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**RESEARCH PAPER**

**A Study to Investigate Students' Attitude towards Research at University Level**

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**ABSTRACT**

Present study aimed to investigate students' attitude towards research at university level. An attitude takes into account thoughts, feelings, and actions, as well as how they interact. A quantitative approach was employed to conduct present study. Researcher employed a survey research design to conduct the study. Population was comprised of all university students of Lahore city. Sample of the study was comprised of 200 male and female university students of one public and one private university on convenient basis. An instrument of the study was adapted by the researcher. Reliability of the scale was .804. Data were analysed by using descriptive and inferential statistics to investigate students' attitude towards research at university level. Findings of the study concluded that male and female students have a positive attitude towards research at university level. However, female students' attitude towards research is tend to be more significance as compared to the male students at university level. Female students showed more interest in research at university level. Male and female students' have significant difference regarding their attitude towards research based on their gender and degree program. However, an insignificant result was found among university students' attitude towards research based on their age. Present study recommends to develop attitudes of university students towards research by practicing in class through giving short research projects and techniques.

**KEYWORDS** Attitude towards Research, Anxiety, Research Usefulness, Positive Research Disposition

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**Introduction**

Research is the process of gathering and analyzing data to improve our comprehension of the topic being studied (Swindoll, 2012). Research involves using the scientific method to carefully assess problems or conduct in-depth studies of certain concerns or difficulties (Reddy, 2019).

An individual's attitude might be either favourable or negative towards a certain topic. Bidimensional definitions of attitudes take subject-specific beliefs into account as well. A comprehensive definition of attitude takes into account thoughts, feelings, and actions, as well as how they interact (Zan & Martino, 2007). The term "attitude towards research" refers to a thorough examination of a person's thoughts, emotions, and actions regarding research. In psychology, an attitude can be described as a collection of feelings, opinions, and actions towards a specific person, thing, object, or event (Banaji & Heiphetz, 2010).

According to Bolin et al. (2012) although research is widely regarded as being essential to any professional activity, not all students view it as being crucial to their own personal and professional development. Some students may or may not perceive the

usefulness of research classes, depending on the type of unconscious attitudes they may be thinking about research. (Rubin & Babbie, 2011). Butt and Shams (2013) found that self-supporting evening programme students have a noticeably better attitude towards the research than those in self-supporting morning programme students. Perhaps this is because night time students are more enthusiastic about this subject. Not all students view research as being essential to their own personal and professional growth, despite the fact that it is increasingly being viewed as essential to any professional practice. Some students may or may not perceive the usefulness of research courses, depending on the type of basic beliefs about research they may be affective (Rubin & Babbie, 2011). As previously mentioned, numerous studies have found that some students have unfavourable attitudes towards research since they are frequently afraid, nervous and anxious about it (Korkmaz, et al., 2010).

According to Moore et al. (2008) students frequently lack interest in research, particularly when they cannot perceive how it directly relates to their practise or day-to-day life. According to Pan et al. (2004) by emphasizing the value of research in all areas of human activity, research teachers can increase students' enthusiasm for and confidence in their skills as researchers, encouraging students and providing them with a pleasant and favourable environment can considerably improve their interest in conducting research. Brew et al. (2006) research skills are an important ingredient for completing and succeeding in undergraduate education. The ability to use research skills to analyse and find solutions to complex problems is becoming one of the defining requirements for hiring university graduates. Many higher education institutions face the task of preparing students to be efficient future problem solvers and change-makers in a rapidly changing environment (Ashcroft et al., 2020). Quarton (2003) however, research skills must be developed over the entire period of undergraduate study because they are not innate. Similarly, it was discovered that prospective students with a premedical background had a considerably better attitude towards research than those who had previously studied arts and computer science at the upper secondary level. The reason according to Butt and Shams (2013) could be that experimentation during their prior pre-medical education may have established a favourable attitude towards the research among potential teachers. As Orgun et al. (2014) stated, in comparison to female pupils, male students are more innovative.

