



Original Article

# Changes in Prospective Teachers' Beliefs About the Teaching Profession: A Longitudinal Study

Sangeeta Kadam<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Jojen Mathew<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, G. V. M.'s Dr. Dada Vaidya

College of Education-Research Centre Farmagudi Ponda- Goa, Affiliated to Goa University

<sup>2</sup>Guide G. V. M.'s Dr. Dada Vaidya College of Education-Research Centre,

Farmagudi Ponda- Goa, Affiliated to Goa University

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**Correspondence Address:**

Sangeeta Kadam  
Research Scholar, G. V. M.'s Dr. Dada  
Vaidya College of Education-Research  
Centre Farmagudi Ponda- Goa,  
Affiliated to Goa University  
Email: [sangeeta@nirmalainstitute.org](mailto:sangeeta@nirmalainstitute.org)

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## Abstract

The beliefs that prospective teachers hold about the teaching profession play an important role in shaping their professional identity and future teaching practices. The present paper examines the changes in the pedagogical beliefs of prospective teachers in Goa regarding the teaching profession during the B.Ed. programme. This paper is based on data drawn from the researcher's larger longitudinal study on the pedagogical beliefs of prospective teachers. The original study examined seven dimensions of pedagogical beliefs, of which the present paper focuses on one dimension, namely beliefs regarding the teaching profession.

The study adopted a longitudinal research design, as the same group of 300 prospective teachers was studied at three stages of the B.Ed. programme: at entry, at the end of the first year, and at the exit stage. The population of the study consisted of prospective teachers enrolled in colleges of Education in Goa affiliated to Goa University. Data was collected using the Pedagogical Beliefs Scale (PBS) developed by the researcher. The tool was prepared after reviewing related literature and was validated by subject experts to ensure the relevance and clarity of the items. A pilot study was conducted on 40 prospective teachers, who were not the part of the final sample. The content validity of the tool was established through the Content Validity Ratio (CVR), which was found to be satisfactory. Reliability of the tool was ensured through internal consistency measures. The data for the present dimension were analysed using Repeated Measures ANOVA, followed by the Bonferroni post hoc test to identify the differences across the three stages. The findings revealed a significant improvement in the beliefs of prospective teachers regarding the teaching profession across the three stages of the B.Ed. programme. The findings reveal that the professional convictions of future teachers progressively reinforced throughout their teacher education program. The research emphasises the importance of teacher training programs in fostering positive professional attitudes in prospective educators.

**Keywords:** Prospective Teachers, Teaching Profession, Pedagogical Beliefs, Longitudinal Study, Teacher Education.

## Introduction

Educators significantly influence the development of both individuals and society's future. The effectiveness of education significantly relies on the convictions, mindset, and dedication of educators to their vocation. Among the various factors that affect teaching practices, the beliefs that prospective teachers possess regarding the teaching profession are particularly significant, as these beliefs direct their professional actions and form their identity as forthcoming educators.

When prospective teachers enrol themselves to become teachers, they already have their own ideas about what teaching is all about. These ideas are shaped by what they learned in school, the people they grew up with, what they think is important, and what they expect from their future careers. As they go through teacher training, these ideas are expected to change and grow through what they learn in class, discussions with their peers, actual teaching experiences, and guidance from professionals.

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As they get closer to becoming real teachers, they start to understand more deeply what the job is all about, including the challenges and how important it is. They begin to see that teaching is not just about passing on knowledge, but also about helping students grow and develop. This journey of becoming a teacher is crucial in shaping their beliefs and practices, and it's what will ultimately make them effective educators. The Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programme plays a crucial role in shaping the pedagogical beliefs of student-teachers. It offers opportunities to prospective teachers to understand the objectives of education, the responsibilities of the teacher, and the values inherent in the profession. Through teaching practice and interaction with teacher educators, student-teachers progressively develop professional attitudes and beliefs that influence their preparedness to enter the teaching field. Consequently, examining how their beliefs about the teaching profession evolve during the B.Ed. programme is essential for understanding the effectiveness of teacher education.

The present study focuses on one important dimension of pedagogical beliefs, namely beliefs regarding the teaching profession, among prospective teachers in Goa. It seeks to examine whether these beliefs change significantly across the three stages of the B.Ed. programme. By studying this dimension, the research aims to understand the role of teacher education in developing positive professional beliefs among future teachers.

