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Exploring College Students' Attitudes Toward Research in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT: This study examined the attitudes toward research of students enrolled in the College of Teacher Education at the Lyceum of Aparri, Philippines. Specifically, it described students' attitudes toward research and determined whether significant differences existed when respondents were grouped according to sex, age, and academic year level. A descriptive-comparative research design was employed, involving 37 college students. Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire and analyzed through frequency counts, percentages, weighted means, an independent-samples t-test, and analysis of variance (ANOVA). The findings revealed that students generally held very favorable attitudes toward research, with an overall weighted mean of 4.44. Research skills were perceived as helpful for future professional practice (M = 4.89), while research was regarded as an indispensable component of professional training (M = 4.86) and useful for future careers (M = 4.84). Students also recognized the connection between research and their field of study (M = 4.78). These results indicate that respondents understood the relevance of research to their academic and professional development. Furthermore, no statistically significant differences were found in students' attitudes when grouped according to sex (p = 0.9893), age (p = 0.6004), and academic year level (p = 0.9129), using the .05 significance level. The findings highlight the importance of sustaining students' positive perceptions of research while providing learning experiences that strengthen their research competence and confidence. Teacher education institutions may enhance research instruction through guided research activities, faculty mentoring, and opportunities for practical application. These efforts may help students translate their appreciation of research into meaningful engagement with evidence-informed professional practice.

KEYWORDS: attitudes toward research, teacher education, college students, research education, higher education

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INTRODUCTION

Research is an important component of higher education, contributing to the development of analytical thinking, evidence-based decision-making, and the ability to critically examine problems. For college students, engagement with research provides opportunities to develop skills in identifying problems, evaluating information, interpreting evidence, and constructing knowledge. These competencies are particularly relevant in teacher education, where future teachers are expected to evaluate educational practices, respond to classroom challenges, and make informed instructional decisions. However, the inclusion of research in higher education curricula does not necessarily ensure that students develop an interest in or a positive disposition toward research. Students may recognize its academic and professional value while simultaneously perceiving research activities as difficult, stressful, or intimidating. Understanding this relationship is important for examining how students experience research as part of their academic preparation.

Students' attitudes toward research are relevant to their willingness to participate in research activities, their perceptions of research-related tasks, and their engagement with the research process. Attitudes may reflect students' beliefs about the usefulness of research, their feelings when undertaking research tasks, and their willingness to engage in research-related activities. These dimensions are important because students' recognition of research as academically valuable may coexist with apprehension about conducting it. Previous studies have reported varying patterns of research attitudes among students, ranging from favorable perceptions to concerns about research knowledge, competence, and the demands of research activities (Pavlovic, et al., 2024; Dailah, 2025; Duvuru, et al.,

2025). Such differences suggest that attitudes toward research should not be understood solely in terms of whether students consider research important. Rather, examining students' attitudes requires attention to how they evaluate its usefulness and how they experience the process of conducting it.

Research attitudes are also relevant to the preparation of future teachers. Teacher education students are expected not only to understand research concepts but also to develop the capacity to use evidence in examining educational problems and improving teaching practice. Nevertheless, students' exposure to research courses may not automatically translate into confidence or willingness to undertake research independently. Peiser, et al. (2022) examined student teachers' perceptions of research and its potential application to professional practice, highlighting the importance of distinguishing the perceived value of research from students' intentions to engage in it. Similarly, studies examining students' research attitudes have identified concerns regarding research preparation, practical experience, and the perceived difficulty of research work (Quintero, et al., 2025; Mokresh, et al., 2024; Wishkoski, et al., 2022). These findings point to the need to examine students' attitudes within their specific educational contexts rather than assume that research requirements alone are sufficient to encourage research engagement.