Correspondingly, Shaukat et al. (2014) has made the case that men have a vastly more positive attitude towards research than women do. Also, Deepa (2014) found that male students have a stronger attitude towards research than female pupils. Al Ghamdi et al. (2014) medical students' attitudes, practices, and perceptions of research have been examined. They get to the conclusion that the majority of students agree that research is vital in the medical industry.

### **Literature Review**

Research has evolved into one of the most important reason resources for all people to change their way of life in today's rapidly changing world. It reveals new paths in a number of fields, including instruction, business, trade, industry, economics, science, and technology. In actuality, research which has become essential to human advancement has been the driving force behind that growth. Social science has always been interested in the relationship between attitude towards research, notably in the areas of educational and social psychology research. The association between attitude and research skills, however, has not been the subject of many studies. Thus, it is hoped that this research would offer new information about the phenomenon.

Among the few studies conducted to assess the research performance of Pakistani educational institutions. Mushtaq et al. (2012) developed a study to evaluate and analyse the condition of research activities in various medical institutions across the nation and to ascertain how the research culture at Pakistani medical institutions changed between 2007 and 2010. Twenty-four medical universities and institutions were chosen to have the impact factor of their articles evaluated. These publications' distributions by year, by city, and within each institution under investigation were all examined. They found that between 2007 to 2010, there was a rise in the number of publications. The study concentrated on the rate of evolution of the research paradigm in Pakistani medical educational institutions.

Kapuka et al. (2019) use Papanastasiou's (2014) Revised Attitude towards Research (R-ATR) scale. This study investigated the variables influencing graduate education students' attitudes towards research as well as the attitudes themselves. At a university in northern China, the findings indicated that the students' attitudes towards research were generally favourable. Students who take doctoral degrees showed significantly higher levels of self-efficacy, lower levels of research anxiety, and more positive attitudes about research than those pursuing master's degrees. Research anxiety was strongly inversely correlated with the amount of research courses taken. The general attitudes of students towards research were favourably correlated with their generalised self-efficacy. The association between age and attitudes towards research was not found to be significant.

Demjén et al. (2017) determine this survey is to ascertain respondents' perceptions of their research interests and skills. Students from real and applied science faculties make up the participants. The findings highlight respondents' interest in participating in research activities, their need for support resources (other than information from university courses), their perceptions of their having the key skills required to conduct research, and their capacity for communicating about the research they were involved in. Oguan et al. (2014) used the ATR scale devised by Elena T. Papanastasiou (2005) to examine the students' attitudes and levels of concern around research and how that affects their academic performance. To better understand the attitudes and concern of the students regarding research, the study used two designs: a descriptive survey and associational research. Most of them show a negative opinion towards the difficulties of research, students generally have a good attitude towards it. Comparatively speaking, male pupils are more upbeat than female students. As expected, people with good academic standing have a positive outlook on research. Also, the students' admission that research is stressful demonstrates their apprehension about it. However, no association between students' academic success and the relevance of their research to their careers or their favourable attitudes was found. Students in social work have negative attitude towards research, according to Rubin et al. (2011) research. Professors in social work are aware that students do not always lean on just research.

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Shaukat et al. (2014) revealed that research techniques courses are frequently rated poorly and viewed as challenging by students. This study used the Attitudes towards Research Scale (Papanastasiou, 2005) to evaluate the views of 201 randomly chosen postgraduate teacher education candidates from Pakistani public and private universities. It was assumed that students have favourable opinions about several facets of research. This measure has 32 items with the following 5 constructs: Research difficulty, Research anxiety, favourable attitudes towards research, and research utility in a career. Data were collected by self-administered approach. Throughout the trainee instructors' class periods, data were collected from them. As a sample for the study, three programs – B.S. honors/M.A. education (N = 63) were chosen. Both t- test and ANOVA were used to evaluate the data. The findings showed that men were much more favourable towards research than women. Similar outcomes were reported for age, various study programs, and university type.