### Research Problem

The present study aims to find out whether the beliefs of prospective teachers in Goa about the teaching profession change during the different stages i.e. entry, end of the F.Y.B.Ed. and exit stage (end of S.Y.B. Ed) of the B.Ed. programme. It focuses on understanding how teacher education influences their professional beliefs as they progress through the course.

### Statement of the Problem

Prospective teachers enter teacher education programmes with certain beliefs about the teaching profession, and these beliefs may change as they gain new learning experiences during the course of training. Researchers such as Pajares (1992) and Richardson (1996) have pointed out that teachers' beliefs are shaped by experience and can be influenced by teacher education programmes. As prospective teachers progress through the B.Ed. programme, their exposure to theoretical knowledge, teaching practice, and professional guidance may influence their beliefs regarding the teaching profession. In this context, the present study seeks to examine the changes in the pedagogical beliefs of prospective teachers in Goa regarding the teaching profession across the three stages of the B.Ed. programme.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To examine whether there is a significant change in the pedagogical beliefs of prospective teachers in Goa regarding the teaching profession across the three stages of the B.Ed. programme.

2. To identify the stages at which significant differences occur in the pedagogical beliefs of prospective teachers in Goa regarding the teaching profession.

### Methodology

#### Research Design

The present study adopted a longitudinal research design to examine the changes in the pedagogical beliefs of prospective teachers regarding the teaching profession during the course of the B.Ed. programme. A longitudinal design was considered appropriate because it allows the researcher to study the same group of participants over a period of time and observe changes in their beliefs at different stages of the programme. Since the purpose of the study was to understand how prospective teachers' beliefs regarding the teaching profession develop as they progress through teacher education, data were collected from the same participants at three different stages of the B.Ed. programme. This design helped in capturing the progression and transformation in their pedagogical beliefs in a systematic manner.

#### Sample:

The study was carried out among 300 prospective teachers enrolled in two-year full time B.Ed. Programme in three Colleges of Education, affiliated to Goa University. The participants were selected for the main study to understand their beliefs regarding different dimensions of pedagogy, with specific focus on the teaching profession dimension for the present paper. Since the study intended to trace changes over time, the same participants were followed across the three stages of the B.Ed. programme.

#### Data Collection Tool- (PBS)

The researcher used a Pedagogical Beliefs Scale (PBS) to collect data for the study. This tool was specifically prepared by the researcher for the purpose of collection of data. In order to measure the pedagogical beliefs of prospective teachers across various dimensions, one of which was beliefs regarding the teaching profession this scale was constructed. The items in the scale were framed after an extensive review of related literature and careful consideration of the objectives of the study. The statements were constructed to reflect the perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs of prospective teachers towards the teaching profession.

#### Pilot Study:

A pilot study was conducted to examine the clarity, relevance, and reliability of the instrument before administering the tool for the main study. The pilot study was carried out on 40 prospective teachers, who were not the part of the study. Conducting the pilot study helped the researcher identify ambiguous statements and make necessary modifications to improve the quality of the tool.

#### Validity of the Tool:

To ensure the validity of the Pedagogical Beliefs Scale, the draft tool was submitted to subject experts in the field of education and teacher education. Their recommendations and insights were thoughtfully taken into account during the refinement of the items. The specialists

assessed the significance, suitability, and representativeness of each statement concerning the study's goals. Incorporating their feedback, essential changes were implemented to enhance the quality of the content in the instrument.

The Content Validity Ratio (CVR) was used to establish the tool's content validity. The items were assessed by specialists, and the CVR values acquired suggested an acceptable degree of consensus concerning the significance of the items incorporated in the scale.

The overall CVR for the tool was found to be within the acceptable range and was considered excellent, indicating that the items were appropriate for measuring the pedagogical beliefs of prospective teachers.

**Reliability of the Tool:**

The internal consistency of the tool was also examined to ensure the reliability of the scale. The responses obtained from the pilot study were analysed, and the reliability coefficient indicated that the scale had good internal consistency. This showed that the items in the scale were consistent in measuring the intended construct and that the instrument was reliable for use in the main study.

**Data Analyses:**

For the present paper, data related to the teaching profession dimension were analysed across the three stages of the B.Ed. programme. Since the same participants were

assessed repeatedly over time, Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether there were significant differences in the pedagogical beliefs of prospective teachers regarding the teaching profession across the three stages. This statistical technique was suitable for identifying changes in the mean scores of the same group measured at multiple points in time.

