



RESEARCH ENTHUSIASM, RESEARCH ENGAGEMENT, AND RESEARCH DETERMINANTS AMONG NURSE EDUCATORS IN SELECTED ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

Although nurse educators play a pivotal role in driving evidence-based healthcare, turning academic interest into published scholarship remains a persistent hurdle in higher education. This quantitative descriptive-comparative-correlational study evaluated the levels, profile differences, and interrelationships of research enthusiasm, research engagement, and research determinants among 140 nurse educators across selected academic institutions in Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines. Data gathered through total enumeration and validated survey questionnaires revealed very high levels of research enthusiasm, intrinsic motivation, and institutional encouragement. Respondents also demonstrated high levels of research competence, self-efficacy, and resource availability. However, actual engagement clustered predominantly around seminar attendance and collaborative team roles, while independent research leadership and peer-reviewed journal publishing remained low. Statistically significant profile-based differences in engagement and determinants were associated with teaching experience, educational attainment, monthly income, weekly workload, and research training exposure. Furthermore, research enthusiasm correlated strongly with research determinants ($r = .786$) but only moderately with research engagement ($r = .300$), indicating that personal interest requires structured institutional support to yield published research. The study proposes a Research Capacity Enhancement Framework incorporating guided mentorship, protected research time, and targeted resource allocation to build a sustainable research culture in nursing education.

Keywords: *nurse educators, research enthusiasm, research engagement, research determinants, research capacity enhancement framework*



INTRODUCTION

Nursing research underpins evidence-based practice, generating scientific knowledge that informs clinical decision-making, improves patient outcomes, and advances nursing education (Polit & Beck, 2021; LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 2022). As the clinical role of nurses continues to expand, the demand for nursing research to improve practice has grown correspondingly (Hong, 2025). Yet nursing faculty face compelling barriers that constrain research enthusiasm and engagement (Alotaibi, 2023). As a nurse educator involved in both classroom instruction and clinical training, the researcher observed that many faculty members recognize the value of research but that competing academic and clinical responsibilities often limit sustained involvement — an observation that motivated the present inquiry into the factors influencing research enthusiasm and engagement among nurse educators.

Research enthusiasm refers to nurses' positive attitudes, intrinsic motivation, and belief in the value of research, while research engagement denotes active participation in research-related activities — acquiring knowledge, applying research in practice, collaborating in studies, and contributing to evidence generation (Exploring the motivation of health professionals to engage with research at various career stages, 2024). Confidence in evidence-based practice skills, knowledge, and organizational support have been linked to greater engagement among nurses (Thiel et al., 2019), and a positive attitude toward research has been linked to better quality of care (Durmus et al., 2025). Philippine studies similarly report that nurses generally hold positive attitudes toward research and work in institutions that encourage participation through leadership support and faculty development (Maglunsod & Kulintang, 2024; Cruz, 2024). Even so, other studies report that interest in research does not reliably translate into engagement: Nor et al. (2021) found that only about 40.3% of nurses expressed interest in clinical research and 31% had prior experience, while Akerjordet (2012) found that although 40% expressed a positive attitude, few were actually engaged — evidence that enthusiasm alone is insufficient without addressing barriers such as limited time, incentives, training, mentorship, and institutional resources (Jabonete, 2022; Torres et al., n.d.; Nagai, 2022; Squires, n.d.).

Although prior studies have examined nurses' attitudes toward research or the barriers to participation, few have simultaneously examined research enthusiasm and engagement among nurse educators specifically within Philippine higher education, and little is known about the determinants that shape both constructs in this context. Existing literature has also concentrated on demographic variables such as age, educational attainment, and workload, while monthly income — despite its plausible influence on access to training, conferences, and publication opportunities — has received comparatively little attention. This study addresses these gaps by determining the level of research enthusiasm, research engagement, and research determinants among nurse educators in selected higher education institutions in Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines; examining differences in these constructs according to profile characteristics; testing the relationships among the three constructs; and using the findings as the basis for a research capacity enhancement framework. The study aligns with Sustainable Development Goals 3 and 4, the aspirations of AmBisyon Natin 2040, and the priorities of the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II) regarding faculty research productivity and institutional research capacity.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on the Research Capacity and Culture (RCC) Framework of Holden et al. (2012), which explains research participation as shaped by interacting personal, professional, and organizational domains, and is further supported by Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior, in which attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control jointly shape behavioral intention, and by Rogers' (1962) Diffusion of Innovation Theory, which frames the eventual research capacity enhancement framework as an innovation to be adopted through staged institutional awareness, capacity-building, pilot implementation, evaluation, and integration. In the conceptual framework, respondents' profile characteristics — age, years of experience, weekly teaching



workload, monthly income, highest educational attainment, and research training attended — serve as background variables; research enthusiasm and research engagement form the two reciprocally related outcome variables; and personal, professional, and organizational determinants (institutional support, research competence, self-efficacy, motivation, and resource availability) serve as the intervening factors expected to shape whether enthusiasm translates into sustained engagement.