Zeeshan et al. (2019) determine the student's attitude towards research. The University of the Punjab serves as the source for the sample of students. Methods: Factor analysis was used to identify key research variables. Inferential analysis and descriptive statistics are used to better understand the students' attitudes regarding research. Application of the mean, Man Whitney U test, and Kruskal Wallis H test were used to assess the responses. Overall, the students' attitudes towards research are favourable. Comparatively speaking, male pupils are more positive than female students. As expected, people with advanced degrees have a positive view on research.

Gilmore et al. (2010) study expands research on graduate student growth by assessing the descriptive findings and validity of a self-report survey created to collect graduate students' assessments of their teaching and research skills. Descriptive findings shed some light on the areas where graduate students in their first year of graduate study are growing. The results show that a number of variables, including graduate students' personal values and research and teaching behaviour, influence how they perceive their research and teaching skills. Additionally, participants' self-reported teaching and research skills did not match what their students and fellow researchers thought of them.

## Material and Methods

Present study aimed to investigate students' attitude towards research at university level. Researcher employed a survey research design to conduct the study. Sample of the study was comprised of 200 male and female university students of Lahore city. An instrument of the study was adapted by the researcher. Reliability of the scale was .804. Data were analysed by using descriptive and inferential statistics to investigate students' attitude towards research at university level.

## Results and Discussion

**Table 1**  
**Descriptive Scores of Students' Attitude towards Research at University Level**

	Gender	Research Usefulness	Anxiety	PRD
Male	Mean	16.9281	20.5030	19.0898
	N	167	167	167

	Std. Deviation	3.09015	3.28354	3.56155
	Std. Error of Mean	.23912	.25409	.27560
Female	Mean	18.3030	22.1212	21.1515
	N	33	33	33
	Std. Deviation	1.21153	2.20451	2.99083
	Std. Error of Mean	.21090	.38376	.52064
Total	Mean	17.1550	20.7700	19.4300
	N	200	200	200
	Std. Deviation	2.90917	3.18399	3.55079
	Std. Error of Mean	.20571	.22514	.25108

Table shows descriptive scores of students' attitude towards research at university level. The mean scores about students' research usefulness are (M=16.92) anxiety (M=20.50), and positive research disposition scores are (M=19.08) showed that male and female students have a positive attitude towards research at university level. However, female students' attitude towards research is tend to be more significance as compared to the male students at university level. Female students showed more interest in research at university level.

**Table 2**  
**Difference of Male and Female University Students' Attitude towards Research**

Factors	Gender	N	M	SD	t-value	df	Sig.
Research Usefulness	Male	100	16.92	3.09	-4.312	126.77	.000
	Female	100	18.30	1.21			
Anxiety	Male	100	20.50	3.28	-3.516	63.84	.001
	Female	100	22.12	2.20			
Positive Research Disposition	Male	100	19.08	3.56	-3.500	51.66	.001
	Female	100	21.15	2.99			

Findings showed a significant mean difference between male and female students' attitude towards research regarding the factors (research usefulness, anxiety and positive research disposition) at university level.

**Table 3**  
**Difference of Male and Female University Students' Attitude towards Research**

Variables	Gender	N	M	SD	t-value	df	Sig.
Attitude towards Research	Male	100	56.52	7.68	-5.823	98.815	.000
	Female	100	61.67	3.63			

Findings showed a significant mean difference between male and female students' overall attitude towards research at university level.

**Table 4**  
**Difference of University Students' Attitude towards Research based on their Age**

Factors	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Research Usefulness	7.384	1	7.384	.872	.352
	1676.811	198	8.469		
	1684.195	199			
Anxiety	9.430	1	9.430	.930	.336
	2007.990	198	10.141		
	2017.420	199			
Positive Research Disposition	2.744	1	2.744	.217	.642
	2506.276	198	12.658		
	2509.020	199			

Findings showed an insignificant mean difference among university students' attitude towards research regarding the factors (research usefulness, anxiety and positive research disposition) at university level based on their age.