Alongside Repeated Measures ANOVA, the Bonferroni post hoc examination was utilised to determine the particular stages that showed significant differences. Although Repeated Measures ANOVA showed whether there was a significant overall change, the Bonferroni test was employed for identifying the specific stages where significant differences existed. This provided a clearer understanding of how future teachers' perceptions of the teaching profession evolved during the B.Ed. programme.

The methodological framework of the study was carefully designed to ensure systematic data collection, the validity and reliability of the tool, and appropriate statistical analysis for examining the long-term changes in prospective teachers' pedagogical beliefs regarding the teaching profession.

To examine whether the pedagogical beliefs of prospective teachers regarding the teaching profession changed across the three stages of the B.Ed. programme, the mean scores were compared using Repeated Measures ANOVA. The results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Repeated Measures ANOVA Summary**

Dimension	M <sup>1</sup> (Entry)	M <sup>2</sup> (End FY)	M <sup>3</sup> (Exit)	F	df	p	η <sup>2</sup> (partial)
Teaching Profession	37.73	38.78	39.97	14.54	(1.936, 578.88)	< .001	0.046

Note. Greenhouse–Geisser correction applied to all df. η<sup>2</sup> (partial) interpreted as: .01 = small, .06 = medium, .14 = large. M<sup>1</sup> = Entry; M<sup>2</sup> = End of F.Y.B.Ed.; M<sup>3</sup> = Exit.

The Mean scores of future teachers' pedagogical beliefs about the teaching profession indicated a steady rise throughout the three phases of the B.Ed. programme. The Mean score at entry was 37.73, which increased to 38.78 by the end of the first year and increased to 39.97 at the exit stage. This consistent increase in the Mean values suggests that the perceptions of prospective teachers about the teaching profession grew more favourable as they advanced through the B.Ed. programme.

A Repeated Measures ANOVA was performed to determine if the change in Mean scores were statistically significant. The examination uncovered a statistically significant variation in the educational beliefs of future educators about the teaching profession across the three phases,  $F(1.936, 578.88) = 14.54, p < .001$ . This suggests that the noted rise in average scores was not a result of random variation and that the attitudes towards the teaching profession underwent a significant change throughout the B.Ed. programme.

The partial eta squared value of 0.046 indicates a small to moderate effect size, suggesting that the B.Ed. programme had a significant effect on prospective teachers' beliefs regarding the teaching profession. Although the effect size is moderate, it suggests that the experiences

provided throughout the teacher education programme contributed to the progressive improvement of professional beliefs.

These results indicate that as future educators progressed from the beginning phase to the concluding phase of the B.Ed. programme, their comprehension and views of the teaching profession enhanced. Engagement with theoretical concepts, instructional experience, and professional encounters throughout the programme might have contributed to their formation of more robust and favourable perceptions of the teaching profession.

Given that the acquired p-value was below 0.001, the null hypothesis suggesting that there is no significant difference in prospective teachers' pedagogical beliefs regarding the teaching profession across the three phases of the B.Ed. programme was rejected.

Although the Repeated Measures ANOVA indicated that there was a significant difference in the pedagogical beliefs of prospective teachers regarding the teaching profession across the three stages of the B.Ed. programme, it did not specify between which stages these differences occurred. Therefore, Bonferroni post hoc analysis was carried out to identify the specific stages where the significant differences existed.

**Table 2: Post-Hoc Pairwise Comparisons (Bonferroni)**

Dimension	Entry vs End of FY	End of FY vs Exit	Entry vs Exit	Overall Direction
Teaching Profession	MD = 1.05, $p < .05$	MD = 1.18, $p < .05$	MD = 2.24, $p < .05$	↑

Note. MD = Mean Difference. All pairwise comparisons significant at  $p < .05$  (Bonferroni-adjusted). ↑ = consistent upward development across all three stages.

The outcomes of the Bonferroni analysis revealed some captivating trends. For instance, there were substantial variations between the entry and the end of the first year - the mean difference was (MD = 1.05,  $p < .05$ ), between the end of the first year and the exit stage (MD = 1.18,  $p < .05$ ), and between the entry stage and the exit stage (MD = 2.24,  $p < .05$ ), which is statistically noteworthy. Analysis revealed some big differences in how students felt about the Teaching Profession at the beginning and end of the programme. What's particularly interesting is that these variations increased as time went on it is observed an average shift of 1.18 from the end of the first year to the exit, but a significantly greater average shift of 2.24 from the entry to the exit. This indicates that the B.Ed. programme effectively assists future educators in forming a favourable belief about the teaching profession, and this impact intensifies as prospective teachers advance through the programme. In general, the programme appears to be effective, as prospective teachers demonstrating consistent and notable enhancement in their views on teaching as time progresses.

