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## OPINION OF RESEARCH SCHOLARS TOWARDS NATIONAL ELIGIBILITY TEST



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### Short Profile

R. Vinodh Kumar is working as an Assistant Professor at Department of Education in Periyar University, Periyar Palkalai Nagar, Salem , Tamil Nadu, India. He has completed M.A., M.Sc., M.Ed., M.Phil., NET., SET.



### ABSTRACT:

The National Eligibility Test (NET) is conducted by University Grants Commission to determine eligibility for Assistant Professor and for the award of Junior Research Fellowship (JRF) in order to ensure minimum standards and quality in teaching and research. The academicians have a different kind of opinion about the national eligibility test. The present study has been designed to explore the opinion of research scholars towards National Eligibility Test with reference to certain variables. For the study, 84 research scholars have been selected by adopting the purposive sampling technique. An opinionnaire has been prepared and validated to collect data. The data

collected has been analyzed by adopting the statistical measures such as descriptive analysis and t' - test. The results indicate that the research scholars have above average level opinion towards UGC - National Eligibility Test and female research scholars have a better opinion regarding UGC - National Eligibility Test with compared to their male counterparts.

### KEYWORDS

*Opinion, teaching, research, and quality.*

## INTRODUCTION:

The National Eligibility Test (NET) is conducted by University Grants Commission twice a year to determine eligibility for Assistant Professor and for the award of Junior Research Fellowship (JRF) for the postgraduates in order to ensure minimum standards and quality in teaching and research. The candidates with a postgraduate degree in any subject (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences) can eligible to appear for the National Eligibility Test. The test is conducted in over 80 different disciplines(UGC, 2014)<sup>1</sup>. The test consists of three objective type papers. The first paper intended to test the candidates teaching/research aptitude and second and third paper assesses in-depth knowledge, comprehension and application of the candidates in their specialized subject. The third paper of the test was descriptive in nature up to December 2011. The pattern of the test has been changed from the June 2012 session.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The academicians have a different kind of opinion about the national eligibility test. Some opined that NET ensures the minimum standards and quality in teaching and research. "A teacher should be an all-rounder. For the 25 vacant lecturer posts, we received about 700 applications. Only NET qualifiers with good communication skills were selected," reveals ValsonThampu, Principal, St. Stephen's College, Delhi (Pavithram, 2014)<sup>2</sup>. But some others wanted the NET to be discontinued since it has not been effective in raising the standard of the teaching profession. "There is no guarantee that a candidate with NET qualification will have a good aptitude for teaching. There have been several instances of candidates without a pass in NET performing better than those with the qualification," said M. Sheik Mohamed, the Principal of Jamal Mohamed College, Tiruchirapalli, Tamil Nadu (Krishnamurthy, 2006)<sup>3</sup>. The main objective of the study is to find out the level of the attitude of research scholars (M. Phil and Ph.D Scholars) towards National Eligibility Test. The research scholars are very much aware of the National Eligibility Test as they have already completed their post-graduation. The research scholars are going to work in universities/ colleges as Assistant Professor or as Scientist in research institutes in the future after qualifying National Eligibility Test in their subject concerned. Hence, it is very important to know the mindset of young scholars about the present system and structure of National Eligibility Test. Their viewpoints will be useful for the policy makers and stakeholders of higher education to review the test.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- + To find out the level of opinion among the research scholars towards UGC-National Eligibility Test.
- + To find out whether there is any significant differences exist in the opinion of research scholars towards UGC-National Eligibility Test with respect to following demographic variables such as gender, level of research programme, mode of research, a number of attempts made for NET, and NET qualification status of research scholars.

## HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

- ▲ The level of the opinion of the research scholars towards UGC-National Eligibility Test is high.
- ▲ There is no significant difference in the opinion of research scholars towards UGC-National Eligibility Test with respect to following demographic variables such as gender, level of research programme, mode of research, a number of attempts made for NET, and NET qualification status of

research scholars.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

### Method

As the study deals with the opinion of research scholars towards UGC - National Eligibility Test, the investigator has adopted the survey method. The main variable of the study is "Opinion towards UGC - National Eligibility Test". The demographic variables are gender, level of the research programme, mode of research, a number of attempts made for NET, and NET qualification status of research scholars.

### Sample

The sample of 84 research scholars (M. Phil and Ph.D scholars) has been selected from the departments of Periyar University, Salem, TamilNadu by adopting the purposive sampling technique.

### Data Collection Instrument

"Opinionnaire on UGC - National Eligibility Test", a five-point rating scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) with 32 items has been developed to find out the opinion of research scholars towards UGC - National Eligibility Test. The minimum score on the scale is 32 and the maximum score is 160. Content validity of the tool was estimated by evaluating the relevance of the items by the experts. The reliability of the test was found to be 0.80 by the split - half method.

### Statistical Techniques Used

For the study, the investigator applied the statistical techniques such as Descriptive analysis (Mean and Standard Deviation) and inferential analysis ('t'-test) to analyze the opinion of research scholars towards UGC - National Eligibility Test.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesis – 1: The level of opinion of the research scholars towards UGC - National Eligibility Test is high.

