

## LECTURER'S RESEARCH ATTITUDE ON STUDENT'S RESEARCH MOTIVATION: IMPLICATION FOR RESEARCH-BASED LEARNING

**Kelechi T. Ugwu**

Department of Social Science and Humanities  
Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu, Nigeria  
*Corresponding author, email: kcugwu@imt.edu.ng*

**Joy A. Ugwuanyi**

Department of Social Science and Humanities  
Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu, Nigeria

### **Abstract**

*There is a growing concern about the research attitudes in Nigeria's academia. Lecturers in the tertiary education system are faced with imparting quality knowledge and providing relevant research skills. However, insinuations suggest that the observed variation in lecturer's research attitudes in academia is implicated in the student's research motivation. Thus, the primary purpose of the current study is to explore the research attitude of lecturers in academia as a factor that could account for the variance in student's research motivation. We operationalized research motivation as the willingness and drive to engage in research activities. Ninety-six students pooled from public tertiary institutions in Enugu States of Nigeria completed a self-report measure. The linear regression result revealed a statistically significant relationship between research attitudes and research motivation. The adjusted  $R^2$  revealed that the research attitudes of the lecturers accounted for the 27.2% variation in student's research motivation. We conclude that the lecturer's research attitudes are essential in improving student's research motivation.*

**Keywords:** Research Attitudes, Motivation, Students.

### **Introduction**

Research is an essential component of higher education in modern-day education (Kachalova et al., 2019). Tertiary institutions are presently allocating attention to scientific investigations, thereby making research a critical aspect of education apart from the conventional task of teaching (Etzkowitz, 2003). Research design and development is the primary focus in

academia, especially at the tertiary level. Perhaps, growth and development of a nation require a rapid coherent scientific inquiry and logical research framework (Ashrafi-Rizi et al., 2015). Accordingly, Bhagavathula et al. (2017) noted that evidence-based knowledge is a ubiquitous part of science education in global academia. Research is critical in advancing and improving every aspect of our world. Sabel'nikova-Begashvili and Khudoverdova (2020) reported the importance of exposing students to research activities. Krylova et al. (2019) emphasized the necessity for teaching research competence to the learners.

Previous studies (e.g., McLaughlin et al., 2018; Mina et al., 2016; Partido & Colón, 2019) implicated positive research attitudes on students' eagerness to participate in research activities. Vossen et al. (2018) highlighted the relevance of research and evidence-based inquiries on the growing Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics education (STEM) sustainability. The position of the educational institution is assessed by its research culture. For instance, Hajdarpasic et al. (2015) contended that an influential research culture in higher education facilitates the institution and enhances students' perception of education. Consistently, Davis and Jones (2017) noted that academic research activities equip the students with innovative information. In addition, Brown et al. (2016) stated that research activities impact cutting-edge knowledge and primary research methodologies on the students and increase scholarly inspiration (Falconer & Holcomb, 2008). The relevance associated with student's exposure to research activities has been widely emphasized (e.g., Abu-helalah et al., 2015; Beanland et al., 2020; Borakati et al., 2017; Kozlov et al., 2017; Noguez & Neri, 2019; Razeghi, 2019; Roach, 2017; Swan et al., 2018; Weiner & Watkinson, 2014).

Lecturers in tertiary institutions are an essential part of learning. Thus, they contribute significantly to the development of research skills. In Nigeria, lecturers are faced with providing knowledge and services that contribute to national development. Literature has identified research as an essential part of teaching and learning in academia and one of the conditions for moving up the ladder in the academic system(Katz & Coleman, 2001). Research output has become a critical and vital determinant of academic success(Chin & Law, 2020).Thus, lecturers are tasked with equipping students with the relevant skills to understand research methods and processes. Perhaps, student's research motivation is vital in achieving the objective.

Student's research motivation is operationalized as the eagerness to conduct research work, comply with research processes and supervisor's comments, and timely completion of a research study. A student's motivation is crucial in their success in undertaking an education endeavour(Alamri et al., 2021). Achievement motivation is efficiently utilized in educational psychology(Rheinberg, 2020). Accordingly, (Cheng et al., 2020)noted that motivation is a crucial predictor of commitment and performance. However, the association between the supervisor's research attitude and student's research motivation is scarcely investigated in Nigeria, hence the justification for this study.

The concept of research entails the process of collecting and analyzing relevant data to increase knowledge and understanding of a topic or an issue(Creswell, 2012). Research involves careful processes that provide credible output. A research attitude is the predisposition to engage in research activities(Safi & Kumar, 2019). One of the significant characteristics in the academic profession in higher education systems, including educational

psychology, is consistent scientific inquiries. Previous research has indicated the positive influence of scholarly research disposition on the professional development of educators (Ulla, 2018). Engaging in a research process allows academics to develop new skills, approaches, and strategies (Impedovo & Malik, 2016; Landicho, 2020), which can be transferred to the students. One of the tasks of lecturers is to supervise student's research projects while the learners invest the effort to emulate the research style of the supervisor. This relationship determines to a large extent, the student's understanding of the research processes and the development of research-based learning in academia. Thus, a positive research attitude of the lecturers improves both their practice and their students' learning outcomes (Mertler & Charles, 2008). The present study aimed to investigate student's research motivation based on the lecturer's research attitude.