Statement of the Problem

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of (a) age, (b) years of experience, (c) weekly teaching workload, (d) monthly income, (e) highest educational attainment, and (f) research training attended?
2. What is the level of research enthusiasm among nurse educators?
3. What is the level of research engagement among nurse educators?
4. What is the level of research determinants among nurse educators in terms of (a) institutional research support, (b) research competence, (c) research self-efficacy, (d) research motivation, and (e) availability of research resources?
5. Is there a significant difference in research enthusiasm, research engagement, and research determinants when respondents are grouped according to profile?
6. Is there a significant relationship among research enthusiasm, research engagement, and research determinants?
7. Based on the findings, what research capacity enhancement framework may be developed to strengthen research participation and advance nursing research?

Correspondingly, the study tested two null hypotheses: (H01) there is no significant difference in research enthusiasm, research engagement, and research determinants when respondents are grouped according to profile; and (H02) there is no significant relationship among research enthusiasm, research engagement, and research determinants.



METHODS

Research Design

The study used a quantitative descriptive-comparative-correlational design. The descriptive component characterized respondents' profile and their levels of research enthusiasm, engagement, and determinants; the comparative component tested for significant differences in these constructs across profile groups; and the correlational component tested the relationships among research enthusiasm, engagement, and determinants.

Participants and Sampling

Respondents were 140 registered nurses employed as nurse educators in three higher education institutions offering Bachelor of Science in Nursing programs in Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines (100 from one institution and 20 each from the remaining two), selected through total enumeration sampling. Eligible respondents held an active Professional Regulation Commission nursing license, held teaching responsibilities in lecture and related learning experience courses regardless of rank or employment status, and voluntarily provided informed consent; excluded were nurses employed solely in clinical settings, non-teaching administrative personnel, and those on extended leave during data collection.

Instrumentation

Data were gathered using a structured, four-part questionnaire. Part 1 collected profile information (age, years of experience, weekly teaching workload, monthly income, highest educational attainment, and research training attended). Part 2 measured research enthusiasm using a nine-item adaptation of the Research Engagement and Enthusiasm Survey Tool (REST) developed by Eder et al. (2018), scored on a four-point scale (1 = never to 4 = always; possible range 9–36). Part 3 measured research engagement using a 13-item checklist adapted from Amicucci et al. (2022), with an added item on serving as a research presentation panelist or evaluator, each item weighted according to the level of involvement it represents and summed into a composite engagement score. Part 4 measured research determinants across five 10-item domains — institutional research support (adapted from the Research Capacity and Culture Tool), research competence (adapted from the Research Competencies Assessment Instrument for Nurses; Mallidou et al., 2018), research self-efficacy (informed by the Self-Efficacy in Research Measure and the Comprehensive Research Self-Efficacy Scale; Taş, Demiral-Uzan, & Uzan, 2023), research motivation (adapted from the Research Motivation Scale; Deemer, Martens, & Buboltz, 2010), and availability of research resources (researcher-developed, grounded in the RCC framework) — each rated on a four-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree). The complete adapted instrument was subjected to expert content validation by three nurse professionals and pilot-tested with 30 respondents outside the study locale, yielding an overall internal-consistency reliability of Cronbach's $\alpha = .964$ (59 items).

Data Gathering Procedure

Following ethical clearance and institutional approval, the validated instrument was administered face-to-face to eligible nurse educators after written informed consent was obtained. Data were collected during the first semester of Academic Year 2026–2027 and required approximately 30 to 40 minutes per respondent. Completed questionnaires were checked for completeness, coded, and encoded for analysis in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Data Analysis

Frequencies and percentages were used to describe the respondents' profile and engagement checklist responses. Mean and standard deviation were used to describe the levels of research enthusiasm and research determinants.



