

Attitude of Ph.D. Research Scholars Towards Research in Himachal Pradesh

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Abstract

The present study was conducted on research attitude of Ph.D. scholars of Himachal Pradesh University in terms of gender, discipline and fellowship status (fellowship holder/ non- fellowship holders). A sample of 80 Ph.D. research scholars was selected from ten departments of sciences and social sciences disciplines in Himachal Pradesh University. The descriptive survey method was followed by administering Attitude Scale towards Research (ASTR) constructed and validated by Dr Vishal Sood & Y.K. Sharma (2012). It was found from the results of t- test that there is no significant mean difference in the research attitudes of Ph.D. research scholars across gender, discipline and fellowship status. Results also showed the moderately favourable research attitude of Ph.D. scholars indicating a conducive environment for research in Himachal Pradesh University.

Keywords: Research, Attitude, Research attitude, Ph.D. research scholar, sciences and Social Sciences discipline, fellowship and non- fellowship holder research scholar.

INTRODUCTION

Research is an academic activity and as such the term should be used in technical sense. According to Clifford Woody research comprises defining and redefining problems, formulating hypothesis or suggested solutions; collecting, organising and evaluating data; making deductions and reaching conclusions; and at last, carefully testing the conclusions to determine whether they fit the formulating hypothesis. D. Slesinger and M. Stephenson in the Encyclopaedia of social sciences define research as “the manipulation of things, concepts or symbols for the purpose of general using to extend, correct or verify knowledge, whether that knowledge aids in construction of theory or in the practice of an art.” The knowledge gained by research is of the highest order. It is not based on assumptions, beliefs and untested generalizations. To seek such knowledge, a researcher must develop scholarship, accurate observation, integrity, willingness to spend long hours to collect and study all forms of evidence before arriving at conclusions, scholarship and ability to recognise causal relationship and originality and objectivity in thinking. However, it must be recognised that such ideals serve as goals for which researchers should strive. Being human beings, it is difficult for researchers to realise all ideals completely. The term attitude is derived from the Latin word ‘aptus’ which is also the root of the word aptitude. It indicates a state of preparedness or adaptation (Erwin, 2001).

Attitude towards research refers to a person’s evaluative stance, viewpoint or way of thinking and feeling about the research. It encompasses a combination of beliefs, emotions, and behaviours that shape an individual’s response towards research. Attitude can be positive, negative or neutral and can influence a

person's thoughts, decisions and actions. In the field of research, attitude play a critical role in shaping how researchers approach their work, interact with guide and colleagues and contribute to the advancement of knowledge.

Significance of the study

The present study was oriented towards investigating the attitude towards research among the Ph.D. research scholars and to find out the various aspects of their attitude. By understanding factors that influence attitudes towards research, researchers can work to improve their research practices. It encourages researchers to approach their work with curiosity and diligence, leading to more robust and effective research.

