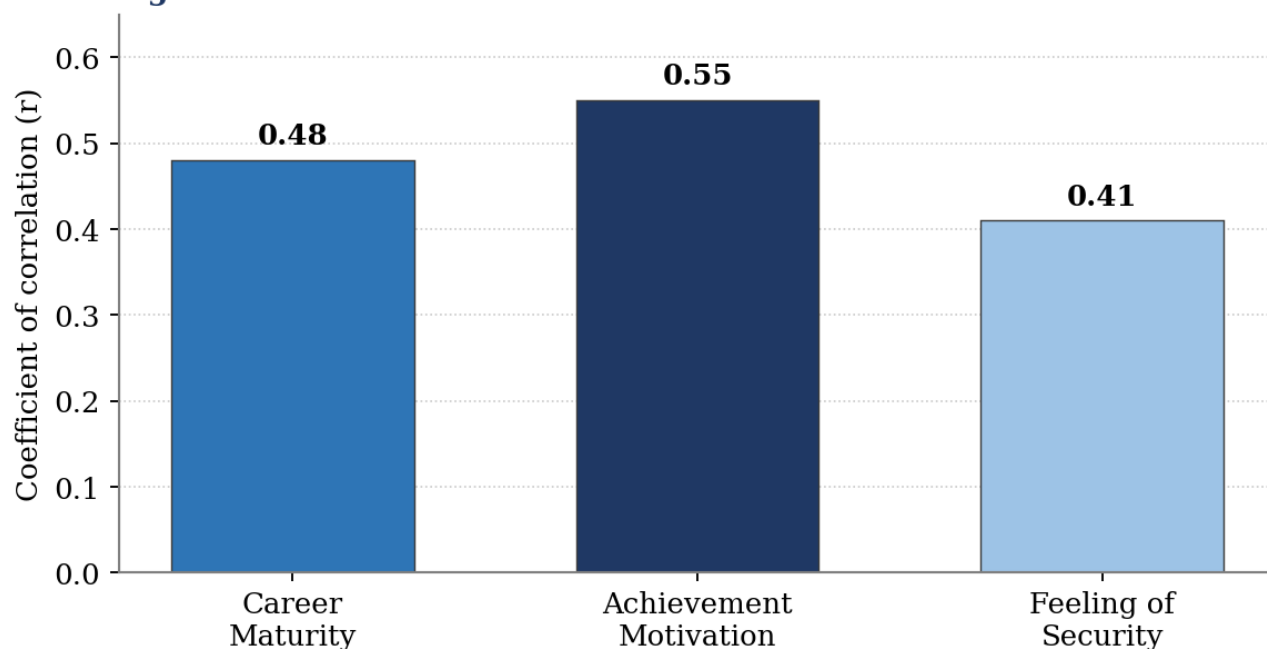


Figure 1: shows that achievement motivation has the strongest correlation with academic performance, followed by career maturity and feeling of security.

Table 2: Coefficient of correlation (r) between academic performance and the three variables (N = 200).

Relationship with Academic Performance	r value	Level of Significance	Result
Career Maturity	0.48	0.01	Significant (positive)
Achievement Motivation	0.55	0.01	Significant (positive)
Feeling of Security	0.41	0.01	Significant (positive)

