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Original Article

# Cultivating Research Capacity of Administrative Personnel in Higher Education

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**Abstract.** In line with the global call for inclusive and sustainable quality education (SDG 4), this study addresses a notable gap in higher education research by examining the potential role of non-teaching personnel (NTP) in strengthening institutional research capacity. The study aimed to assess the research interest, confidence, and engagement of NTP and to propose a tailored research competency program to support their involvement. Using a descriptive-correlational design, data were collected through purposive sampling from 60 NTP at the University of Perpetual Help System DALTA – Molino Campus, a private higher education institution (HEI) in the Philippines, using a validated survey instrument. Results indicated high mean scores for research interest (M = 3.63) and moderate mean scores for research confidence (M = 3.37). Significant positive correlations were found between research interest and engagement ($\rho = 0.420$, $p < .001$) and between confidence and engagement ($\rho = 0.421$, $p < .001$). Despite these encouraging indicators, participants reported key barriers, including lack of time (M = 3.67), confidence (M = 3.27), and competence (M = 3.13). The findings underscore the importance of organized institutional support—such as specialized training and dedicated research time—to enable NTP to participate meaningfully in research. Strengthening their engagement supports institutional goals and advances SDGs related to innovation, inclusion, and sustainable development in higher education.

***Keywords:*** *Higher education administrative staff; Professional development programs; Research capacity development; Research engagement; SDG 4.*

In the evolving landscape of higher education, fostering a sustainable and inclusive research culture is no longer the sole responsibility of faculty members. Non-teaching personnel (NTP), such as librarians, research coordinators, administrative staff, and extension officers, play increasingly important roles in the university research ecosystem. Understanding their research interests, confidence, and engagement is critical to building holistic, collaborative institutional excellence. As the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) emphasized, quality assurance in higher education is not limited to teaching alone. However, it includes excellence in governance, administration, and research, implicitly requiring contributions from all university sectors (CHED, 2012). Moreover, CHED's Instruction, Research, and Sectoral Engagement (IRSE) program specifically supports the participation of both teaching and NTP in research activities (CHED, 2016).

However, many institutions still fall short in establishing focused programs that specifically cater to the research needs of NTP's. This oversight is partly due to how previous studies often conflate teaching and NTP,

inadvertently prioritizing outcomes related to teaching and learning strategies while ignoring the unique needs and contributions of the support workforce. The Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA), one of the accrediting organizations, promotes a thorough approach to quality assurance that incorporates staff development in research and administrative support systems (PACUCOA, n.d.). However, in practice, this vision is often inconsistently implemented. As a result, NTPs are left under-supported in professional development opportunities, especially in research competencies. Maravilla (2020) found that positive attitudes toward research alone do not lead to higher productivity without adequate institutional support, emphasizing the broader need for stronger capacity-building.

The potential for NTP's to contribute to research and institutional development is well supported by literature on practitioner and action research. These approaches promote inquiry-driven improvements by professionals within their work contexts, including librarians, counselors, IT staff, and administrators. As an educational institution, supporting teaching and NTP in pursuing higher education and continuous learning is essential. All employees are expected to be research-competent, contributing through critical reading, data analysis, and informed decision-making (Cerbito, 2022). By engaging in action research, NTP can improve workflows, enhance student services, and address institutional challenges, fostering a culture of reflective practice and evidence-based decision-making across the university.

The institutional mission at the University of Perpetual Help System DALTA – Molino Campus is to develop Christ-centered, service-oriented, and research-driven individuals dedicated to quality education and nation-building. In alignment with this mission, nurturing a research culture among all university stakeholders, including NTP, is imperative. Recent records from the institution reveal an interesting trend in the number of completed NTP research outputs. There was a promising increase from 14.4% in the school year 2022–2023 to 42% in 2023–2024. However, this was followed by a decline to 30% in the 2024–2025 school year. These fluctuations highlight the varying levels of engagement among the researchers, even after investing in capacity-building initiatives. This situation emphasizes the need for a more structured and sustainable research development program. It will ensure everyone is included, encourage collaboration between departments, and ultimately improve the delivery of programs and services while helping the university achieve its goals of excellence and contribute to nation-building.

