

Exploring Research Attitudes and Capabilities: Hospitality and Tourism Management Students' Readiness for Academic Research



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ABSTRACT:

Background: In today's rapidly evolving hospitality and tourism industry, strong research skills are essential for students in Hospitality and Tourism Management programs. These skills enable students to analyze trends, solve industry-specific problems, and contribute to both academic and practical advancements. Despite the growing importance of research in these fields, there is a gap in understanding how well-prepared students feel and how capable they are at conducting research. Existing studies often generalize research skills across disciplines, but the unique challenges in hospitality and tourism demand specialized approaches. This study aims to address this gap by exploring the research attitudes and capabilities of Hospitality and Tourism Management students, with the goal of identifying areas for improvement and enhancing research training programs to better prepare students for future industry challenges and academic contributions.

Methods: This descriptive-comparative study examined the research attitudes and capabilities of third-year BSHM students at Biliran Province State University using stratified random sampling. A modified version of Papanastasiou's (2005) 'Attitude Toward Research' Scale was used to assess research skills in crafting introductions and writing conclusions. Data from 100 students were analyzed through descriptive statistics and the Mann-Whitney U-test to identify significant differences in attitudes and capabilities. Ethical standards were maintained, ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation through informed consent.

Results: The majority of respondents rate the on-campus OJT as being moderately effective, with a mean score of 3.32 and a median level of satisfaction. It was found that their on-campus training experience had generally matched their satisfaction with gaining new knowledge and skills.

Conclusion: The analysis of third-year BSHM and BSTM students' research capabilities and attitudes reveals key differences. While both groups show competence in research, BSHM students are slightly more skilled in articulating study importance and defining research scope. BSHM students also have a more positive attitude towards research, viewing it as essential to their careers, while BSTM students are less enthusiastic. Statistical tests confirm these differences, highlighting the need for tailored educational strategies to improve research skills and foster a more positive attitude among BSTM students, ultimately better preparing them for success in hospitality and tourism management.

KEYWORDS: Biliran Province State University, Hospitality Management, Tourism Management, Research Attitudes, Research Capabilities, Research Skills

INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced academic and professional world, research skills are more critical than ever. These skills are especially crucial for Hospitality Management and Tourism Management program students. The hospitality and tourism industry is constantly changing and evolving in new directions. Students need a strong foundation in innovative solutions and evidence-based practices to keep up. Research skills allow them to analyze trends, solve industry-specific problems, and contribute significantly to academic knowledge and practical advancements in their fields.

Understanding and developing these research skills helps students understand the complex issues facing hospitality and tourism. These skills allow them to dive deep into analysis, gather and synthesize information from various sources, and create new insights to influence policy decisions and business strategies. Furthermore, strong research capabilities make graduates more

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competitive in the job market, as employers increasingly look for candidates who can conduct independent research and add value to their organizations.

However, even though research skills are clearly important, there's a gap in our understanding of how Hospitality Management and Tourism Management students feel about research and how capable they are at conducting it. Most existing studies focus on general research skills across different academic disciplines, but there's a lack of research specifically tailored to hospitality and tourism education. This is a significant gap because the unique challenges and opportunities in these fields, such as rapid industry changes and diverse customer needs, demand specialized approaches to developing and assessing research competencies. Hospitality and tourism studies need distinct methodologies to effectively address their specific research needs.

Our study aims to fill this gap by exploring the research attitudes and capabilities of Hospitality Management and Tourism Management students. We want to find out what they're good at, where they might need improvement, and how we can better support their research education. We will use a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to fully understand students' research attitudes and capabilities. Our insights will be valuable for educators, curriculum developers, and industry stakeholders.

