



ATTITUDE OF STUDENTS TOWARDS RESEARCH

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Abstract

The present research aims to study the student's attitude towards research methods and academic achievement. This study was designed to acquire the knowledge of student's attitude and practice towards research activities during academic year. The majority of students had no positive attitude towards research activities. This study showed that the majority of student's capabilities and insight to the research activities are not up to the mark. It is recommended to improve student's knowledge and activity towards research. Students showed favorable knowledge of research, but their attitude to the field was inadequate. More attention must be placed on these parameters in the curriculum to improve student interest in research. The impact of barrier factors on research demonstrates that there is a need for greater availability of information in order to solve the problems and change strategies for research. It can be concluded that almost all the graduating students had negative attitude towards research work which is not a welcomed development if a nation is to have a breakthrough in technology and research. The study recommends that the instructional process should be managed in appropriate ways so as to create positive attitudes towards the research methods.



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Introduction

Research is a systematic process to achieve new knowledge, science or invention by the use standard methods. In the present day, one of the best measures of scientific progress in a country is the research situation in their scientific communities. Therefore, the concern over conducting scientific and accurate research has increased in most countries, both industrial and developing. This trend may be due to the desire to resolve the existing problems in their communities, to establish independence from other countries or to compete with them. The present research sought to find out the students attitudes towards quantitative research methods, as this could have a bearing on their performance. Insufficient attention to research by a government and the

educated members of a community may contribute to scientific and knowledge lag within the national community but also in the world as whole. Sometimes educated members favour the trend in research, while the shortfall in basic and valuable research may reflect other factors that have influence on the research. Adequate knowledge of the study subject and awareness of research principles are essential prerequisites for any study. Some previous studies of students showed that they had inadequate knowledge of the scientific inquiry process, but that they were nonetheless interested in pursuing research in the future. Positive attitude towards the research is the key for successful project. Attitude is the readiness to act in a certain way to certain issues. What constitute these could be moods, feelings, prejudices, fear and anxiety. Attitude is not an innate tendency but it is learnt. The final factor directly affecting the performance of research lies in the barriers against researchers. The main parameters reported in the literature as barriers to research among medical students include (a) inadequate knowledge of study design, (b) interpretation of study results, (c) time limitations and restrictions in funding support (d) lack of research training (e) uncertainty about the ability to successfully complete a study (lack of research self-efficacy), (f) little support from mentorship (g) lack of interest in research and (h) limited access to data sources (i.e. internet), materials and equipment.

Literature review

The relationship between attitude, self-efficacy and academic achievement has always been a topic of interest in social sciences, particularly in the fields of educational and social psychological researches. Attitude develops and is organized through experience. It is assumed that the appearance of an attitude is dependent on learning or social interactions. Attitude refers to a person's feeling thought and predisposition to respond to an object. Some researchers like Aborisade, Adebule, Omirin (1999) and Idu (1988) indicated many but similar patterns of attitude formation, that the main sources of attitude include assimilation from the environment, emotional effects of certain kinds of experiences and direct intellectual processes.

The concept of attitude is often divided into three aspects: cognitive, affective and behavioral. The cognitive aspect consists of thoughts and views about an object or construct, the affective aspect consists of feelings and moods towards an object, and the behavioral aspect is the actual behavior of a person or their intention to exhibit or avoid certain behaviors. Translated to the development of a positive attitude towards research, the cognitive aspect refers to the fact that students need to know and understand the possibilities of carrying out and using teacher research

(and to perceive it as important for them as prospective teachers). The affective aspect concerns the fact that students need to feel good about and enjoy conducting and using teacher research (and to perceive it as interesting for them as prospective teachers). Finally, the behavioural aspect occurs when a student attempts to carry out or to use teacher research, or plans to learn more about it. In addition to paying attention to the influence of students' cognitive, affective and behavioural aspects of their attitude, there is also a need to address the development of the students' confidence in conducting and using research (e.g., Jarvis and Rennie 1998; Mulholland and Wallace 2001). The concept of self-efficacy has been added to the operationalization of attitude. Self-efficacy is a construct which indicates an individual's belief in their own capacities (Bandura 1986), which, in this study, refers to their being able to conduct and use teacher research (Dyson 1997). There is a need to include self-efficacy as an aspect of students' attitude, because it influences students' behaviour in a positive or negative sense. When self-efficacy with regard to conducting and using research increases, it becomes more likely that students will not only develop a positive attitude towards research, but that they will also carry out and use teacher research in practice (Dyson 1997). "A study of the attitude, self-efficacy, effort and academic achievement of students towards research methods and statistics", it is therefore utterly important to illustrate the relationship between the four variables: attitude, self-efficacy, effort and academic achievement.

Research objectives

In the present study, there are primarily two objectives. First, the current research intends to test whether "effort" is significantly related to "attitude" and "self-efficacy". Second, the study aims to test whether "effort" serves as a mediated factor between attitude, self-efficacy and academic achievement.

Research Hypothesis

Two research hypotheses were generated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. (1) There is no significant difference between the pattern of male and female graduating students attitude to research work. (2) There is no significant difference in the pattern of education arts and social sciences graduating student.

Results and Discussions

First and foremost, the present research proves that all the four variables (attitude, self-efficacy, effort and academic achievement) are positively correlated with one other. However, even

though they are related to one another, multiple regression analyses display some interesting findings. For the first set of multiple regression analysis, it is found that attitude and self-efficacy can significantly predict effort. However, in the second set of regression analysis, when all the three variables (attitude, self-efficacy and effort) are considered as independent variables while academic achievement is considered as the dependent variable, it is discovered that effort cannot predict academic achievement. Therefore, effort can only be regarded an indirect factor that can influence both attitude and self-efficacy, but not necessarily academic achievement.

Apart from this, the present research also further consolidates the direct relationship between attitude, self-efficacy and academic achievement as suggested in past literature. It is observed that attitude has a direct effect on academic achievement while self-efficacy also has a direct effect on academic achievement.

This study investigated the perceived development of student teachers' attitude towards research and the development of their research knowledge and skills, after participating in an introductory course in teacher research. Overall, the students perceived a positive development in their attitude towards research, especially in their opinions of the importance of research and their own capability of conducting and using research.

Future Aspects

- Lecturers in universities should use instructional methodologies that motivate students so that they overcome the seeming impossibilities in their learning of numerical courses.
- High school mathematics should be taught using methodologies that provoke critical thinking hence motivating the students.
- The fear of high school mathematics should be hindered from being generalized to similar numerical disciplines like quantitative research methods.

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