Failure to conduct this research risks perpetuating a model that overlooks an essential segment of the academic community. Estacio et al. (2022) discovered in their study at the University of Baguio that NTPs frequently have fewer research training opportunities than faculty members, even though their professional development needs are similar. Research participation among NTP at the University of Perpetual Help System DALTA – Molino Campus is encouraging but still modest and irregular. In contrast, early capacity-building initiatives encourage participation but cannot maintain sustained commitment over the long run. This disparity highlights our limited understanding of the factors that affect NTPs' confidence and enthusiasm in research. To close this gap, this study examines these aspects to improve competencies and help institutions perform better and more consistently in their studies.

## Methodology

### Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research approach to investigate NTP's involvement, self-confidence, and research interest. The descriptive component summarized the respondents' characteristics, as well as their levels of confidence and interest in research. The correlational aspect explored potential relationships among specific factors such as demographics, research interests, and perceived trust in research. Additionally, a cross-sectional survey was used to gather information from participants across various departments, thereby identifying trends and correlations among variables (Davis, 2021).

### Participants and Sampling Technique

This study used purposive sampling to select NTPs with academic or clerical functions at UPHSD–Molino, as they were the most appropriate respondents to provide data relevant to the research objectives. From the total population of 120, 60 responses were obtained, yielding a response rate of 50%. Data collection was conducted exclusively through Google Forms, while a mixed-mode contact strategy—consisting of email invitations and telephone follow-ups—was employed to maximize participation and ensure accessibility. A post hoc power analysis was conducted using G*Power for a two-tailed correlation test with an expected medium effect size (ρ =

0.30) at α = 0.05. Based on the default infinite-population assumption, the power achieved by 60 respondents was about 65%. However, applying the finite population correction (FPC)—since half of the entire population was included—raised the adequate power to approximately 91%. This percentage indicates that the study sample was sufficiently powered to detect the hypothesized relationships.

**Research Instrument**

The study used a structured questionnaire as its primary data collection instrument. This tool was initially developed by the UPH-Molino Research and Development Center in 2018 and has been validated for use in research capability assessments. The instrument demonstrated high internal consistency, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.9 (n=30), indicating excellent reliability. The questionnaire consisted of four parts: Part 1 collected demographic and professional profile information; Part 2 assessed interest in research-related activities; Part 3 measured research self-efficacy; and Part 4 identified reasons for non-participation in research. The comprehensive design of the instrument allowed for detailed analysis of attitudes and barriers to research engagement among NTP.

**Data Gathering Procedure**

The department heads and college deans received the questionnaire from the researchers via email. They were requested to distribute the survey among NTP for the academic year 2024-25. A mixed-mode contact approach was employed to increase participation, including telephone follow-ups to remind and encourage participants to complete the survey and email distribution. This strategy guarantees that the NTPs will participate as much as possible. Before completing the survey, participants were informed of the study's objectives and ethical considerations. The responses were then compiled and prepared for statistical analysis.

**Data Analysis Procedure**

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the respondents' demographic characteristics and key variables. The researchers calculated frequencies and percentages for categorical data such as sex, educational attainment, department, and years of service. Meanwhile, the researchers computed means and standard deviations for continuous variables, including research interest, confidence, and related indicators. Spearman's rho was employed to examine the relationships among research interest, research confidence, and indicators of research engagement. This nonparametric measure was chosen because it is appropriate for ordinal and non-normally distributed data. The strength of associations was interpreted using conventional effect size benchmarks.

Chi-square tests of independence were conducted to assess associations between categorical variables and research engagement outcomes. Where expected cell counts were low, Fisher's Exact Test was applied as a confirmatory analysis to validate the chi-square results. The internal consistency of multi-item scales was examined using Cronbach's alpha. In addition, a post hoc power analysis was performed. While G*Power estimated the achieved power at approximately 65% under the infinite-population assumption, the finite population correction (given that 60 respondents represented half of the total population of 120) increased the adequate power to about 91%, confirming that the study was adequately powered to detect medium correlations.

