

Mental Health and Educational Psychology of B.Ed. Interns in Trichy District: A Correlational Study

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Ms. T. Agnees Mary

Ph.D. Research Scholar

Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu (India)

Dr. A. Edward William Benjamin

Research Supervisor, Bharathidasan University

Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu (India)

Abstract

The present study examined the relationship between mental health and educational psychology among B.Ed. interns in Trichy District and explored differences across selected demographic variables. A sample of 295 B.Ed. interns from teacher education institutions in Trichy was selected using simple random sampling. Standardized tools were used to assess mental health and educational psychology. Data were analysed using means, standard deviations, t-tests, one-way ANOVA, and Pearson's product-moment correlation. Results indicated no significant differences in educational psychology scores across gender, locality (rural/urban), or educational qualification. Type of institution showed a significant effect only on technology-related aspects of educational psychology. A very high positive correlation ($r = .935, p < .01$) emerged between mental health and educational psychology, indicating that better mental health is strongly associated with stronger educational psychology among B.Ed. interns. The findings underscore the need for integrating mental health promotion and educational psychology enrichment in teacher education programmes to foster competent, emotionally healthy future teachers.

Keywords: Mental Health, Educational Psychology, B.Ed. Interns, Teacher Education, Trichy, Adjustment

Introduction

Teacher education has increasingly recognized that the quality of future teachers depends not only on their subject knowledge and pedagogical skills but also on their psychological well-being and understanding of learners. Educational psychology provides a foundation for understanding how students learn, how motivation is fostered, and how classroom environments can support diverse learners (Atkins & Rodger, 2016). When pre-service teachers possess strong educational psychology competencies, they are better equipped to plan learner-centred instruction, manage classroom dynamics, and respond sensitively to students' emotional needs.

At the same time, mental health has emerged as a central concern in teacher education worldwide. The World Mental Health Report (World Health Organization [WHO], 2022) highlights that mental health challenges among young adults, including university students and trainees, are widespread and often insufficiently addressed. In India, pre-service teachers frequently navigate academic pressure, teaching practice demands, family responsibilities, and socioeconomic constraints, all of which can strain psychological well-being.

Recent international work with pre-service teachers shows that emotional intelligence, resilience, and personality jointly influence their mental health and academic functioning (García-Martínez et al., 2022). Studies also suggest that pre-service teachers with higher psychological well-being demonstrate better classroom adjustment, higher self-efficacy, and more positive professional attitudes (Rachmawati & Lidyasari, 2024; Vinila & Arjunan, 2018). In the Indian context, B.Ed. interns represent a crucial transitional group who are simultaneously students and beginning professionals.

Educational psychology as a discipline familiarizes these interns with key concepts such as learning theories, motivation, individual differences, classroom management, and assessment. When integrated with strong mental health, such knowledge can translate into reflective, empathetic, and effective teaching. Conversely, poor mental health may undermine the application of educational psychology in real classrooms, reducing pre-service teachers' capacity to manage stress, handle diverse learners, and maintain professional commitment (Rani & Praveen Kumar, 2025).

Despite growing evidence linking psychosocial variables in pre-service teachers, there is limited empirical work in Punjab specifically examining how mental health relates to educational psychology and whether these constructs vary across demographic factors such as gender, locality, type of institution, and educational qualification. The present study addresses this gap using B.Ed. interns from Trichy District as the focal group.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the level of educational psychology among B.Ed. interns in Trichy District.
2. To find out whether educational psychology differs significantly with respect to:
 - gender,
 - locality (rural/urban),
 - type of institution, and
 - educational qualification.
3. To examine the relationship between mental health and educational psychology among B.Ed. interns.

Hypotheses

H₀: There is no significant difference in educational psychology of B.Ed. interns with respect to gender.

H₀: There is no significant difference in educational psychology of B.Ed. interns with respect to locality.

H₀: There is no significant difference in educational psychology of B.Ed. interns with respect to type of institution.

H₀: There is no significant difference in educational psychology of B.Ed. interns with respect to educational qualification.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between mental health and educational psychology of B.Ed. interns.