### **Hypothesis**

The primary aim of the current study is to explore the lecturer's research attitude as a factor that could account for the variation in student's research motivation. Thus, to achieve this aim, we formulated the hypothesis below:

Lecturer's research attitude would significantly predict student's research motivation.

### **Method**

The study population comprised students from two Public Tertiary Institutions in Enugu State, Nigeria. One hundred and twenty-one male and female students who are enrolled in different departments were approached between May and July 2021. They were asked to participate in a study aimed to understand the department's role in their research work. The participants were mainly pooled from the final year classes and the postgraduate classes. The one hundred and eleven students who consented to partake in the study were given the study instrument. In all, ninety-six (96) copies of the research

instruments were filled correctly and utilized for the study, perhaps, the twelve (12) improperly filled copies and three (3) unreturned copies were discarded. We adopted a cross-sectional survey design in the study.

### **Measure**

The participants completed a self-report measure designed to assess their subjective perception of supervisor's research attitudes and their research motivation. The 10-item Linkert type instrument contains two sections: Section A comprises items relating to the supervisor's research attitude, and section B measures student's research motivation. The scale is scored in a 5-point Likert-type response format, with high scores indicating a correlation. The reliability of the scale was obtained following a pilot study. Observation of the Cronbach's alpha coefficients revealed acceptable levels of internal consistency reliabilities of the instrument, which exceeded the cutoff rules-of-the thumb of .86 as recommended for study purposes (Kaplan & Saccuzzo, 2013).

### **Result**

#### *Hypothesis testing*

To test the hypothesis that a lecturer's research attitude would significantly predict a student's research motivation. Linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the student's research motivation variation based on the lecturer's research attitudes. The investigation revealed that the lecturer's research attitudes statistically significantly predicted student's research motivation at  $F(1,94), 60.035, P < .000$ . Adjusted  $R^2$ , indicating that the predictor variable accounted for 27.2% of the observed variance in students' research motivation.

### **Table 1:**

**Table showing the linear regression results for attitude towards research activity**

	B	95% CI for B		SEB	$\beta R^2$	t	Sig
		LL	UL				
Model							
Constant .000	2.347	2.084	2.610	.133			17.588
LRA	-.476	-.596	-.396	.061	-.476	.272	-7.830 .000

Note. LRA= Lecturer's Research Attitude. B = Unstandardized regression coefficient; CI = Confident Interval; LL = Lower Limit; UL = Upper Limit; SEB = Standardized error of the coefficient;  $\beta$  = Standardized coefficient;  $R^2$  = Coefficient of determination. \*P<.000.

## Discussion

The present study aimed to assess the lecturer's research attitudes' predictive effect on students' research motivation. The study's findings showed that the lecturer's research attitudes statistically significantly predicted student's research motivation at F (1,94), 60.035, P<.000. With adjusted  $R^2$  indicating that the lecturer's research attitudes accounted for 27.2% of the observed variance in research motivation. The result suggests that students supervised by a lecturer who has the disposition for research are more likely to participate in research activities than their counterparts under negatively inclined supervisors. The probable explanation for the result could be attributed to the fact that lecturers with positive research attitudes are more committed to research procedures, methods, and positive output. Hence, they are more likely to scrutinize student's submissions, thereby imparting research knowledge to the learners. Conversely, lecturers with poor research attitudes are more likely to approve student's research submission with less inspection, thus, compromising research quality and learning motivation.

Consistent with previous research, Lindsay et al.(2002) reported that both undergraduates and postgraduates indicated consistency in recognizing the benefits of lecturer research credibility on motivation. More so, the result of the study corroborates similar findings(e.g., Cadez et al., 2017; Valle et al., 2016),who reported that research excellence is positively related to teaching quality. Perhaps, teaching quality correlates with student's motivation (Ruiz-Alfonso et al., 2021).

### **Conclusion**

The present study aimed to investigate the variation in student's research motivation based on the lecturer's research attitudes. We conclude that the lecturer's research attitude is a significant predictor of students' research motivation. Thus, the result confirmed our expectation that the lecturer's research attitude would significantly predict student's research motivation. This revelation is essential in academia because it provides insight into the role of departmental members in student's research activities. A better understanding of determinants of student's research motivation would be relevant in Nigeria's academia to push the academic system towards research-based and improve the culture of scientific inquiries. It is implied that student's research motivation would increase by assigning supervisory roles to research inclined lecturers. Thus, we recommend robust training of lecturers in research procedures and methodologies.

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