An independent-samples t-test was used to compare respondents grouped by weekly teaching workload (two categories), and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), with Tukey's HSD post hoc test where a significant difference emerged, was used for variables with three or more categories (age, years of experience, monthly income, educational attainment, and research training attended); the Kruskal–Wallis H test was used where normality assumptions were violated. Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient was used to test the relationships among research enthusiasm, research engagement, and research determinants. Significance was set at $\alpha = .05$.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of the Philippine Health Research Ethics Board and Republic Act No. 10173 (the Data Privacy Act of 2012). Ethical clearance was obtained prior to data collection, and participation was entirely voluntary and based on written informed consent; no personal identifiers were collected, and confidentiality was maintained throughout data storage, encoding, and analysis. Use of artificial intelligence during manuscript preparation was limited to language refinement and organization, with all interpretations, analyses, and conclusions remaining the sole responsibility of the researcher.



RESULTS

Profile of Respondents

Of the 140 nurse educators surveyed, 70.0% were below 40 years of age (40.7% aged 20–29, 29.3% aged 30–39), while 24.3% were 40–49 and 5.7% were 50 and above. Nearly half (45.7%) had less than five years of research experience, 30.7% had more than ten years, and 23.6% had 5–10 years. Weekly teaching workload was nearly evenly split, with 51.4% working 40 hours or less and 48.6% working more than 40 hours. Monthly income was concentrated in the lower brackets, with 42.1% earning below ₱30,000 and another 42.1% earning ₱30,000–49,999 (84.2% combined); 11.4% earned ₱50,000–69,999, 0.7% earned ₱70,000–89,999, and 3.6% earned ₱90,000 or more. More than half (51.4%) held a Master's degree, 42.9% a Bachelor's degree, and 5.7% a Doctoral degree. Regarding research training, 52.9% had attended one to two trainings, 17.9% had attended three to four, 8.6% had attended five or more, and 20.7% had attended none.

Table 1. Profile of Respondents (N = 140).

Profile Variable	Category	f	%
Age	20–29	57	40.7
	30–39	41	29.3
	40–49	34	24.3
	50 & above	8	5.7
Years of Experience	< 5	64	45.7
	5–10	33	23.6
	> 10	43	30.7
Weekly Teaching Workload	≤ 40 hrs.	72	51.4
	> 40 hrs.	68	48.6
Monthly Income (₱)	< 30,000	59	42.1
	30,000–49,999	59	42.1
	50,000–69,999	16	11.4
	70,000–89,999	1	0.7



Profile Variable	Category	f	%
	$\geq 90,000$	5	3.6
Highest Educational Attainment	Bachelor	60	42.9
	Master	72	51.4
	Doctor	8	5.7
Research Training Attended	0	29	20.7
	1–2	74	52.9
	3–4	25	17.9
	5 & above	12	8.6

Levels of Research Enthusiasm, Engagement, and Determinants

Research enthusiasm was rated Very High overall ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 0.50$). Seven of the nine items fell in the Very High range (3.26–3.37); the highest-rated item concerned willingness to share and disseminate findings through presentation and publication ($M = 3.37$), while the lowest concerned motivation to identify nursing research problems ($M = 3.15$, still High).

Research engagement was likewise classified Very High overall, but participation was concentrated in introductory, supportive, and team-based activities rather than independent scholarship: 90.7% had attended a research seminar, 70.7% had served on a research team, and 70.0% had attended a research webinar, whereas only 16.4% had published in a peer-reviewed journal, 21.4% had served as principal investigator or research leader, and 22.9% had presented a poster or completed a research workshop.

Among the determinants, institutional research support was rated Very High ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 0.49$) and research motivation was rated Very High ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 0.48$), while research competence ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 0.47$), research self-efficacy ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 0.52$), and availability of research resources ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 0.54$) were each rated High. Within institutional support, administrative encouragement to participate in research received the highest rating ($M = 3.48$), while direct administrative support received the lowest ($M = 3.19$). Within research competence, conducting a systematic literature search was rated highest ($M = 3.14$), and knowledge sufficiency for identifying research problems was rated lowest ($M = 3.00$). Within self-efficacy, confidence in interpreting research findings was rated highest ($M = 3.25$) and confidence in identifying a researchable nursing problem lowest ($M = 2.99$). Within motivation, professional development was the strongest driver ($M = 3.41$). Within resource availability, institutional support for publication and for conference presentation were rated highest ($M = 3.19$ each), while sufficient time within the weekly workload to participate in research was rated lowest of all 50 determinant items ($M = 2.81$).