The upward trend in the mean scores suggests that the professional beliefs of prospective teachers became stronger as they advanced through the programme. This gradual increase may be attributed to the academic experiences, teaching practice, and professional exposure provided during the B.Ed. course, which likely helped prospective teachers develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of the teaching profession.

### Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that the pedagogical beliefs of prospective teachers regarding the teaching profession improved significantly across the three stages of the B.Ed. programme. The mean scores showed a steady increase from the entry stage to the exit stage, indicating that the beliefs of prospective teachers became more positive as they progressed through the programme. The Bonferroni post hoc analysis further showed that significant improvement took place at each stage, suggesting a gradual and continuous development in their beliefs regarding the teaching profession.

This gradual improvement may be attributed to the various academic and professional experiences that prospective teachers undergo during the B.Ed. programme. At the entry stage, prospective teachers often begin the programme with personal beliefs shaped by their own school experiences and social perceptions of the teaching profession. As they progress through the course, they are exposed to educational theories, classroom practices, teaching internships, and interaction with teacher educators, all of which contribute to the refinement of their beliefs.

These experiences help them understand the responsibilities, values, and importance of the teaching profession in a deeper and more meaningful way.

The findings support the view that teacher beliefs are not fixed but develop through professional preparation and reflective experiences. Pajares (1992) emphasised that teachers' beliefs play a central role in shaping their professional practices and that these beliefs can be influenced by educational experiences. Similarly, Richardson (1996) observed that teacher education programmes have the potential to shape and reconstruct the beliefs of prospective teachers by providing them with new learning opportunities and reflective experiences.

The findings are also in agreement with the work of Fives and Buehl (2012), who pointed out that teacher beliefs develop gradually through professional preparation and practical engagement. The significant increase in beliefs regarding the teaching profession observed in the present study reflects the positive influence of the B.Ed. programme in strengthening the professional outlook of prospective teachers.

This improvement in beliefs is important because positive beliefs about the teaching profession contribute to greater commitment, professional responsibility, and readiness to teach. When prospective teachers develop stronger professional beliefs during their training, they are more likely to enter the profession with confidence and a positive sense of purpose. Therefore, the findings highlight the important role of teacher education institutions in nurturing constructive professional beliefs among future teachers.

Overall, the findings of the study suggest that the Teacher Education programme plays a meaningful role in shaping and strengthening the pedagogical beliefs of prospective teachers regarding the teaching profession. The steady increase in beliefs across the three stages reflects the value of structured teacher education experiences in developing professionally committed teachers.

### Conclusion:

The study found that the beliefs of prospective teachers in Goa regarding the teaching profession became more positive during the B.Ed. programme. The scores showed a gradual increase from the beginning of the course to the final stage, which suggests that the participants developed a better understanding of the teaching profession as they moved through the programme. The statistical results also confirmed that these changes were significant.

One possible reason for this change could be the kind of experiences the student-teachers received during the B.Ed. programme. Through coursework, teaching practice, and regular interaction with teacher educators, they may have started looking at teaching in a more serious and



professional way. These experiences seem to have helped them understand the value and responsibilities of the profession better than they did at the beginning of the course.

This shows that teacher education does more than provide knowledge and teaching skills. It also helps shape the way future teachers think about their profession. When prospective teachers develop positive beliefs about teaching, they are more likely to enter the profession with commitment and a sense of responsibility. For this reason, teacher education programmes should continue to provide experiences that support the professional growth of student-teachers.

#### Suggestions:

The findings of the study show that the beliefs of prospective teachers regarding the teaching profession improved during the B.Ed. programme.

This indicates that the experiences provided during teacher training are aiding student-teachers in enhancing their comprehension of the profession.

Further studies can be taken up on other dimensions of pedagogical beliefs so that a broader understanding can be developed about how beliefs of prospective teachers influence classroom teaching and how teacher education helps in shaping these beliefs. Similar studies in different settings may also help in understanding whether these changes are seen in other contexts as well.

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#### Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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