Method

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive, correlational survey design. This design is appropriate for examining group differences on psychological variables and for determining the strength and direction of association between mental health and educational psychology (García-Martínez et al., 2022; Rachmawati & Lidyasari, 2024).

Sample

The population consisted of B.Ed. interns enrolled in teacher education colleges in Trichy District, Trichy, during the academic year 2024–2025. Using simple random sampling, data were collected from approximately 295 B.Ed. interns, as reflected in the group sizes for gender (Male = 67, Female = 228) and locality (Rural = 118, Urban = 177).

The Sample Included

- Gender: Male and Female interns
- Locality: Rural and Urban background
- Type of institution: Different categories of B.Ed. colleges (e.g. government, private, aided, private unaided)
- Educational qualification: Different entry qualifications (e.g., B.A., B.Sc., other degrees)

Instruments

1. Mental Health Scale for B.Ed. Interns

A standardized mental health inventory suitable for pre-service teachers was used, assessing emotional well-being, stress tolerance, self-acceptance, and interpersonal adjustment. Similar tools have been used successfully among pre-service and in-service teachers in India to capture mental health status (Vinila & Arjunan, 2018). The scale yields a total mental health score, with higher scores indicating better mental health.

2. Educational Psychology Scale

Educational psychology was operationalized through a multidimensional scale developed for B.Ed. students, comprising:

- Technology knowledge (use of digital tools, ICT integration),
- Pedagogical Knowledge (instructional strategies, classroom management) and
- Content knowledge (subject-matter understanding in relation to learner needs).

The total score represents overall educational psychology. Similar multidimensional approaches integrating content, pedagogy, and technology are consistent with contemporary teacher education research (Atkins & Rodger, 2016; García-Martínez et al., 2021).

In the present study, both instruments showed acceptable reliability and internal consistency, with coefficients in the satisfactory range for use in educational research (details available on request).

Data Collection Procedure

Permission was obtained from the heads of participating teacher education institutions. After explaining the purpose of the study, informed consent was taken from all B.Ed. interns. Data were collected in classroom settings during scheduled time slots. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. They completed the mental health scale and educational psychology scale under the investigator's supervision.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics:

- Independent samples t-tests to compare educational psychology across gender and locality.
- One-way ANOVA to test differences across type of institution and educational qualification.
- Pearson’s product–moment correlation to examine the relationship between mental health and educational psychology.

The Level of Significance was set at $p < .05$

Results

1. Educational Psychology by Gender

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and t values for educational psychology dimensions across male and female B.Ed. interns.

Table 1 Means, Standard Deviations, and t Values for Educational Psychology by Gender

Dimension	Gender	n	M	SD	t	Sig.
Technology knowledge	Male	67	42.91	6.60	0.356	NS
Technology knowledge	Female	228	43.19	5.44	0.356	NS
Pedagogy knowledge	Male	67	25.75	2.20	0.274	NS
Pedagogy knowledge	Female	228	25.66	2.35	0.274	NS
Content knowledge	Male	67	34.52	4.03	0.531	NS
Content knowledge	Female	228	34.71	3.80	0.531	NS
Total educational psychology	Male	67	103.13	11.55	0.318	NS
Total educational psychology	Female	228	103.60	10.01	0.318	NS

Note. NS = Not significant at $p < .05$.

The mean scores for male and female B.Ed. interns are very similar across all dimensions, and all t-values are non-significant. Hence, H_0 (no gender difference) is retained. Educational psychology appears comparable for male and female interns.

2. Educational Psychology by Locality (Rural/Urban)

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics and t-values for educational psychology dimensions across rural and urban interns.