**Ethical Considerations**

Before data collection, the researchers explained the purpose and nature of the study to respondents in the survey's introductory section. They informed participants that their involvement was voluntary and that they could decline or withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. The researchers obtained informed consent, as completing and submitting the questionnaire indicated participants' agreement to participate in the study. The study strictly maintained respondents' anonymity by not requiring any personally identifiable information. They treated all responses with strict confidentiality and used them solely for academic and research purposes. Furthermore, the researchers ensured that no physical, psychological, or professional risks affected the participants. They securely stored the data collected, granting access only to the researchers. The ethical conduct of this research followed institutional guidelines and respected the rights and welfare of all participants.

## Results and Discussion

### Demographic Data

**Table 1.** *Distribution of the Respondents According to Sex*

| Sex | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Female | 38 | 63.33% |
| Male | 22 | 36.67% |
| **Total** | **60** | **100.00%** |

Table 1 presents the sex distribution of the respondents. Most were female (63.33%, n=38), while male respondents comprised 36.67% (n=22) of the total sample. This result indicates that female NTPs were more represented in the study than their male counterparts.

**Table 2.** *Distribution of the Respondents According to Department*

| Department | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Community Extension Services (CES) | 3 | 5.00% |
| ISA/Linkages | 3 | 5.00% |
| Library | 7 | 11.67% |
| Quality Assurance (QA) | 2 | 3.33% |
| Registrar | 5 | 8.33% |
| Research and Development Center (RDC) | 3 | 5.00% |
| Student Affairs Services (SAS) | 10 | 16.67% |
| General Services Department (GSD) | 5 | 8.33% |
| Human Resource Department (HRD) | 6 | 10.00% |
| Information Technology Services (ITS) | 3 | 5.00% |
| Academic Admin | 13 | 21.67% |
| **Total** | **60** | **100.00%** |

Table 2 presents the distribution of respondents according to department. The highest proportion came from Academic Administration (21.7%, n=13), followed by Student Affairs Services (16.67%, n=10) and the Library (11.67%, n=7). Other notable groups included the Human Resource Department (10.00%, n=6) and the Registrar's Office (8.33%, n=5). Smaller proportions were observed from Community Extension Services, ISA/Linkages, Research and Development Center, and Information Technology Services (5.00% each, n=3). The lowest representation came from Quality Assurance and the General Services Department (3.33% each, n=2). This distribution shows that, although respondents were drawn from various departments, Academic Administration and Student Affairs Services accounted for the largest share.

**Table 3.** *Distribution of the Respondents According to Age*

| Age | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| 20 - 25 | 11 | 18.33% |
| 26 - 30 | 9 | 15.0% |
| 31 - 35 | 10 | 16.67% |
| 36 - 40 | 6 | 10.00% |
| 41 - 45 | 5 | 8.33% |
| 46 - 50 | 7 | 11.67% |
| Over 50 | 12 | 20.00% |
| **Total** | **60** | **100.00%** |

Table 3 presents the respondents' age distribution. The largest groups were aged 20–25 (18.33%, n=11) and over 50 (20.00%, n=12). It was followed by respondents aged 31–35 (16.7%, n=10) and 26–30 (15.0%, n=9). Smaller proportions came from the 46–50 age group (11.7%, n=7), the 36–40 age group (10.0%, n=6), and the 41–45 age group (8.3%, n=5). The distribution shows a relatively balanced mix of younger and older respondents, with notable representation from both early-career and late-career age groups.

**Table 4.** *Distribution of the Respondents According to Educational Attainment*

| Educational Attainment | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Bachelor's Degree | 44 | 73.33% |
| Master's Degree | 13 | 21.67% |
| Doctorate Degree | 3 | 5.00% |
| **Total** | **60** | **100.00%** |

The data in Table 4 indicate that most employees (73.3% or 44 individuals) hold a Bachelor's degree. Meanwhile, 21.7% (13 individuals) have completed a Master's degree, and only 5.0% (3 individuals) hold a Doctorate. The distribution reflects a workforce with a strong undergraduate foundation and meaningful representation of advanced degree holders.