Review of related literature

Oguan et al. (2014) investigated the attitudes and anxiety level of the students' attitude towards research and its influence on their academic achievement by using Attitude towards Research Scale devised by Elena T. Papanastasiou in 2005. Rani et al. (2014) conducted a study to find out the research attitude among M.Ed. students. The sample for this study was selected randomly. A scale "Attitude towards Research" standardized by Dr Vishal Sood and Prof. Y.K. Sharma was used for collecting data. It was found that rural student's attitude towards research is highly positive than urban students and male student's attitude towards research is highly positive than female student's attitude. Deka et al. (2015) conducted a study to assess the attitude of postgraduate students towards research. Findings of the study revealed that the postgraduate students have negative attitude towards research. Abun et al. (2019) attempted to study the attitude of graduate students towards research and their intention to conduct research in the future by using descriptive correlational and quantitative study. Dhiman (2019) did a study of attitude of Ph.D. research scholars of Himachal Pradesh University towards research by using descriptive survey method. Kakupa (2019) examined graduate education student's attitude towards research by using Papanastasiou's (2014) Revised Attitude towards Research (R-ATR) scale. The results of the study showed that the students had moderately positive attitudes towards research. Patel (2019) a cross-sectional study was conducted in Terna Medical College, Nerul, Navi Mumbai in 2016. Entitled "Do our medical undergraduates need to develop research skills? Assessing perceptions, attitudes and skills of medical undergraduate". The findings revealed that students have a positive attitude toward conducting research. Ozcan (2019) did a study to investigate faculty of education students' attitudes towards scientific research by using scale of attitude towards scientific research. In this study ordinal logistic regression analysis and descriptive statistics are used. Upadhyay (2019) did a comparative study of attitude towards research, mental health and stress among JRF, NET and non-NET research scholars by using F-test (ANOVA) and found no significant difference in the research attitude of JRF, NET and non-NET research scholars. Butt and Shams (2020) attempted to study master in education student attitude towards research. Rajpal (2020) did a study of the attitude of research scholars towards research by using descriptive survey method and taking sample of 100 research scholars. Research attitude scale developed by Preslee D. Kharsati (2012) was used for collecting data. Results revealed that research scholars perceived neutral attitude towards research. Rind (2020) conducted a review study to examine research attitude of students. The purpose of the study was to explore the student's attitude towards research. Hence the report of review generalized research attitudes which are positive and negative. Sivagami and Sugasini (2020) conducted a study to determine the attitude towards research of the research scholars of arts and

science stream by using descriptive survey method. The results of the study showed that more than half of the respondents had medium level of research attitude. Daran and Daran (2021) attempted to study the attitude student's attitude towards research in the college of teacher education and come up with an action plan that the college may use to address the existing situation. Prashad and Qasim (2021) did a study to determine the attitude towards research of the research scholars of science and arts stream with special reference to gender. Descriptive survey method is used in the proposed work. Sobczuk et al. (2022) did a cross-sectional study among medical students of medical university to examine scientific interests and activities, opinion on selected research issues. Pandey and Singh (2023) analysed postgraduate student's attitude towards research. Sample of 200 post-graduate students was selected who have completed one year of course work in M.Ed., M.Sc. or M.A. The study was based on descriptive survey method. Tran et al. (2023) did a cross-sectional study to investigate both positive and negative attitudes towards research of undergraduate students.

Rezaei and Miandashti (2013), Habib et al. (2018), Maqsood et al. (2019) and Patel (2019) found that students had positive attitude towards research. On the other hand, Deka, Mishra and Patel (2015) found that students had negative attitude towards research. Studies of Dhiman (2019) and Kakupa (2019) revealed that students had moderately favourable attitudes towards research. Roul (2018) and Dhiman (2019) found no significant difference in the research attitude of male and female students. While Oguan et al. (2014), Rani et al. (2014), Shaukat et al. (2014) and Saleem et al. (2015), Hussain et al. (2016) found a significant difference in the research attitude of male and female students. Dhiman (2019) found no significant difference in the research attitude of science and arts stream students but Prashad and Qasim (2021) found a significant difference in the research attitude of science and arts stream students. Upadhyay (2019) found no significant difference in the research attitude of JRF, NET and non-NET research scholars.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the research attitude of Ph.D. research scholars of Himachal Pradesh University.
2. To study the difference in the research attitude of male and female Ph.D. research scholars.
3. To study the difference in the research attitude of Ph.D. research scholars of Sciences and Social Sciences discipline.
4. To study the difference in the research attitude of fellowship and non-fellowship holder Ph.D. research scholars.

Hypothesis of the study

1. There will be no significant mean difference in the research attitude of male and female Ph.D. research scholars.
2. There will be no significant mean difference in the research attitude of Ph.D. research scholars of Sciences and Social Sciences discipline.
3. There will be no significant mean difference in the research attitude of fellowship and non-fellowship holder Ph.D. research scholars.

Delimitations of the study

1. The present study is delimited to Himachal Pradesh University.
2. Total ten departments five from each Sciences and Social Sciences respectively are taken for study.

- The study is confined to dependent variable ‘research attitude’ and independent variables ‘gender, discipline and fellowship status’.

Methodology

The present study has been conducted by using “Descriptive Survey Method”.