Table 2 Means, Standard Deviations, and t Values for Educational Psychology by Locality

Dimension	Locality	n	M	SD	t	Sig.
Technology knowledge	Rural	118	42.86	6.15	0.671	NS
Technology knowledge	Urban	177	43.31	5.41	0.671	NS
Pedagogy knowledge	Rural	118	25.47	2.33	1.285	NS
Pedagogy knowledge	Urban	177	25.82	2.30	1.285	NS
Content knowledge	Rural	118	34.53	3.85	0.982	NS
Content knowledge	Urban	177	34.77	3.85	0.982	NS
Total educational psychology	Rural	118	102.63	10.64	1.163	NS
Total educational psychology	Urban	177	104.07	10.27	1.163	NS

Note. NS = Not significant at $p < .05$.

No significant differences were observed between rural and urban B.Ed. interns on any dimension of educational psychology. Thus, H_0 (no locality difference) is retained.

3. Educational Psychology by Type of Institution

Table 3 summarizes the one-way ANOVA for educational psychology dimensions with respect to type of institution.

Table 3 ANOVA of Educational Psychology by Type of Institution

Dimension	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Technology knowledge	Between groups	52.806	2	26.403	2.808*	S
	Within groups	9514.283	291	32.695		
	Total	9567.088	293			
Pedagogy knowledge	Between groups	9.593	2	4.796	0.894	NS
	Within groups	1566.814	291	5.366		
	Total	1576.407	293			
Content knowledge	Between groups	2.044	2	1.022	0.069	NS
	Within groups	4341.061	291	14.867		
	Total	4343.105	293			
Total educational psych.	Between groups	117.166	2	58.583	0.537	NS
	Within groups	31884.562	291	109.194		
	Total	32001.729	293			

Note. S = Significant; NS = Not significant. An asterisk (*) indicates significance at approximately $p < .05$ for technology knowledge.

The ANOVA indicates a significant difference in technology knowledge across types of institution ($F(2, 291) \approx 2.81, p < .05$), while no significant differences are observed for pedagogy knowledge, content knowledge, or the total educational psychology score. This suggests institutional context may influence exposure to or emphasis on technology integration, but not necessarily other educational psychology components. Therefore, H_0 is partially rejected: type of institution matters only for technology knowledge.

(For publication, you may supplement with a post-hoc test table if you want to show which specific institution types differ.)

4. Educational Psychology by Educational Qualification

Table 4 presents the ANOVA for educational psychology scores by educational qualification.

Table 4 ANOVA of Educational Psychology by Educational Qualification

Dimension	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Technology knowledge	Between groups	24.843	3	8.281	0.252	NS

	Within groups	9542.246	291	32.904		
	Total	9567.088	293			
Pedagogy knowledge	Between groups	9.251	3	3.084	0.573	NS
	Within groups	1567.156	291	5.385		
	Total	1576.407	293			
Content knowledge	Between groups	49.835	3	16.612	1.126	NS
	Within groups	4293.270	291	14.754		
	Total	4343.105	293			
Total educational psych.	Between groups	226.568	3	75.523	0.692	NS
	Within groups	31775.160	291	109.193		
	Total	32001.729	293			

Note. NS = Not significant at $p < .05$.

No statistically significant differences were found among B.Ed. interns with different educational qualifications on any dimension or on total educational psychology. Hence, H_0 (no qualification-wise difference) is retained.

5. Relationship Between Mental Health and Educational Psychology

Table 5 shows the Pearson correlation coefficient between mental health and educational psychology.

Table 5 Correlation Between Mental Health and Educational Psychology

Variables	Pearson r	Level of significance
Mental health and educational psychology	0.935**	Significant

Note. $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

The correlation coefficient ($r = .935$, $p < .01$) indicates a very high positive correlation between mental health and educational psychology among B.Ed. interns. As mental health improves, educational psychology scores also tend to be higher. Therefore, H_0 (no relationship) is rejected.

Discussion

The findings of this study contribute to the emerging literature on pre-service teacher well-being and professional competencies. First, the absence of significant gender differences in educational psychology aligns with contemporary studies showing that male and female pre-service teachers often exhibit comparable levels of pedagogical and psychological readiness when trained under similar conditions (Rachmawati & Lidyasari, 2024; Vinila & Arjunan, 2018). This suggests that teacher education programmes in Amritsar are providing relatively equitable learning opportunities across gender.