**Table 5.** *Distribution of the Respondents According to Years of Working Experience*

| No. of Years Working | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Less than one year | 7 | 11.67% |
| 1 - 5 years | 11 | 18.33% |
| 6 - 10 years | 12 | 20.00% |
| 11 - 15 years | 7 | 11.67% |
| 16 - 20 years | 8 | 13.33% |
| Over 20 years | 15 | 25.00% |
| **Total** | **60** | **100.00%** |

Table 5 presents the respondents' total professional working experience. The largest group (25.00% or 15 individuals) has over 20 years of experience, demonstrating significant industry exposure. Those with 6–10 years (20.00%) and 1–5 years (18.33%) represent mid-career professionals, while employees with less than 1 year, 11–15 years, and 16–20 years comprise smaller portions ranging from 11.67% to 13.33%. Overall, the distribution shows a workforce with diverse levels of professional experience, including early-career, mid-career, and seasoned employees.

**Table 6.** *No. of Research Conducted by the Respondents in the Last 3 Years*

| No. of Research Conducted | Counts | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | 40 | 66.67% |
| 1 | 4 | 6.67% |
| 2 | 11 | 18.33% |
| 3 | 4 | 6.67% |
| More than 3 | 1 | 1.67% |
| **Total** | **60** | **100.00%** |

The data in Table 6 show that most respondents (66.67%, or 40 individuals) have not conducted research in the last three years. Smaller portions of respondents reported conducting one research (6.67%), two researches (18.33%), three researches (6.67%), and more than three researches (1.67%). Overall, the distribution indicates that while some employees have completed multiple research studies, most have not completed any research during this period.

**Table 7.** *No. of Research Published by the Respondents in the Last 3 Years*

| No. of Research Published | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | 51 | 85.00% |
| 1 | 8 | 13.33% |
| 2 | 1 | 1.67% |

The data in Table 7 indicate that most respondents (85.0% or 51 individuals) have not published research in the last three years. A smaller portion of respondents published one research study (13.33%), and only one respondent (1.67%) published two. The distribution shows that while a few employees have published research, most have not published any work during this period.

**Table 8.** *No. Research Presentation of the Respondents in the Last 3 Years*

| No. of Research Presented | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | 44 | 73.33% |
| 1 | 9 | 15.00% |
| 2 | 5 | 8.33% |
| 3 | 1 | 1.67% |
| More than 3 | 1 | 1.67% |
| **Total** | **60** | **100.00%** |

Table 8 presents the number of research studies presented by respondents. Most respondents (73.33% or 44 individuals) have not presented any research. Smaller portions presented one research (15.0%), two researches (8.33%), three researches (1.67%), and more than three researches (1.67%).

**Table 9.** *No. Research Awards/Recognition of the Respondents in the Last 3 Years*

| No. of Research Awards | Counts | % of Total |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | 54 | 90.00% |
| 1 | 6 | 10.00% |
| 2 | 0 | 0.00% |
| 3 | 0 | 0.00% |
| More than 3 | 0 | 0.00% |
| **Total** | **60** | **100.00%** |

Table 9 shows the number of research awards or recognitions received by respondents in the last three years. The majority (90.0%, 54 individuals) reported receiving no awards, while a smaller portion (10.0%, 6 individuals) received one award. No respondents reported receiving 2, 3, or more than three awards. The distribution indicates that only a small fraction of employees have received recognition for their research, while most have not been recognized in the past three years.