In the Philippines, the development of research capacity in higher education is supported by policies that emphasize the role of higher education institutions (HEIs) in research, innovation, extension, and national development. Commission on Higher Education Memorandum Order No. 52, series of 2016, entitled Pathways to Equity, Relevance, and Advancement in Research, Innovation, and Extension in Philippine Higher Education, provides a policy framework for strengthening these functions. This policy context underscores the importance of developing research capabilities within Philippine HEIs. At the student level, however, institutional commitments to research must be considered alongside students' actual experiences, perceptions, and attitudes. Understanding how students view research can provide useful information for institutions seeking to strengthen research instruction and create learning environments that support the development of research competencies. This concern is particularly relevant in teacher education, where research preparation may contribute to the development of reflective, evidence-informed future educators.

Although previous studies have examined students' attitudes toward research in different academic settings, findings across populations and educational contexts have not always been consistent. Some studies have reported favorable attitudes, whereas others have identified weaknesses in research knowledge, negative perceptions, or difficulties associated with research activities (Assar, et al., 2022; Alsaleem, et al., 2021; Cotrina, et al., 2025). Previous research has also considered whether attitudes differ according to demographic characteristics, including sex and academic background. These variations indicate the importance of examining research attitudes in specific institutional settings. For students enrolled in teacher education programs, understanding both their evaluations of research and the difficulties they associate with it may help clarify the relationship between recognizing research as useful and experiencing research as challenging. Moreover, examining the possible associations between students' attitudes and selected demographic characteristics may provide institution-specific evidence regarding the relevance of these variables to students' research experiences.

In response to these considerations, the present study examined the attitudes toward research of students enrolled in the College of Teacher Education at the Lyceum of Aparri, Philippines. Specifically, it described the participants' demographic characteristics, examined their attitudes toward research, and determined whether their attitudes were significantly associated with sex, age, and year level. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, the study sought to generate empirical evidence on how students perceive research and the challenges they associate with research activities. By focusing on teacher education students within a specific institutional context, the study contributes localized evidence to the broader discussion of research attitudes in higher education. The findings may inform institutional reflection on research instruction, student support, and the preparation of future teachers to engage meaningfully with research.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive-comparative research design to examine the attitudes toward research of students enrolled in the College of Teacher Education at the Lyceum of Aparri, Philippines. The descriptive component was used to summarize the respondents' demographic characteristics and describe their attitudes toward research, while the comparative component examined whether differences in attitudes existed across groups based on sex, age, and academic year level.

The participants consisted of 37 students from the College of Teacher Education at the Lyceum of Aparri. The study considered their sex, age, and academic year level to describe the participant profile and examine differences in attitudes toward research across demographic groups.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to assess students' attitudes toward research. The instrument gathered demographic information, including sex, age, and academic year level, and elicited responses concerning students' perceptions of research, including its perceived usefulness, contribution to professional development, and associated challenges. The responses were summarized to determine the participants' attitudes toward research. The specific dimensions and interpretation of the attitude scores were based on the questionnaire used in the study.

Permission to administer the questionnaire was obtained through a formal letter of request submitted to the Research Director's Office. Upon approval, coordination was undertaken with instructors of the College of Teacher Education to facilitate questionnaire

distribution and retrieval. The completed questionnaires were collected, reviewed for completeness, and organized for data processing and analysis.

The data were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages to describe the participants' demographic characteristics. Weighted means were used to summarize their responses regarding attitudes toward research. An independent-samples *t*-test was used to examine differences in attitudes between male and female students, while one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to examine differences among age groups and academic year levels. Statistical significance was assessed using the significance level adopted in the study. The selection of these tests was based on the grouping variables and the intended comparisons.