Sample

Simple random sampling technique is used for selecting the sample. 80 Ph.D. research scholars from the 10 departments of Himachal Pradesh University.

Research Tool

The tool used for the present study is Attitude Scale towards Research Scale constructed and standardised by Dr Vishal Sood and Prof Y.K. Sharma (2012).

Statistical Techniques Used

Descriptive statistics like mean, standard deviation is used to compare the two groups. The t- test is performed for testing the hypothesis.

$$t = \frac{M_1 - M_2}{\sqrt{\frac{(SD_1)^2}{N_1} + \frac{(SD_2)^2}{N_2}}}$$

Results and discussions

1. Study of Research Attitude of Ph.D. Research Scholars

Table 1: Level of Attitude towards Research

Sr. No.	Range of raw score	N	Level of attitude towards research
1.	196 and above	0	Extremely Favourable
2.	184-195	3	Highly Favourable
3.	172-183	19	Above average favourable
4.	156-171	38	Moderately favourable
5.	144-155	16	Unfavourable
6.	132-143	3	Highly Unfavourable
7.	131 and below	1	Extremely unfavourable

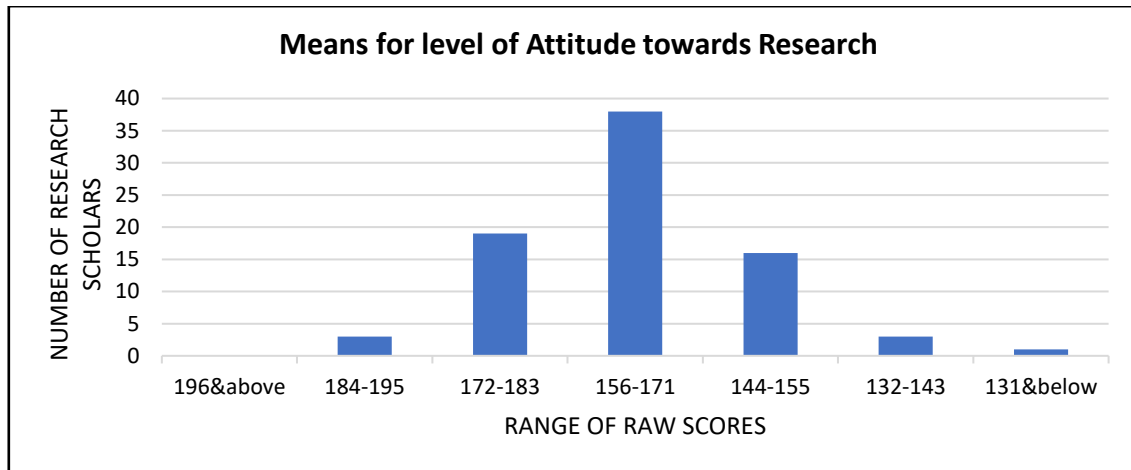


Figure 1

Table 1 and figure 1 shows that no research scholar has scored between 196 & above that means no Ph.D. research scholar have extremely favourable attitude towards research. Only 3 research scholars have scored between 184-195 scores that means they have highly favourable attitude towards research. 19 research scholars have scored between 172-183 scores which means they have above average favourable attitude towards research. 38 research scholars have scored between 156-171 which means their attitude towards research is moderately favourable. 16 research scholars have scored between 144-155 which shows they have unfavourable attitude towards research. Only 3 research scholars have scored between 132-143 which shows they have highly unfavourable attitude towards research. Only 1 research scholar has scored between 131 & below which shows his attitude towards research is extremely unfavourable.

Table 2: Overall Research Attitude of Ph.D. Research Scholars

Attitude Towards Research	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Overall Result
	80	163.5	12.4	Moderately Favourable

Table 2 shows that the mean of the score of all Ph.D. scholars is 163.5 which fall under the category of moderately favourable as per the norms. So overall attitude of Ph.D. research scholars of Himachal Pradesh University is moderately favourable.