**Table 10.** *No. of Research Seminar/Training/Workshop Attended by the Respondents in the Last 3 Years*

| No. of Research Seminars | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | 32 | 53.33% |
| 1 | 8 | 13.33% |
| 2 | 7 | 11.67% |
| 3 | 4 | 6.67% |
| More than 3 | 9 | 15.00% |
| **Total** | **60** | **100.00%** |

The data in Table 10 show that most respondents (53.3%, or 34 individuals) have not attended any research seminars, training sessions, or workshops in the last three years. Smaller portions attended 1 (13.3%), 2 (11.7%), 3 (6.7%), and more than 3 (15.0%) research-related activities. Overall, the distribution indicates that while some employees actively participate in research capacity-building opportunities, a significant portion have not engaged in any seminars, trainings, or workshops related to research.

## Descriptive Results

**Table 11.** *Mean Scores and Verbal Interpretation of Respondents' Research Interest*

| Items | Mean | Verbal Interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| **(1)** Reading a research journal article. | 3.63 | Very Interested |
| **(2)** Being a member of a research team. | 3.60 | Very Interested |
| **(3)** Conceptualizing a research study. | 3.72 | Very Interested |
| **(4)** Having a research study. | 3.70 | Very Interested |
| **(5)** Having research activities as part of work. | 3.53 | Very Interested |
| **(6)** Taking a research design course. | 3.47 | Very Interested |
| **(7)** Developing a data analysis strategy. | 3.65 | Very Interested |
| **(8)** Analyzing data. | 3.70 | Very Interested |
| **(9)** Writing a paper presentation. | 3.55 | Very Interested |
| **(10)** Writing for a research publication. | 3.58 | Very Interested |
| **(11)** Collecting data. | 3.75 | Very Interested |
| **Composite Mean** | **3.63** | **Very Interested** |

**Legend**: 1-1.80 – Not Interested at All; 1.81-2.60 –Slightly Interested; 2.61-3.40 –Moderately Interested; 3.41-4.20—Very Interested; 4.21-5 –Extremely Interested

The table shows that the composite mean score for participants' interest in research is 3.63. According to the Likert

scale ranges, this score falls into the "Very Interested" verbal interpretation. An analysis of the individual items reveals that all eleven research aspects received mean scores corresponding to the "Very Interested" category. The scores for these items range from a low of 3.47 ("Taking a research design course") to a high of 3.75 ("Collecting data"). The data indicate that participants show strong, consistent interest across various research activities, reflecting high engagement and a positive disposition toward research. Their interest is not confined to specific aspects but extends to the research process, which may be driven by personal motivations. Maravilla (2020) likewise noted that research involvement can stem from individual interests, highlighting the role of intrinsic motivation in fostering research engagement.

**Table 12.** *Mean Scores and Verbal Interpretation of Respondents' Confidence in Doing Research*

| Items | Mean | Verbal Interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| **(1)** Designing a Research Study | 3.32 | Moderately Confident |
| **(2)** Writing the Introduction | 3.50 | Very Confident |
| **(3)** Writing the Literature Review | 3.37 | Moderately Confident |
| **(4)** Writing the Discussion. | 3.40 | Moderately Confident |
| **(5)** Writing the Methodology | 3.33 | Moderately Confident |
| **(6)** Writing the Results of the Study | 3.52 | Very Confident |
| **(7)** Forming the Conceptual Research Paradigm | 3.23 | Moderately Confident |
| **(8)** Determining the Appropriate Tool for a Data Analysis | 3.25 | Moderately Confident |
| **(9)** Use of Technology in Designing and Carrying Out the Research Study | 3.42 | Very Confident |
| **(10)** Interpreting the Statistical Data | 3.30 | Moderately Confident |
| **(11)** Writing the Abstract of a Research Paper | 3.38 | Moderately Confident |
| **Composite Mean** | **3.37** | **Moderately Confident** |

**Legend**: 1-1.80 – Not Confident at All; 1.81-2.60 – Slightly Confident; 2.61-3.40 – Moderately Confident; 3.41-4.20 – Very Confident; 4.21-5 –Extremely Confident

Table 12 shows the respondents' confidence in conducting research. Based on the table, the average mean score for the respondents' confidence in doing research is 3.37. According to the established Likert scale, this score falls within the "Moderately Confident" range. This result aligns with Robiños et al. (2022), who emphasized that higher research self-efficacy fosters greater research interest and productivity. While Robiños found that faculty generally expressed confidence in research despite limited experience, the present finding suggests that respondents also recognize its importance. However, their confidence remains moderate.