Ethical principles were observed throughout the conduct of the study. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to decline participation or withdraw without penalty. The confidentiality of their responses was maintained, and the collected information was used for research purposes. Data were handled responsibly, and results were presented in aggregate form to protect participants' identities. The study was conducted in accordance with applicable institutional requirements for research ethics and data protection.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Profile Variables	Frequency (n-37)	Percentage
Sex		
Male	9	24.32
Female	28	75.68
Age		
20 years old and below	26	70.27
21-23	6	16.22
24-26	4	10.81
27 years old and above	1	2.70
Year Level		
First Year	20	54.05
Second Year	6	16.22
Third Year	8	21.62
Fourth Year	3	8.11

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 37 respondents in terms of sex, age, and academic year level. Most respondents were female, accounting for 28 students (75.68%), while nine (24.32%) were male. In terms of age, the majority were 20 years old and below (n = 26, 70.27%). Six respondents (16.22%) were aged 21–23, four (10.81%) were aged 24–26, and one (2.70%) was 27 years old and above. Regarding academic year level, first-year students comprised the largest group, with 20 respondents (54.05%), followed by third-year students with eight (21.62%), second-year students with six (16.22%), and fourth-year students with three (8.11%). Overall, the respondents were predominantly female, aged 20 years and below, and enrolled in their first year of study.

Table 2. Students' Attitude towards Research

Items	Mean	Qualitative Description
I feel at ease when taking research courses.	4.59	Very Favorable
In enjoy my research course(s).	4.03	Favorable
I feel confident when taking research courses.	3.92	Favorable
Research is useful for my career.	4.84	Very Favorable
I love research courses.	3.73	Favorable
I find research courses interesting.	4.11	Favorable
Research is connected to my field of study.	4.78	Very Favorable
Research courses are not stressful for me.	4.54	Very Favorable
I feel calm when taking research courses.	4.59	Very Favorable
The skills I have acquired in research will be helpful to me in the future.	4.89	Very Favorable
Research should be indispensable my Professional training.	4.86	Very Favorable
I find research courses manageable.	4.65	Very Favorable
Research courses are pleasant.	4.14	Favorable
OVERALL WEIGHTED MEAN	4.44	Very Favorable

Table 2 presents the students' attitudes toward research in terms of their perceptions of research courses, the relevance of research to their future careers, and its contribution to their professional preparation. The overall weighted mean of 4.44, described as Very Favorable, indicates that the respondents generally held favorable attitudes toward research. Among the indicators, the belief that research skills would be helpful in the future obtained the highest mean (M = 4.89). This was followed by the view that research should be an indispensable part of professional training (M = 4.86) and that research was useful for their careers (M = 4.84). Students also strongly recognized the connection between research and their field of study (M = 4.78). These results suggest that the respondents understood the importance of research in developing competencies that could support their future professional practice. This finding is consistent with Papanastasiou (2005), who examined students' attitudes toward research and identified perceived usefulness as an important dimension of those attitudes. The high ratings in the present study suggest that students viewed research not merely as an academic requirement but also as a means of developing knowledge and skills relevant to their future careers. For students in teacher education, this perception is particularly important because research can help future teachers examine educational practices, understand classroom concerns, and make informed instructional decisions.

The respondents also reported favorable attitudes toward their research learning experiences. Research courses were perceived as pleasant (M = 4.14), interesting (M = 4.11), and enjoyable (M = 4.03). However, the statement "I love research courses" received a comparatively lower mean of 3.73. Although this rating remained within the favorable category, it suggests that recognizing the value of research may not necessarily translate into strong personal enthusiasm for research courses. Students may appreciate the relevance of research while differing in how much they enjoy studying or conducting it. The findings also highlight the importance of distinguishing students' perceptions of research usefulness from their confidence and comfort in undertaking research activities. Studies on research methods courses have reported that students may acknowledge the importance of research while experiencing anxiety or difficulty during the learning process (Mensah, et al., 2023; Wishkoski, et al., 2022; Ramirez, et al., 2024). This distinction is relevant when interpreting the present results because positive attitudes toward the professional value of research do not automatically establish that students feel equally confident in carrying out research tasks.