Ultimately, our goal is to better prepare students for conducting meaningful research in their future careers. By identifying current gaps and areas for improvement, we aim to develop more effective research training programs that are specifically designed for Hospitality Management and Tourism Management students. This will not only help graduates tackle industry challenges and contribute to growth and innovation but also make significant impacts in both academic and professional spheres, enhancing their career prospects and professional development

Objectives

The main purpose of this study is to profile and evaluate the research attitudes and capabilities of third-year BSHM and BSTM students in the School of Management and Entrepreneurship for the school year 2023-2024. Specifically, the study aims to determine respondents' demographic profiles, including age, sex, status, number of completed research papers, and course program. It seeks to assess their attitudes towards research in terms of usefulness, anxiety, positive predisposition, and relevance to life. Additionally, it will evaluate their research capabilities in writing the introduction, methodology, results and discussion, and summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The study also aims to propose a Research Development Program based on the findings. The null hypotheses are: (H01) there is no significant difference between the research attitudes of BSHM and BSTM students, and (H02) there is no significant difference between their research capabilities.

Conceptual Framework

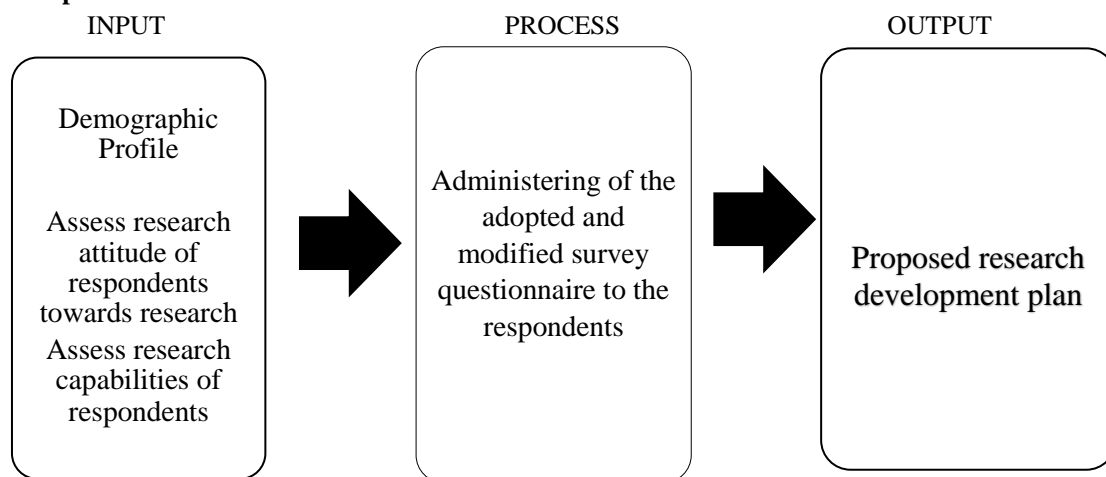


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Theoretical Framework

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), developed by Icek Ajzen, offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the research attitudes and capabilities of hospitality and tourism management students by evaluating their attitudes towards research, perceived social support, and perceived behavioral control. This study hypothesizes that positive attitudes, strong social support, and high perceived control will enhance students' research capabilities and engagement. Practical implications include improving attitudes by showcasing research value, fostering a supportive research culture, and providing necessary resources. Additionally, integrating Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which focuses on intrinsic motivation and autonomy, Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), emphasizing self-efficacy and observational learning, and Expectancy-Value Theory, which examines beliefs about success and research value, enriches the TPB framework. This combined approach provides a more holistic

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understanding of the factors influencing research attitudes and capabilities, leading to targeted interventions that better prepare students for research activities and align their educational outcomes with industry needs.

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive-comparative method with stratified random sampling to assess the research attitudes and capabilities of third-year BSHM students at Biliran Province State University. The researchers obtained permission from the Dean, provided consent forms, and distributed a modified 'Attitude Toward Research' Scale questionnaire to 100 students. The Likert scale assessed research capabilities in various areas, and data were collected, analyzed, and consolidated. Descriptive statistics (frequency count, percentage, and mean) and the Mann-Whitney U-test were used to analyze the data and determine significant differences in research attitudes and capabilities. For research attitudes, scores were categorized from "Very Positive" to "Very Negative," and for research capabilities, from "Very Highly Capable" to "Not Capable."

Ethical Consideration

The ethical considerations surrounding the conduct, approval, integrity, and confidentiality of all research participants were carefully addressed during the research. The researchers took measures to protect the identities of the respondents by not disclosing them to third parties. Before the study began, the researchers obtained consent and approval from the respondents. They also provided detailed information about the study's methodology and objectives, ensuring that the respondents agreed to participate voluntarily, respecting their autonomy in the research process.