The individual item analysis shows that most of the listed research activities also received mean scores corresponding to a "Moderately Confident" verbal interpretation. Specifically, nine of the eleven items fall into this category, with scores ranging from 3.23 ("Forming the Conceptual Research Paradigm") to 3.40 ("Writing the Discussion").

However, two items, "Writing the Introduction" (3.50) and "Writing the Results of the Study" (3.52), received mean scores that fall into the "Very Confident" range. This finding suggests that although the respondents' confidence in their research skills is generally moderate, it is higher in these two particular domains. All things considered, the statistics indicate that participants have a reasonable degree of confidence in their capacity to complete the many activities required for study.

**Table 13.** *Perceived Barriers that Prevent NTP from Engaging in Research*

| Items | Mean | Rank |
|---|---|---|
| Lack of Competence | 3.13 | 3 |
| Lack of Confidence | 3.27 | 2 |
| Lack of Time | 3.67 | 1 |
| Lack of Compensation | 2.93 | 4 |

Lack of time ($x$ = 3.67) emerged as the top factor preventing NTPs from engaging in research, which is often linked to heavy workloads (Jordan et al., 2024; Quitoras & Abuso, 2021; Banegas, 2018). Lack of confidence ($x$ = 3.27) ranked second, followed by lack of competence ($x$ = 3.13), while lack of compensation ($x$ = 2.93) was ranked last. Interestingly, Alvior and Santos (2018) found the opposite pattern among NTPs at the same university: lack of confidence and lack of compensation ranked highest, while lack of time ranked lowest. The study was conducted before the pandemic; hence, the difference may reflect shifting institutional demands. These demands may include workloads intensifying in recent years, making time the most pressing concern, compared with earlier periods when limited skills and incentives were more prominent.

## Inferential Results

**Table 14.** *Association Between the Number of Researches Conducted and Educational Attainment of the Respondents*

| Variables | $\chi^2$ *value* | *P*- value | Decision | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Researches Conducted vis-à-vis Educational Attainment | 26.8 | .008 (Chi-square); .033 (Fisher's) | Reject the $H_0$ | Significant |

***Significant if p < .05

The chi-square test ($\chi^2(12, N = 60) = 26.8$, $p = 0.008$) indicates a significant relationship between educational attainment and the number of researches conducted. Since some categories had small frequencies, Fisher's Exact Test was also applied to confirm the result. Fisher's test ($p = 0.033$) likewise showed significance, suggesting that research involvement is indeed influenced by educational level in this sample. In contrast, Jordan et al. (2024) conducted a separate analysis for NTP participants. They found no significant association between degree attainment and research output, which they attributed to the small number of respondents with advanced degrees.

**Table 15.** *Association Between the Number of Researches Conducted and the Number of Trainings Attended by the Respondents*

| Variables | $\chi^2$ *value* | *P* -value | Decision | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Researches Conducted vis-à-vis Educational Attainment | 45.4 | .001 (Chi-square); .001 (Fisher's) | Reject the $H_0$ | Significant |

***Significant if p < .05

The chi-square test ($\chi^2(16, N = 60) = 45.4$, $p < .001$) indicates a significant relationship between the number of research seminars attended and the number of researches conducted. Fisher's Exact Test was also employed to validate the results because several categories had low frequencies. The results were validated by Fisher's exact test ($p < .001$), indicating a substantial correlation between research production and seminar attendance in this group. This finding supports Bilbao et al.'s (2024) assertion that teachers need access to research-related resources and professional development to develop their research capacity. Additionally, it supports the findings of Sendawula et al. (2018), who highlighted that training increases employee engagement and proposed that research seminars can increase teachers' participation in research projects. However, Jordan et al. (2024) reported no significant association between training attendance and research engagement among NTP participants. Their descriptive results indicated that those who had attended seminars were more likely to produce research outputs than those who had not. This inconsistency may be due to differences in sample size, participant characteristics, or the quality and frequency of training.