2. To Study difference in the Research Attitude of Male and Female Ph.D. Research Scholars

Table 3: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value for Research Attitude of Male and Female Ph.D. Research Scholars

Sr. No.	Group	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	Std. Err.	Result
1.	Male	40	162.3	13.05	78	0.86	2.79	NS
2.	Female	40	164.7	11.9				

Note: not significant at 0.05 level of significance.

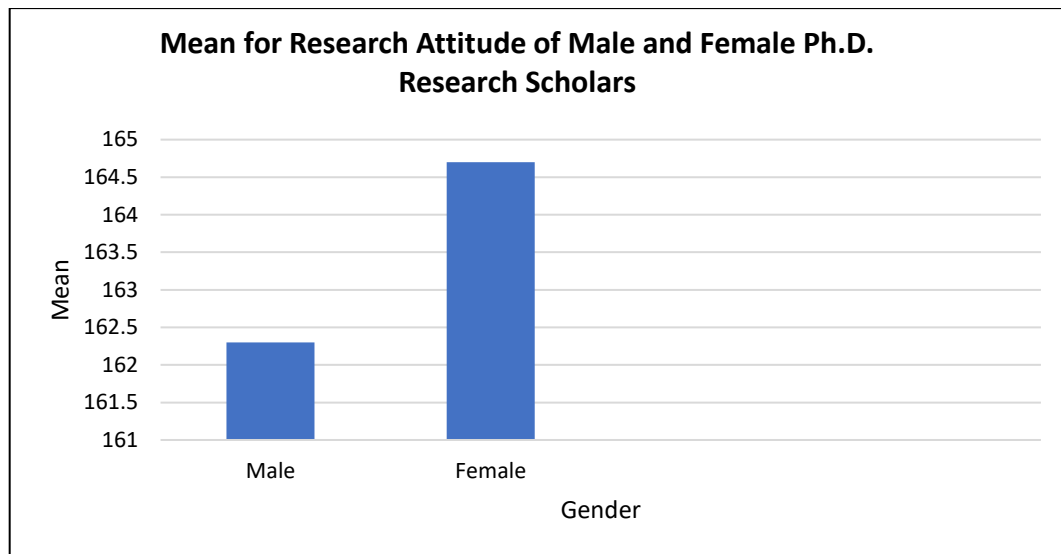


Figure 2

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1(Ho): There will be no significant mean difference in research attitude of male and female Ph.D. research scholars.

The result of table 3 and figure 2 shows the t-value obtained for these two groups is 0.86 which is not significant at 0.05 (2.00) level of significance. This indicates that there is no significant difference in research attitude of male and female Ph.D. research scholars. The mean score of female research scholars (164.7) and male research scholars (162.3) falls under the category of moderately favourable level of attitude towards research as per the norms indicating their moderately favourable research attitude.

Hence hypothesis 1 “there will be no significant mean difference in the research attitude of male and female Ph.D. research scholars” is accepted.

3. To Study difference in the Research Attitude of Ph.D. Research Scholars of Sciences and Social sciences Discipline

Table 4: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value for Research Attitude of Ph.D. Research Scholars of Sciences and Social Sciences Discipline

Sr. No.	Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Std. Err.	Result
1.	Sciences	40	163.9	12.3	78	0.28	2.75	NS
2.	Social Sciences	40	163.1	12.5				

Note: not significant at 0.05 level of significance.