RESULTS

Table 1. Respondents' Profile

	BSHM RESPONDENTS		BSTM RESPONDENTS	
	f	%	f	%
Age				
20	21	42.00	14	28.00
21	16	32.00	22	44.00
22	12	24.00	10	20.00
23	1	2.00	3	6.00
26	0	0.00	1	2.00
Total	50	100	50	100
Sex				
Male	17	34.00	11	22.00
Female	33	66.00	39	78.00
Total	50	100	50	100
Number of completed research papers				
1	18	36.00	27	54.00
2	21	42.00	21	42.00
3	10	20.00	2	4.00
4	1	2.00	0	0
Total	50	100	50	100
Course Program				
BSHM	50	100.00		
BSTM			50	100.00
Total	50	100	50	100.00

The age distribution reveals that most students in both BSHM and BSTM programs are 20 or 21 years old, with BSTM students slightly more represented at 21 (44%) compared to BSHM students (32%). Older students are rare, with only one BSTM student being 26. Female students dominate both programs, but the difference is more noticeable in BSTM, where 78% are female compared to 66% in BSHM.

When it comes to research experience, most students in both programs have completed one or two research papers. However, BSHM students are more likely to have completed three or four papers (22%) compared to just 4% in BSTM.

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These findings suggest that the BSHM program may offer more opportunities or support for research compared to BSTM. The significant female majority could reflect broader trends in higher education. To address these disparities, it might be beneficial for the BSTM program to increase research opportunities and support. Understanding these patterns can help educators create targeted interventions to better prepare all students for their future careers.

Research Attitude

Table 2. BSHM and BSTM's third-year Attitude on Research as to its Usefulness

Indicators	BSHM RESPONDENTS	BSTM RESPONDENTS
	WM	WM
Research is useful for my career	3.74	3.5
Research is connected to my field of study.	3.66	3.5
Research should be indispensable in my professional training	3.52	3.38
Research should be taught to all students	4.06	3.44
The skills I have acquired in research will be helpful	3.88	3.52
Research is precious	3.36	3.26
I will employ research approaches in my profession	3.22	3.18
Research knowledge is as useful as writing	3.66	3.38
AWM	3.63	3.40

Table 2 reveals that both BSHM (Hospitality Management) and BSTM (Tourism Management) students recognize the importance of research for their careers, but BSHM students are slightly more convinced of its benefits. They rated the usefulness of research higher (3.74) and see a stronger connection between research and their field (3.66) compared to BSTM students (3.50 for both). BSTM students rated the importance of research in their training lower (3.38) and are less enthusiastic about universal research education (3.44) than BSHM students (4.06). Although both groups agree on the usefulness of research skills, BSHM students view them as more valuable and relevant, particularly in writing (3.66 vs. 3.38). This suggests BSTM programs could improve by integrating more research components and offering practical experience, enhancing students' appreciation and application of research in their careers.

Table 3. BSHM and BSTM third-year Attitude on Research as to Anxiety

Indicators	BSHM RESPONDENTS	BSTM RESPONDENTS
	WM	WM
Research makes me nervous.	4.22	3.7
Research is stressful.	4.24	3.76
Research me anxious.	3.98	3.66
Research scares me.	3.9	3.48
Research is a complex subject.	3.88	3.62
Research is complicated.	3.92	3.46
Research is difficult	3.9	3.74
AWM	4.0	3.63

Both third-year BSHM and BSTM students find research a bit stressful, but BSHM students report feeling more anxious, with an average rating of 4.0 compared to 3.63 for BSTM students. This suggests BSHM students find research more challenging and emotionally taxing. These findings are consistent with other studies showing high anxiety levels in research tasks across various fields. This highlights the need for better support to help students manage research-related stress.