**Table 5**  
**Difference of University Students' Attitude towards Research based on their Age**

Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Attitude towards Research	1.698	1	1.698	.031	.861
	10934.097	198	55.223		
	10935.795	199			

Findings showed an insignificant mean difference among university students' attitude towards research based on their age.

**Table 6**  
**Difference of University Students' Attitude towards Research based on their Degree Program**

Variables	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Research Usefulness	17.725	1	17.725	2.106	.148
	1666.470	198	8.417		
	1684.195	199			
Anxiety	50.048	1	50.048	5.037	.026
	1967.372	198	9.936		
	2017.420	199			
Positive Research Disposition	14.616	1	14.616	1.160	.283
	2494.404	198	12.598		
	2509.020	199			

Findings showed an insignificant mean difference among university students' attitude towards research regarding the factors (research usefulness, and positive research disposition) whereas, a significant difference was found in anxiety at university level based on their degree program.

**Table 7**  
**Difference of University Students' Attitude towards Research based on their Degree Program**

Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Attitude towards Research	228.240	1	228.240	4.221	.041
	10707.555	198	54.079		
	10935.795	199			

Findings showed a significant mean difference among university students' attitude towards research based on their degree program.

## Discussion

Present study aimed to investigate students' attitude towards research at university level. Researcher employed a survey research design to conduct the study. Findings of the study concluded that male and female students have a positive attitude towards research at university level. However, female students' attitude towards research is tend to be more significance as compared to the male students at university level. Female students showed more interest in research at university level. Male and female students' have significant difference regarding their attitude towards research based on their gender and degree program. However, an insignificant result was found among university students' attitude towards research based on their age. An individual's attitude might be either favourable or negative towards a certain topic. The term "attitude towards research" refers to a thorough examination of a person's thoughts, emotions, and actions regarding research. In psychology, an attitude can be described as

a collection of feelings, opinions, and actions towards a specific person, thing, object, or event (Banaji & Heiphetz, 2010). Although research is widely regarded as being essential to any professional activity, not all students view it as being crucial to their own personal and professional development. Some students may or may not perceive the usefulness of research classes, depending on the type of unconscious attitudes they may be thinking about research. (Rubin & Babbie, 2011). Butt and Shams (2013) found that self-supporting evening programme students have a noticeably better attitude towards the research than those in self-supporting morning programme students. Perhaps this is because night time students are more enthusiastic about this subject. Not all students view research as being essential to their own personal and professional growth, despite the fact that it is increasingly being viewed as essential to any professional practise. (Bolin et al., 2012). Some students may or may not perceive the usefulness of research courses, depending on the type of basic beliefs about research they may be affective (Rubin & Babbie, 2011). As previously mentioned, numerous studies have found that some students have unfavourable attitudes towards research since they are frequently afraid, nervous and anxious about it (Korkmaz, et al., 2010). According to Moore et al. (2008) students frequently lack interest in research, particularly when they cannot perceive how it directly relates to their practise or day-to-day life. According to Pan et al. (2004) by emphasising the value of research in all areas of human activity, research teachers can increase students' enthusiasm for and confidence in their skills as researchers, encouraging students and providing them with a pleasant and favourable environment can considerably improve their interest in conducting research.

## **Conclusion**

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## **Recommendations**

Following are the recommendations of the study.

- Findings of the study showed students' positive attitude towards research at university level. Therefore, it is recommended that students' may provide research oriented environment in universities to enhance their research skills.
- It is recommended to integrate classroom activities into course work, seminars and home works to develop their attitude towards research.
- It is recommended to conduct motivational sessions, seminars and conferences to develop their interest in research.
- It is recommended to practice students through some hand on projects by providing funding to conduct research which would leads their attitude towards research at university level.

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