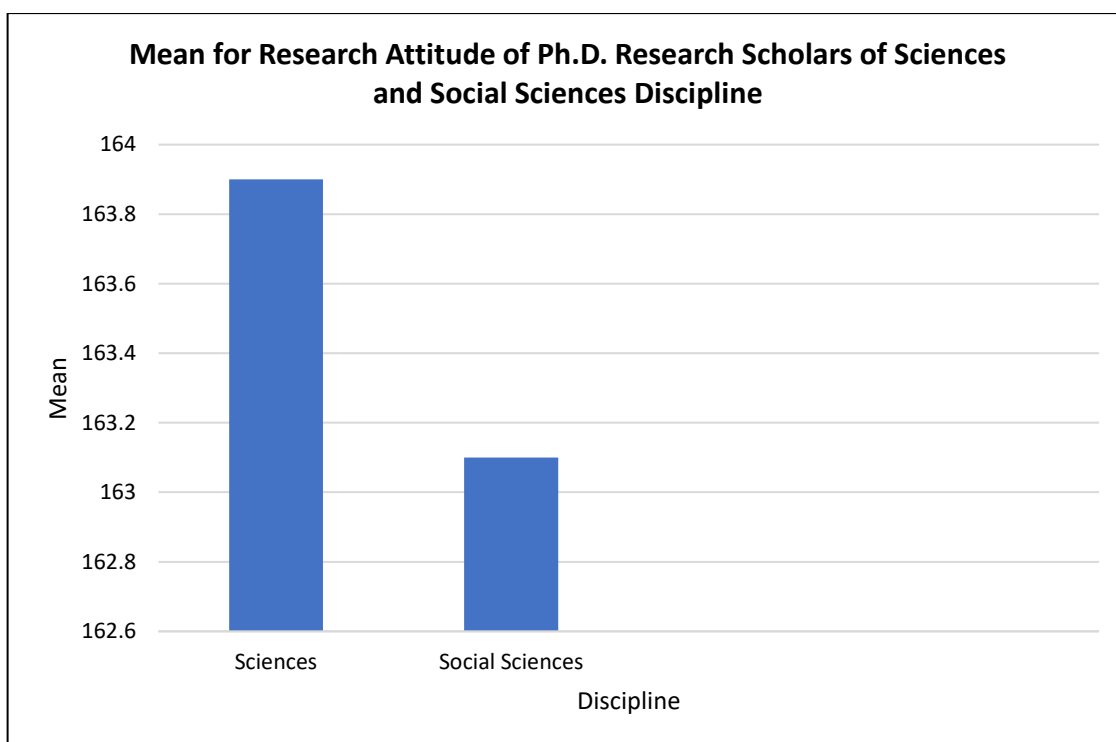


Figure 3

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 (Ho): There will be no significant mean difference in research attitude of Ph.D. research scholars of sciences and social sciences discipline.

Table 4 and figure 3 shows that the t-value obtained for these two groups is 0.28 which is not significant at 0.05 (2.00) level of significance. This value indicates that there is no significant difference in research attitude of Ph.D. research scholars of sciences and social sciences discipline. The mean score (163.9) of Ph.D. research scholars of sciences discipline and the mean score (163.1) of Ph.D. research scholars of social sciences discipline fall under the category of moderately favourable level of attitude towards research as per the norms indicating their moderately favourable research attitude.

Hence hypothesis 2 “there will be no significant mean difference in research attitude of Ph.D. research scholars of sciences and social sciences discipline” is accepted.

4. To Study difference in the Research Attitude of Fellowship and Non-fellowship Holder Ph.D. Research Scholars

Table 5: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value for Research Attitude of Fellowship and Non-fellowship Holder Ph.D. Research Scholars

Sr. No.	Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Std. Err.	Result
1.	Fellowship Holder	40	164.3	11.6	78	0.57	2.73	NS
2.	Non-Fellowship Holder	40	162.7	13.1				

Note: not significant at 0.05 level of significance.