Table - 1: Mean Scores of Opinion of Research Scholars towards UGC – NET

S.No	Variables		N	Mean	SD
1	Gender	Male	54	103.68	10.27
		Female	30	107.6	7.45
2	Level of Research Programme	M.Phil	31	105.64	7.56
		Ph.D	53	104.75	10.53
3	Mode of Research	Full Time	55	104.36	9.24
		Part Time	29	106.44	10.00
4	Number of Attempts made for NET	One Attempt	38	108.86	7.45
		More than One Attempt	46	101.95	9.94
5	NET Qualification Status	Qualified	15	108.33	6.83
		Not Qualified	69	104.37	9.89
<b>Average</b>				<b>105.59</b>	<b>8.91</b>

From the table - 1, it is noted that the total mean score of the opinion of the research scholars towards UGC - National Eligibility Test is 105.59. The maximum score is 160. So the level of the opinion of the research scholars towards UGC - National Eligibility Test is found to be above average.

**Hypothesis – 2:** There is no significant difference in the opinion of research scholars towards UGC-National Eligibility Test with respect to following demographic variables such as gender, level of research programme, mode of research, a number of attempts made for NET, and NET qualification status of research scholars.

Table - 2: Significance of Difference in the opinion of research scholars towards National Eligibility Test with respect to certain variables

Variables	Sub-Variables	N	Mean	S.D	t – value	p - value	Result
Gender	Male	54	103.68	10.27	2.00	0.048 < 0.05	Significant
	Female	30	107.6	7.45			
Level of Research Programme	M.Phil	31	105.64	7.56	0.44	0.654 > 0.05	Not Significant
	Ph.D	53	104.75	10.53			
Mode of Research	Full Time	55	104.36	9.24	0.93	0.355 > 0.05	Not Significant
	Part Time	29	106.44	10.00			
Number of Attempts	One Attempt	38	108.86	7.45	3.63	0.0004 < 0.05	Significant
	More than One Attempt	46	101.95	9.94			
NET Qualification Status	Qualified	15	108.33	6.83	1.85	0.073 > 0.05	Not Significant
	Not Qualified	69	104.37	9.89			

\* Significant at 0.05 level for two – tailed test

**Gender:** It is inferred that the calculated ‘t’ value (2.00) is greater than the tabulated ‘t’ value (1.98) at the 0.05 level of significance. So the null hypothesis framed is not accepted. Consequently, it is concluded that there is a significant difference in the opinion towards UGC – National Eligibility Test between male and female research scholars. Female research scholars are better in the opinion regarding UGC – National Eligibility Test to compare to their male counterparts.

**The Level of Research Programme:** It is noted that the calculated ‘t’ value (0.44) is lesser than the tabulated ‘t’ value (1.98) at the 0.05 level of significance. So the null hypothesis framed is accepted. Consequently, it is concluded that there is no significant difference in the opinion towards UGC – National Eligibility Test between M. Phil and Ph.D., research scholars. However, on the basis of the difference in mean score, M. Phil research scholars have a better opinion with compare to their Ph.D., counterparts.

**Mode of Research:** It is noted that the calculated ‘t’ value (0.93) is lesser than the tabulated ‘t’ value (1.98) at 0.05 level of significance. So the null hypothesis framed is accepted. Consequently, it is concluded that there is no significant difference in the opinion towards UGC – National Eligibility Test between the research scholars pursuing their research through full time and part time mode. But on the basis of the mean score, part-time research scholars have a better opinion rather than full-time research scholars.

**Number of Attempts:** It can be seen from the table that the mean score of research scholars those made one attempt at National Eligibility Test (108.86) is greater than the mean score of their counterparts, i.e.,

research scholars those made more than one attempt at National Eligibility Test (101.95). Also the calculated 't' value (3.63) is greater than the table value (1.98) and significant at 0.05 level of probability. It reveals the fact that the research scholars those made one attempt at National Eligibility Test have a better opinion towards UGC – National Eligibility Test rather than those made more than one attempt. Hence, the null hypothesis framed is not accepted.

**NET Qualification Status:** The mean score of NET qualified research scholars and not - NET qualified research scholars are 108.33 and 104.37 respectively. The opinion of NET qualified research scholars towards UGC – National Eligibility Test is found to be higher than that of non-NET qualified research scholars. But the calculated 't' value (1.85) is lesser than the table value (1.98), and not significant at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis framed is accepted.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The descriptive analysis shows that the research scholars have above average level opinion towards UGC – National Eligibility Test.

- + There is a significant difference in the opinion towards UGC – National Eligibility Test between male and female research scholars. Female research scholars are better in the opinion regarding UGC – National Eligibility Test to compare to their male counterparts.
- + There is no significant difference in the opinion towards UGC – National Eligibility Test between M.Phil and Ph.D research scholars. However, M.Phil research scholars are better in the opinion regarding UGC – National Eligibility Test with compare to their Ph.D., counterparts.
- + There is no significant difference in the opinion towards UGC – National Eligibility Test between the research scholars pursuing their research through full time and part time mode. But on the basis of the mean score, part-time research scholars are better in the opinion regarding UGC – National Eligibility Test rather than full-time research scholars.
- + There is a significant difference exists in the opinion of research scholars towards UGC – National Eligibility Test with respect to the number of attempts made in National Eligibility Test. The research scholars those made one attempt at National Eligibility Test have a better opinion towards UGC – National Eligibility Test rather than those made more than one attempt.
- + There is no significant difference in the opinion of research scholars towards UGC – National Eligibility Test with respect to their NET qualification status. However, the mean score reveals the fact that the opinion of NET qualified research scholars towards UGC – National Eligibility Test is found to be better than that of non-NET qualified research scholars.

## CONCLUSION

The study has been useful to reveal the actual mindset and views of research scholars regarding UGC – National Eligibility Test. The study has implications for colleges and universities to organize sensitization programmes to develop a better opinion about National Eligibility Test among the postgraduate students and research scholars.



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