**Table 2. Summary Levels of Research Enthusiasm and Research Determinants (N = 140)**

Construct / Domain	Mean	SD	Descriptive Level
Research Enthusiasm (overall)	3.28	.499	Very High
Research Engagement (overall)	—	—	Very High
Institutional Research Support	3.36	.486	Very High
Research Competence	3.11	.473	High
Research Self-Efficacy	3.10	.517	High
Research Motivation	3.27	.481	Very High
Availability of Research Resources	3.04	.537	High

Differences According to Profile Characteristics

Research enthusiasm did not differ significantly by teaching experience ($p = .207$), weekly workload ($p = .983$), monthly income, or educational attainment ($p = .117$), but did differ significantly by age, $F(2, 137) = 4.665$, $p = .011$, and by research training attended, with respondents who had attended five or more trainings scoring significantly higher than those with none or with one to two trainings. Research engagement and research determinants, by contrast, differed significantly across all examined profile variables: age (engagement $F(2, 137) = 7.875$, $p = .001$; determinants $F(2, 137) = 3.574$, $p = .031$), years of experience (engagement $F(2, 137) = 8.851$, $p < .001$; determinants $F(2, 137) = 5.145$, $p = .007$), weekly workload (engagement $t = -2.913$, $p = .004$; determinants $t = -2.318$, $p = .022$, with those working more than 40 hours reporting higher engagement and determinant scores), monthly income (higher-earning groups reporting significantly higher engagement and determinants), educational attainment (engagement $p = .002$; determinants $p = .035$), and research training attended (engagement increasing significantly with training exposure; determinants significantly higher for those with at least one training compared with none). Accordingly, the null hypothesis of no significant difference ($H01$) was rejected for research engagement and research determinants across all profile variables and for research enthusiasm with respect to age and research training attended, but was not rejected for research enthusiasm with respect to years of experience, weekly workload, monthly income, or educational attainment.

Relationships Among Research Enthusiasm, Engagement, and Determinants

Spearman's rank-order correlation showed statistically significant positive relationships among all three constructs ($p < .01$), leading to rejection of $H02$. Research enthusiasm correlated strongly with research determinants ($r = .786$), research determinants correlated moderately with research engagement ($r = .455$), and research enthusiasm correlated only weakly to moderately with research engagement ($r = .300$).



Table 3. Spearman Correlations Among Research Enthusiasm, Research Engagement, and Research Determinants

Variable Pair	r	Interpretation
Research Enthusiasm × Research Determinants	.786	Strong positive
Research Determinants × Research Engagement	.455	Moderate positive
Research Enthusiasm × Research Engagement	.300	Weak-to-moderate positive



DISCUSSION

The findings depict a nurse-educator workforce that is predominantly early- to mid-career, values research highly, and perceives its institutions as encouraging — yet channels most of its actual engagement into seminar attendance and team-based participation rather than independent, peer-reviewed scholarship. The very high enthusiasm ($M = 3.28$) alongside a peer-reviewed publication rate of only 16.4% is the central tension the data reveal: consistent with the Research Capacity and Culture Framework (Holden et al., 2012) and Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior, favorable attitudes and even institutional encouragement do not automatically translate into perceived behavioral control or completed scholarly output when practical conditions — chiefly protected time ($M = 2.81$, the lowest-rated determinant item in the entire instrument) and direct administrative assistance ($M = 3.19$) — remain comparatively weak. This pattern echoes prior findings that positive attitudes toward research are common among nurses and nurse educators but that meaningful engagement depends on the opportunities the organization actually provides (Palmer et al., 2023; Janerka et al., 2024; Cleary-Holdforth et al., 2021; Dickens et al., 2024; Jimeno, 2023).