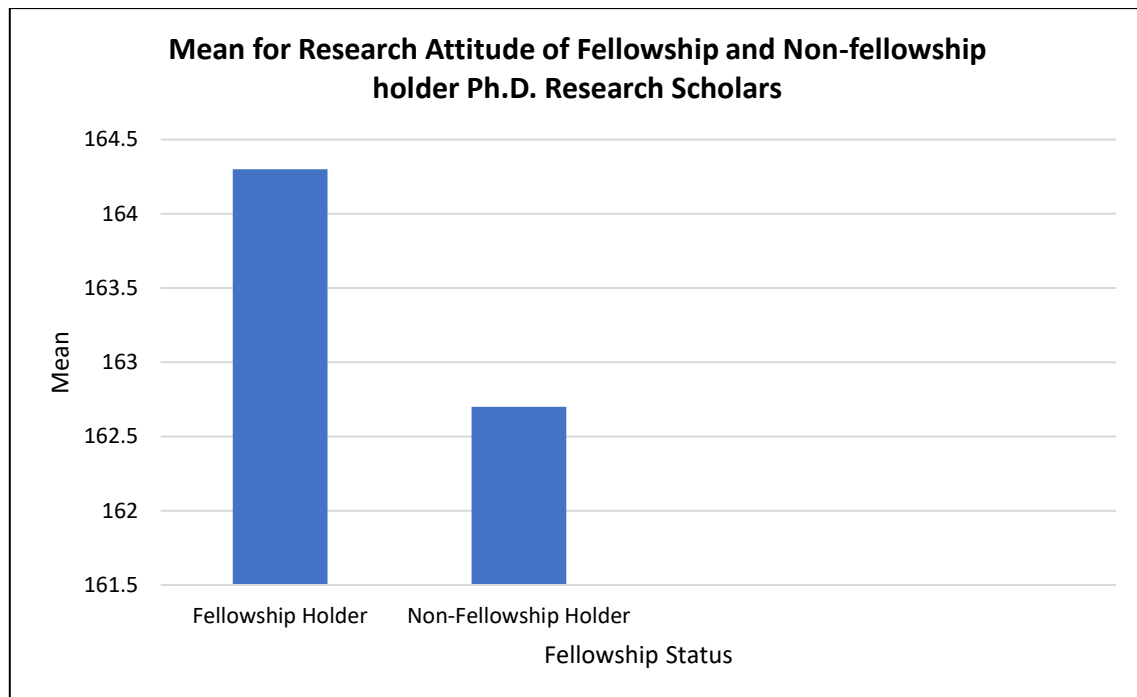


Figure 4

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3(Ho): There will be no significant mean difference in the research attitude of fellowship and non-fellowship holder Ph.D. research scholars.

Table 5 and figure 4 shows that the t-value obtained for two groups is 0.57 which is not significant at 0.05 (2.00) level of significance, indicating that there is no significant difference in the research attitude of fellowship and non-fellowship holder Ph.D. research scholars of ten departments of Himachal Pradesh University and the mean score (164.3) of fellowship holder Ph.D. research scholars and the mean score (162.7) of non-fellowship holder Ph.D. research scholars falls under the category of moderately favourable level of attitude towards research as per the norms indicating their moderately favourable research attitude. Hence hypothesis 3 “there will be no significant mean difference in the research attitude of fellowship and non-fellowship holder Ph.D. research scholars” is accepted.

Conclusion

It is concluded that the overall research attitude of Ph.D. research scholars of Himachal Pradesh University is moderately favourable. It is revealed from the findings that gender, discipline and fellowship status does not affect the research attitude of the research scholars and the means of different groups indicates that they have moderately favourable attitude towards research. However, a little difference in the means for different groups may be due to chance factor.

Educational implications

1. Understanding Ph.D. scholars' attitudes toward research helps improve training programs, ensuring they are better aligned with learners' skills, interests, and developmental needs.
2. Encouraging a positive mindset through academic initiatives fosters persistence and curiosity, supporting ethical, self-driven engagement with research.
3. Recognizing motivation-related challenges allows universities to offer better support, helping students

stay committed and reducing the chances of academic disengagement.

4. Attitude studies provide valuable insights for refining supervisory approaches, helping mentors create more effective and student-centred guidance.
5. The research curriculum can be improved by integrating reflective and ethical components, which promote responsible conduct and independent thinking.
6. A constructive research attitude nurtures openness to exploration and creativity, enhancing the willingness to engage with complex and cross-disciplinary topics.
7. Identifying unproductive attitudes early allows for proactive academic support, preventing issues such as academic misconduct or research avoidance.
8. Scholars' perspectives on research shape how they use digital and academic resources, highlighting the need for training in responsible and skilled tool usage.
9. Positive attitudes contribute to producing meaningful and well-structured research, leading to scholarly work that is both credible and valuable to the academic community.
10. Exploring research attitudes helps build a strong academic environment, where intellectual integrity, cooperation, and research excellence thrive.

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