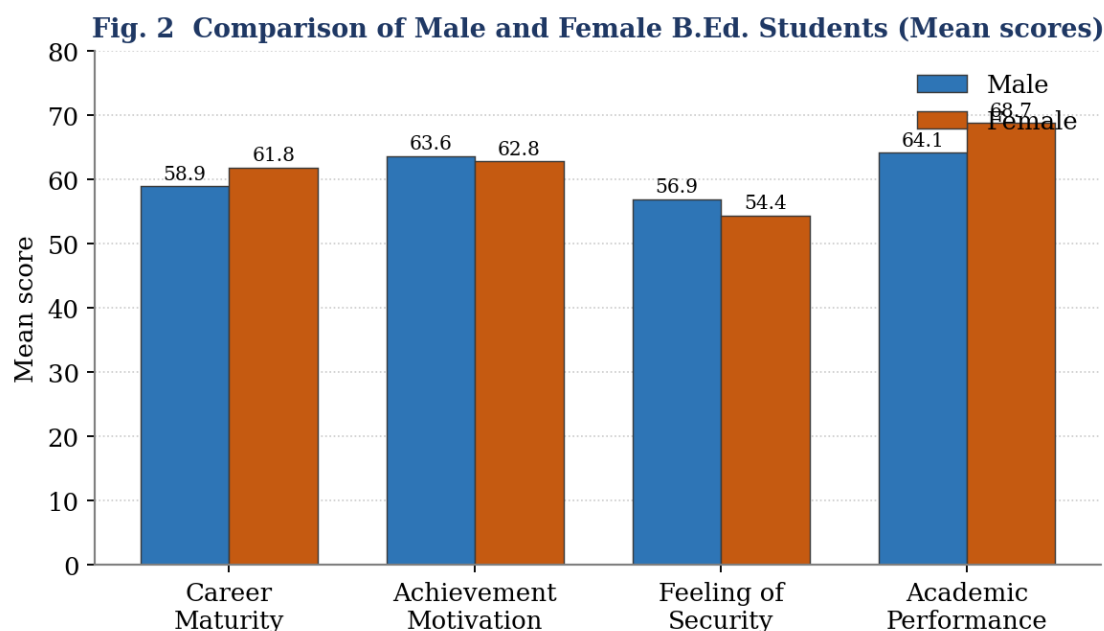


Figure 2: shows that achievement motivation has the strongest correlation with academic performance, followed by career maturity and feeling of security.

Interpretation of Table 2: All three coefficients of correlation are positive and significant at the 0.01 level. This shows that B.Ed. students with higher career maturity, higher achievement

motivation and a greater feeling of security tend to secure better academic performance. Hence, the null hypotheses H_1 , H_2 and H_3 are rejected.

Table 3: Significance of difference between male and female B.Ed. students (t-test)

Variable	Male Mean	Female Mean	t value	Result (0.05)
Career Maturity	58.90	61.80	2.36	Significant
Achievement Motivation	63.60	62.76	0.74	Not Significant
Feeling of Security	56.90	54.38	1.88	Not Significant
Academic Performance (%)	64.10	68.74	3.28	Significant