The correlational results reinforce this interpretation. The strong association between enthusiasm and determinants ($r = .786$) indicates that positive attitudes and confidence travel closely together with perceived institutional and personal capability, while the comparatively weak association between enthusiasm and engagement ($r = .300$) shows that interest alone is a poor predictor of what nurse educators actually do. Research determinants sit in between, correlating moderately with engagement ($r = .455$) — suggesting that determinants such as institutional support, competence, self-efficacy, motivation, and resource availability function as the more proximal levers connecting interest to action, consistent with Self-Determination Theory's emphasis on competence and supportive conditions as drivers of sustained behavior (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

The consistent significance of research engagement and research determinants — but not always research enthusiasm — across profile variables (teaching experience, workload, income, educational attainment, and training) suggests that these characteristics chiefly index differential access to opportunity, exposure, and institutional support rather than differential interest. Notably, research enthusiasm differed significantly only by age and by research training attended, implying that training in particular strengthens confidence and interest, not merely competence — consistent with prior evidence that structured research education programs improve knowledge, confidence, and willingness to engage (King et al., 2022; Lei et al., 2026; Ali et al., 2026; Heaton-Shrestha et al., 2023).

Implications and Practical Output

The findings support a sequenced set of institutional actions rather than a single intervention. At the practice level, structured mentorship pairing experienced researchers with the 45.7% of educators who have less than five years of research experience, staged and needs-based research training, and applied research incubators that move faculty from attendance toward independent inquiry are indicated by the concentration of engagement in seminars (90.7%) and team roles (70.7%) relative to leadership (21.4%) and publication (16.4%). At the policy level, the lower rating for protected research time ($M = 2.81$) despite very high institutional encouragement ($M = 3.48$) points to a specific, addressable gap: formal recognition of research within faculty workload, alongside equitable access to funding, statistical consultation, and publication support, and the integration of research output into faculty evaluation and promotion criteria.

In response to these findings, the study proposes a Research Capacity Enhancement Framework operationalized as a recurring cycle of assessment, strategic planning and capacity development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, and refinement, led jointly by institutional research offices, deans, and faculty development committees, with indicators including training enrollment, active mentor–mentee partnerships, research projects



initiated and completed, and peer-reviewed publications. The framework is intended for contextual adaptation by other institutions rather than direct replication, given that it was derived from three institutions in a single province.

Limitations

This study is limited by its cross-sectional design, which does not support causal inference regarding the relationships among enthusiasm, engagement, and determinants; its reliance on self-reported survey data without triangulation through interviews, observation, or document review; and its geographic and institutional scope, which was confined to three higher education institutions in Nueva Vizcaya and therefore may not generalize to other regions or institutional contexts. The comparatively small number of doctoral-prepared respondents ($n = 8$) also limits the reliability of subgroup comparisons involving that category.

Conclusion

Nurse educators in the participating institutions demonstrated very high research enthusiasm and institutional research support, and high research competence, self-efficacy, and resource availability, but their actual engagement remained concentrated in attendance and collaborative roles rather than independent research leadership or peer-reviewed publication. Research engagement and research determinants — unlike enthusiasm — differed significantly across nearly all profile characteristics, and all three constructs were significantly and positively correlated, most strongly between enthusiasm and determinants. These findings indicate that research enthusiasm provides a necessary but insufficient foundation for sustained scholarly participation, which depends substantially on the personal, professional, and organizational conditions available to nurse educators. Strengthening protected research time, mentorship, training, and administrative and resource support — through mechanisms such as the proposed Research Capacity Enhancement Framework — offers institutions an empirically grounded pathway toward converting existing faculty enthusiasm into a more productive and sustainable research culture.

Recommendations

1. Future studies may replicate this research across a broader range of provinces, regions, and institutional types to test whether the observed patterns generalize beyond the three participating institutions.
2. Subsequent research may incorporate additional variables — such as curiosity, perseverance, personality-related characteristics, and specific forms of administrative support — not captured in the present conceptual framework.
3. Longitudinal or mixed-methods designs, including interviews, focus group discussions, or document review, may address the limitations of the present cross-sectional, self-reported approach and clarify how research enthusiasm and engagement change over time.
4. Future research may include the perspectives of deans, research coordinators, and administrators to complement nurse educators' self-reports regarding institutional research support and infrastructure.
5. The proposed Research Capacity Enhancement Framework should be piloted and evaluated for feasibility, acceptability, and outcomes in the participating institutions and, with contextual adaptation, in other nursing schools.
6. Institutions should prioritize protected research time and formally recognized research workload credits, given that time availability received the lowest determinant rating ($M = 2.81$) despite very high institutional encouragement ($M = 3.48$).
7. Institutions should establish structured mentorship pathways linking experienced and early-career researchers to support progression from collaborative participation toward independent research leadership and publication.



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