**Table 16.** *Association Between the Number of Researches Conducted and the Number of Years of Work of the Respondents*

| Variables | $\chi^2$ *value* | *P*- value | Decision | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Researches Conducted vis-à-vis Educational Attainment | 24.2 | .450 (Chi-square); .296 (Fisher's) | Failed to Reject the $H_0$ | Not Significant |

***Significant if p < .05

The chi-square test ($\chi^2(24, N = 60) = 24.2$, $p = 0.450$) indicates no significant relationship between the number of years a person has been working and the number of research projects they have conducted. This finding is further supported by Fisher's Exact Test ($p = 0.296$), which also shows no significant association. Similarly, Jordan et al. found no significant link between years of service and research output, noting that most respondents, regardless of tenure, had not completed research in the past three years.

**Table 17.** *Correlation Between Interest and Confidence in Doing Research Among NTP*

| Variables | Spearman's ρ | *P*- value | Decision | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Average Interest vis-à-vis Average Confidence | 0.723 | <.001 | Reject the $H_0$ | Significant |

The figure presents a correlation analysis between interest in doing research and confidence in doing research among NTP. Using Spearman's rho, the results show a strong positive correlation ($\rho = 0.735$) with a statistically significant p-value < .001. These findings suggest that NTPs who feel more confident conducting research also show greater interest. It aligns with the study of Jordan et al. (2024) and Robiños et al. (2022), highlighting the mutual reinforcement between confidence and interest in research participation. Thus, enhancing research confidence among NTP may be a key strategy for increasing their interest and involvement in research activities.

**Table 18.** *Correlation of the NTP's Interest in Research and Confidence in Doing Research to Research Engagement*

| Variables | Spearman's ρ | *P*-value | Decision | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Research Interest vis-à-vis Research Engagement | 0.420 | <.001 | Reject the $H_0$ | Significant |
| Research Confidence vis-à-vis Research Engagement | 0.421 | <.001 | Reject the $H_0$ | Significant |

Spearman's rho results revealed a significant positive relationship between research interest and engagement ($\rho = 0.420$, $p < .001$). Finch et al. (2013) supported the idea that higher interest translates into greater research activity. However, in their study, Jordan et al. (2024) and Robiños et al. (2022) found no significant link between these variables. The discrepancy might result from different participant groups: Jordan's mixed sample of teachers and administrative staff may dilute the effect of interest on productivity. At the same time, Robiños's study focused on teachers, whose heavy teaching responsibilities may hinder research despite a strong interest. In contrast, the present study's focus on NTP offers clearer evidence that interest motivates research engagement. Similarly, research confidence was significantly correlated with engagement ($\rho = 0.421$, $p < .001$). This result aligns with Prichard's (2019), emphasizing that confidence drives meaningful engagement. In the research context, this implies that when NTPs believe they can succeed, they are more inclined to participate in research activities. These results demonstrate how important confidence and interest are in enhancing NTP's involvement in research.

## Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight the untapped potential of NTP in advancing the research goals of higher education institutions. Although respondents demonstrated strong research interest and moderate confidence, actual participation in research activities remained low, constrained by barriers such as limited time, competence, and self-efficacy. The significant positive correlations between research interest, confidence, and engagement indicate that NTP can become active and capable contributors to research, particularly with targeted institutional support. This necessitates formal institutional policies providing protected time and incentives for NTP research. Strengthening their involvement fosters a more inclusive, research-driven institutional culture and promotes academic development, innovation, and sustainability within higher education. Future research should evaluate the long-term effectiveness of the proposed competency program on NTP research productivity and engagement.

## Contributions of Authors

**Author 1**: conceptualization, data analysis, paper writing, **Author 2**: data gathering, paper writing, **Author 3**: proposal writing, data gathering, **Author 4**: data gathering, paper writing


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## Conflict of Interests

Indicate if there is any conflict or no conflict of interest.


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