The favorable overall rating suggests that students already recognize research as an important part of their academic and professional preparation. This provides a useful starting point for strengthening research instruction in the College of Teacher Education. Faculty members may build on this positive perception by providing guided research activities, opportunities to practice research skills, constructive feedback, and appropriate mentoring. Such support may help students translate their recognition of research's importance into greater engagement and confidence in conducting research. Overall, the findings indicate that students held very favorable attitudes toward research, particularly regarding its usefulness for their future careers, the development of research skills, and professional training. Nevertheless, the differences in ratings across individual indicators suggest that students' attitudes are multidimensional. Their recognition of research's value, interest in research courses, and comfort with research activities should therefore be considered separately when interpreting their experiences and planning improvements in research instruction.

Table 3. Significant Difference in the Students' Attitude towards Research when grouped according to Profile Variables

Profile Variables	p-value	Decision
Sex	0.9893	Not Significant
Age	0.6004	Not Significant
Year level	0.9129	Not Significant

**significant at .05 level*

Table 3 presents the results of the analysis examining whether students' attitudes toward research differed significantly when grouped according to sex, age, and academic year level. At the .05 level of significance, all three profile variables yielded p-values greater than .05. Therefore, no statistically significant differences were found in students' attitudes toward research across the profile groups examined.

For sex, the p-value was 0.9893, indicating no statistically significant difference between male and female students. This suggests that the respondents reported similar attitudes toward research regardless of sex. The result indicates that, within this sample, neither group demonstrated a statistically distinguishable attitude toward research. For age, the analysis yielded a p-value of 0.6004. Since this value exceeded the .05 significance threshold, the difference in attitudes across age groups was not statistically significant. This suggests that the students' attitudes toward research did not vary significantly according to age in the present sample. However, the relatively small number of respondents in some age categories should be considered when interpreting this finding. Similarly, academic year level yielded a p-value of 0.9129, indicating no statistically significant difference in attitudes toward research among students at different year levels. This suggests that students' perceptions of research were relatively consistent across their progression through the teacher education program. Nevertheless, the result does not establish that academic year level has no influence on research attitudes; it indicates only that the study did not detect a significant difference among the groups.

These findings may be considered alongside Reyes-Rodriguez, et al.'s (2026) examination of attitudes toward research, which emphasizes that students' perceptions involve multiple dimensions, including the perceived usefulness of research. In the present

study, students generally recognized research as important to their future careers and professional preparation. This favorable perception may help explain why the overall pattern of attitudes appeared consistent across demographic groups. However, because the study did not directly examine the factors shaping these attitudes, this explanation should be treated as a possible interpretation rather than a confirmed relationship. The findings also suggest that efforts to improve students' research experiences should not rely solely on demographic characteristics to identify who may need support. Instead, teacher education institutions may consider students' research skills, confidence, learning experiences, and access to faculty guidance. These factors warrant further investigation, particularly because students may recognize the value of research while still experiencing difficulties in carrying out research activities.

CONCLUSION

The findings underscore the importance of sustaining students' positive perceptions of research while strengthening their capacity to engage in research activities. Recognizing research as valuable to professional development is an important starting point, but this recognition should be accompanied by learning experiences that enable students to conduct research with greater confidence and competence. Teacher education institutions therefore need to ensure that research is not treated merely as a course requirement but as an integral part of preparing future teachers to make evidence-informed decisions and respond to educational challenges.

The absence of statistically significant differences across sex, age, and academic year level also suggests that research development initiatives may be designed to support students across these demographic groups, rather than assuming that particular groups are inherently more or less receptive to research. However, these results should be interpreted within the limits of the study's sample and should not be taken as evidence that demographic characteristics never influence research attitudes. Ultimately, developing a stronger research culture requires more than students' recognition of research as professionally useful. It calls for a learning environment in which research is accessible, relevant, and supported through sustained instruction, opportunities for practical application, and faculty guidance. By fostering such an environment, the College of Teacher Education can help prepare future teachers who not only appreciate the value of research but are also equipped to use evidence critically in their professional practice.

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