Table 4. BSHM and BSTM third-year Attitude on Research as to Positive Research Predisposition

Indicators	BSHM RESPONDENTS	BSTM RESPONDENTS
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	WM	WM
I love to research.	3.96	2.72
I enjoy conducting research	2.7	2.88
I like research.	2.7	2.7
I am interested in research	2.96	2.82
I am inclined to study the details of the research	3.04	2.78
AWM	3.07	2.78

Table 4 reveals that third-year BSHM students generally have a more positive attitude towards research compared to BSTM students, who are more neutral. While both groups show a similar level of indifference towards aspects like interest in and enjoyment of research, BSHM students are slightly more enthusiastic. This suggests a need for targeted strategies to boost research engagement and skills. These findings echo Creswell (2014) on students' neutral attitudes towards research, De Vaus (2001) on variations by discipline, and Kuh (2008) on the importance of tailored educational approaches to enhance academic success.

Table 5. BSHM and BSTM third-year Attitude on Research as to Relevance to Life

Indicators	BSHM RESPONDENTS	BSTM RESPONDENTS
	WM	WM
I use research in my daily life.	3.06	2.84
Research-oriented thinking plays a vital role in everyday life.	2.9	3.02
Research thinking does not apply to my personal life	2.96	2.98
Course organized to allow all students to participate fully.	3.12	3.16
Research is irrelevant to my life	3.08	2.9
AWM	3.02	2.98

Table 5 shows that third-year hospitality and tourism management students view research as important for their studies but not very relevant to their daily lives. This reflects findings from Creswell (2014) that students often see research as a school necessity rather than a real-world tool. Differences between the two programs suggest that tailored teaching methods could better align research skills with students' future careers. By making research more practical and relevant, teachers can better prepare students for success in hospitality and tourism jobs.

Research Capability

Table 6. BSHM and BSTM third year' Research Capability in Writing the Introduction

Indicators	BSHM RESPONDENTS	BSTM RESPONDENTS
	WM	WM
Writing the background of the study	3.24	3.04
Developing objectives of the study/statement of the problem.	3.06	3.06
Formulating hypothesis/es.	3.2	2.88
Making theoretical and conceptual frameworks.	3.32	3
Writing the importance of the study.	3.5	3.1
Presenting the Scope and delimitation of the study	3.62	3.14
Defining the different terms that are part of the study	3.5	3.22
Gathering and conceptualizing the review of	3.62	3.06

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the literature.		
AWM	3.38	3.06

Table 6 shows that both BSHM (Hospitality Management) and BSTM (Tourism Management) students have a decent grasp of research writing skills. BSHM students score slightly higher (3.38) than BSTM students (3.06) in writing research components like the introduction and background. BSHM students are better at highlighting the importance of the study and defining terms. However, both groups perform similarly in gathering and reviewing literature. These findings suggest that while both groups have solid skills, there's room for improvement. Tailoring instruction to strengthen specific areas and offering practical experience can help students excel in their research writing, better preparing them for their future careers.

Table 7. BSHM and BSTM third year' Research Capability in Writing the Methodology

Indicators	BSHM RESPONDENTS	BSTM RESPONDENTS
	WM	WM
Identifying the research design	3.56	3.02
Describing the research locale	3.52	3.12
Identifying and selecting the research respondents/participants of the study.	3.5	3.04
Searching and developing the research instrument/interview guide.	3.42	3.26
for	3.32	3.18
Providing the data scoring of the different variables of the study	3.4	3.08
Explaining how the data are analyzed	3.28	3.04
Identifying and describing the statistical tools used in treating the gathered data.	3.26	2.96
Discussing the researcher's reflexivity and ethical consideration.	3.12	3.08
AWM	3.38	3.08

Table 7 reveals that third-year BSHM (Hospitality Management) and BSTM (Tourism Management) students are generally skilled in writing the methodology section of their research. BSHM students score slightly higher (3.38) than BSTM students (3.08), showing stronger abilities in areas like identifying research designs and describing research locales. Both groups are equally good at developing research tools and analyzing data. These results highlight that while both programs offer solid training in research methods, focusing on practical applications can better prepare students for their future careers in hospitality and tourism.