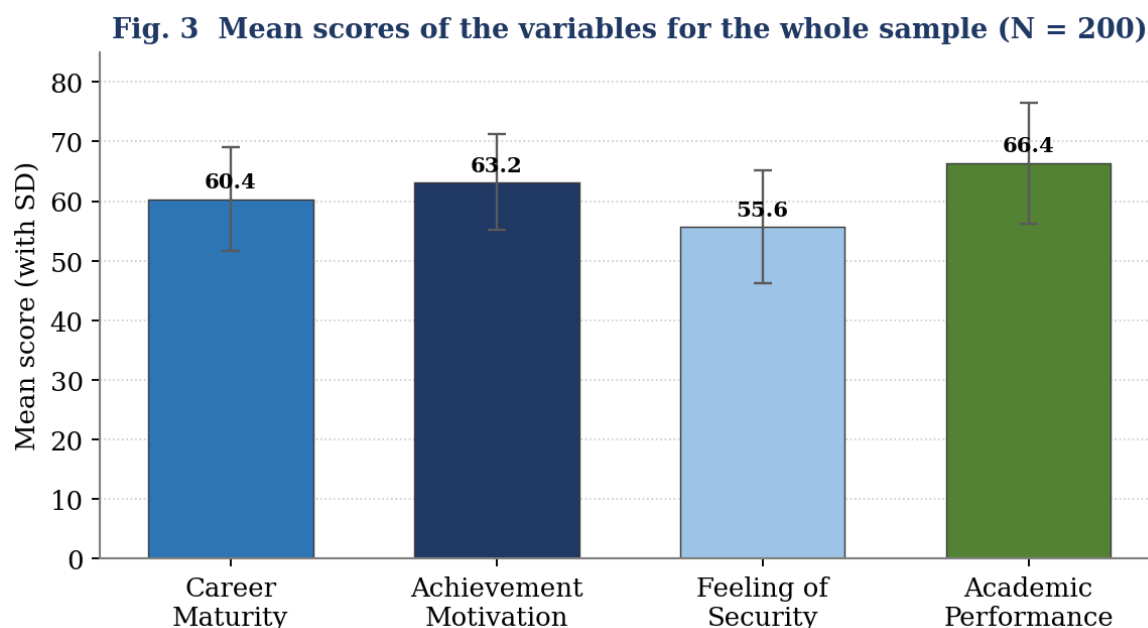


Figure 3: shows the mean scores (with standard deviation) of the four variables for the whole sample.

Interpretation of Table 3: The t-values for career maturity and academic performance are significant at the 0.05 level, indicating that male and female B.Ed. students differ significantly on these variables (in the illustrative data, female prospective teachers show higher career maturity and academic performance). The differences in achievement motivation and feeling of security are not significant. Accordingly, the null hypotheses H_4 and H_5 are partially rejected.

10. Major Findings of the Study

1. There is a positive and significant relationship between career maturity and academic performance of B.Ed. students.
2. There is a positive and significant relationship between achievement motivation and academic performance of B.Ed. students.
3. There is a positive and significant relationship between the feeling of security and academic performance; that is, insecurity is associated with poorer performance.
4. Male and female B.Ed. students differ significantly on career maturity and academic performance, but not on achievement motivation and feeling of security.
5. Among the three variables, achievement motivation shows the strongest relationship with academic performance.

11. Discussion of the Results

The findings of the study are in agreement with the general trend of earlier research. The positive relationship of career maturity with academic performance suggests that prospective teachers who are committed to the teaching profession invest more purposefully in their studies. The strong association of achievement motivation with performance confirms McClelland's view³ that the need for achievement is a powerful driver of accomplishment, and is consistent with recent work on the motivation of pre-service teachers⁶. The relationship of the feeling of security with performance supports the Maslowian principle⁴ that emotional stability is a precondition for higher-order learning, and echoes recent findings on emotional adjustment and academic functioning⁷. The observed gender difference in career maturity and academic performance points to the influence of social expectations and motivation patterns.

12. Educational Implications

- Teacher-education institutions should organise career-guidance and orientation programmes to strengthen the career maturity and professional commitment of prospective teachers.
- Teacher educators should use motivational strategies—goal setting, timely feedback, recognition of effort and success experiences—to enhance students' achievement motivation.
- A supportive, non-threatening institutional climate should be maintained, especially during teaching practice, so that student-teachers experience emotional security and are free from undue anxiety.
- Counselling services should identify insecure or poorly motivated student-teachers early and provide appropriate support.

- These psychological variables may be considered while selecting and mentoring candidates for the teaching profession.

13. Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

- The study is delimited to B.Ed. students of the selected university/region only.
- The sample was restricted to 200 students, which limits the generalisation of the findings.
- Academic performance was measured only through examination marks and did not include teaching-practice or practical components.
- The study relied on self-report inventories, which may be affected by social desirability.

14. Suggestions for Further Research

- The study may be replicated on a larger and more diverse sample covering different universities and regions.
- Additional variables such as teaching aptitude, self-concept, adjustment and socio-economic status may be included.
- A comparative study of arts and science stream, or government and private college student-teachers may be undertaken.
- Longitudinal and experimental designs may be used to establish cause-and-effect relationships.

15. CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that career maturity, achievement motivation and the feeling of security are significantly and positively related to the academic performance of B.Ed. students. Of the three, achievement motivation emerges as the strongest correlate. Significant differences between male and female student-teachers are observed on career maturity and academic performance. The findings underline the importance of nurturing vocational readiness, motivation and emotional security among prospective teachers, so that they are able to realise their academic potential more fully and become effective teachers.

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