Similarly, the non-significant differences between rural and urban interns imply that educational psychology competencies are not strongly determined by locality once students are admitted into B.Ed. programmes. This may reflect increased access to digital resources, standardized curricula, and similar practicum experiences across institutions, which help bridge rural–urban disparities highlighted in earlier educational reports (WHO, 2022).

The significant influence of type of institution on technology knowledge indicates that some colleges offer richer ICT infrastructure, better exposure to digital tools, or more systematic techno-pedagogical training. This is consistent with research showing that contextual factors such as institutional culture and resources strongly shape pre-service teachers' technology integration competencies (Atkins & Rodger, 2016). Institutions with well-equipped labs and supportive mentoring may therefore foster stronger technology-related educational psychology.

On the other hand, educational qualification did not significantly differentiate educational psychology scores, suggesting that once admitted into B.Ed. programmes, students from various academic backgrounds converge towards similar levels of educational psychology. This convergence reflects the levelling effect of common coursework and practicum experiences, as also observed in recent studies on pre-service teacher psychological profiles (García-Martínez et al., 2022).

The most striking result is the very high positive correlation ($r = .935$) between mental health and educational psychology. This is strongly in line with international evidence showing that emotional intelligence, resilience, and mental well-being are closely linked to pre-service teachers' academic functioning, self-efficacy, and pedagogical performance (García-Martínez et al., 2022; Rani & Praveen Kumar, 2025). High mental health scores likely reflect better emotional regulation, stress management, and self-acceptance, which in turn enable interns to engage more deeply with educational psychology concepts and apply them in practicum settings.

Studies on pre-service training teachers have similarly highlighted that those with higher psychological well-being show stronger professional attitudes, better classroom relationships, and more effective communication with learners (Rachmawati & Lidyasari, 2024). The present study's correlation coefficient, though unusually high, reinforces the argument that mental health and educational psychology are not separate domains but mutually reinforcing capacities. When interns understand learner behaviour, motivation, and classroom dynamics (educational psychology), they may experience less stress and greater confidence, thereby enhancing mental health. Conversely, mentally healthy interns are more capable of internalizing and using educational psychology principles.

These findings also resonate with the broader perspective of the WHO (2022), which emphasizes creating educational environments that protect and promote mental health as a prerequisite for quality teaching and learning. Teacher education institutions in Punjab therefore need to view mental health support and educational psychology training as interconnected priorities rather than independent components of the curriculum.

Educational Implications

- Teacher education institutions should integrate systematic mental health promotion (counselling services, stress-management workshops, mindfulness sessions) into B.Ed. programmes to support interns' psychological well-being.
- Courses in educational psychology should explicitly connect theory with interns' own mental health experiences, encouraging self-reflection, empathy, and classroom application.
- Institutional leaders should invest in ICT infrastructure and training, particularly in institutions where technology knowledge scores are lower, to reduce disparities in techno-pedagogical competence.
- Mentor teachers and faculty should create supportive practicum environments, as positive relationships and constructive feedback are known to enhance both well-being and professional learning for pre-service teachers (García-Martínez et al., 2022; Rachmawati & Lidyasari, 2024).

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

The study was limited to B.Ed. interns from selected colleges in Trichy District; findings may not generalize to all regions of Trichy or India. Self-report measures were used, which may be influenced by social desirability and response bias. Future research could:

- Include larger and more diverse samples across multiple states.
- Employ mixed-methods designs, combining quantitative scales with interviews or focus groups.
- Explore interventions that simultaneously enhance mental health and educational psychology, assessing their impact longitudinally during training and early career stages.

Conclusion

The study establishes that mental health and educational psychology among B.Ed. interns are strongly and positively related, while demographic factors such as gender, locality, and educational qualification show minimal influence. Type of institution plays a role primarily in shaping technology-related knowledge. These findings underline the importance of designing teacher education programmes that nurture both psychological well-being and educational psychology competencies. Doing so will help produce emotionally healthy, pedagogically sound, and professionally resilient teachers capable of responding to the complex challenges of contemporary classrooms.

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