Table 8. BSHM and BSTM third year' Research Capability in Writing the Results and Discussion

Indicators	BSHM RESPONDENTS	BSTM RESPONDENTS
	WM	WM
Presenting the gathered data through tables and graphs.	3.52	3.26
Interpreting and analyzing the result.	3.5	3.06
Identifying and selecting the research respondent's participants of the study.	3.38	3.12
AWM	3.47	3.14

Table 8 shows that both BSHM (Hotel Management) and BSTM (Tourism Management) students feel confident in writing the summary, conclusion, and recommendations for their research projects. Both groups rated themselves as capable in pulling together findings and making recommendations. This self-assessment highlights the strengths of each group and provides a useful guide for educators to focus their support and resources, helping to further enhance research and reporting skills in both programs.

Table 9. Significant Difference in the response to their Research Attitude and Research Capabilities.

Variable	U-value	Z-score	P-Value	Decision
Research Attitude	958	2.00955	.04444	Reject null

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				hypothesis
Research Capabilities	948.5	2.07504	.03752	Reject Null Hypothesis

Table 9 shows the results of tests comparing how third-year students feel about their research attitudes and capabilities. The Mann-Whitney U tests found significant differences between the groups, with U-values of 958 for Research Attitude and 948.5 for Research Capabilities, Z-scores of 2.01 and 2.08, and P-values of 0.04 and 0.04, respectively. This means the differences in how students view research and their research skills are real and not just random. These results suggest a need for more customized teaching approaches to improve students' research skills and boost their attitudes towards research in hospitality and tourism management programs.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of third-year BSHM and BSTM students reveals some key differences in their research capabilities and attitudes. Both groups demonstrate competent skills in writing various research components, but BSHM students are slightly better at defining the importance and scope of their studies. BSHM students also hold a more positive view of research, considering it crucial for their careers, whereas BSTM students are less enthusiastic. Statistical tests confirm significant differences between the groups, highlighting the need for tailored educational strategies. To address these disparities, it is recommended to enhance the BSTM curriculum with more practical research activities, create awareness programs about the value of research, establish support systems like research workshops and peer tutoring, encourage cross-disciplinary collaborations, and continuously assess and adapt teaching methods based on student feedback. These steps will better equip students from both programs with the necessary research skills and attitudes to excel in their academic and professional careers in hospitality and tourism management. Based on the analysis of third-year BSHM (Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management) and BSTM (Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management) students' research capabilities and attitudes towards research, here's a suggested research development plan tailored for both groups:

Research Development Plan

Objective	Activities	Persons Involved	Budget Cost per Activity	Time Frame	Performance Indicators
Curriculum Enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduce hands-on research projects in BSTM curriculum. - Implement mentorship programs with faculty for BSTM students. - Provide internships in research-oriented settings for practical experience. 	Faculty members, academic coordinators, industry partners	350,000.00	1 year	Number of research projects implemented; student participation rates.
Awareness Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop programs emphasizing research's value in academic and professional contexts for both BSHM and BSTM students. - Highlight research skills for evidence-based decision-making in hospitality and tourism management. 	Academic advisors, guest lecturers, marketing team	100,000.00	6 months	Attendance rates; post-program surveys on perception changes.

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Support Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish research workshops tailored to BSTM students. - Set up writing centers and peer tutoring programs specifically for BSTM students. - Provide counseling services to address research-related anxiety. 	Research coordinators, counseling staff	50,000	On-going	Usage statistics of workshops and tutoring services; student feedback.
Cross-Disciplinary Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote collaborative research projects between BSHM and BSTM students. - Encourage interdisciplinary understanding of research methods in hospitality and tourism. 	Department heads, research mentors	20,000	1 year	Number of collaborative projects initiated; interdisciplinary feedback.
Continuous Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement regular assessment of research competencies and attitudes. - Gather student feedback to refine educational strategies and interventions. 	Assessment committee, faculty	10,000	On-going	Assessment results; improvement in research competency metrics.

This comprehensive plan outlines specific objectives, activities, persons involved, budget costs per activity, time frames, and performance indicators aimed at improving research skills and fostering positive attitudes towards research among BSHM and BSTM students. Implementing these strategies will help educational institutions effectively address disparities and prepare students for success in hospitality and tourism management careers.

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