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PREDICTIVE VALUE OF ACCESS TO RESEARCH GRANTS ON ACADEMIC STAFF RESEARCH PRODUCTIVITY IN UNIVERSITIES IN ANAMBRA STATE.

By

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Abstract

This study examined the predictive value of access to research grants on academic staff research productivity in universities in Anambra State, Nigeria. A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 3,276 academic staff from two public universities, out of which a sample of 356 respondents was selected using a multi-stage sampling procedure. Data were collected using researcher-developed questionnaires that were validated and tested for reliability. The data were analysed using simple linear regression and regression t-test at a 0.05 level of significance.The findings revealed that access to research grants has a strong positive predictive value on academic staff research productivity, with a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.735 and an R^2 value of 0.540, indicating that 54% of the variation in research productivity is explained by access to research grants. The hypothesis test showed that the predictive value is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The study concluded that access to research grants significantly enhances research productivity among academic staff. It was recommended that government and relevant agencies should increase funding opportunities and create diverse funding sources to support research activities in universities.

Keyword: Research grant, academic staff, research productivity, university etc

Introduction

Research productivity is the extent to which researchers or academic institutions generate measurable and impactful research outputs over a given period. It involves both the quantity of

scholarly outputs, such as journal articles, conference papers, books and technical reports and their quality, as reflected in originality, relevance, rigor and contribution to knowledge advancement. According to the Association of Research Libraries, as cited in Olanisi, Madukoma, and Babalola (2023), research productivity is the process through which research and other academic outputs are created, assessed for quality, communicated to the scholarly community and archived for future use. In higher education research, research productivity is commonly used as an indicator of institutional research performance, scholarly effectiveness, and capacity for knowledge generation. Jaffe, TerHorst, Gunn, Zambrano, and Molina (2020) further noted that research productivity is closely associated with a country's intellectual and economic development. At the institutional level, the absence of robust professional development systems contributes to lower research productivity, reduced global visibility, and weaker university rankings, all of which can limit the attraction of high-quality faculty and funding opportunities. These challenges underscore the necessity of targeted interventions to enhance research capacity, with one of the most critical mechanisms being access to research grants, which provides both the resources and incentives needed to sustain high levels of academic research productivity.

Research grants are financial awards provided by institutions, governments, foundations, or international agencies to support specific research projects or scholarly activities undertaken by academic staff. Cech and Blair-Loy (2019) described research grants as funds that enable lecturers to carry out research projects that would otherwise be limited by personal or departmental resources. Otobong (2025) emphasized that government-supported funds such as the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and the National Research Fund (NRF) strengthen research capacity by providing lecturers with resources to conduct funded research and increase publication output. Operationally, access to research grants in this study is defined as the ability of academic staff to successfully obtain internal or external funding to conduct research, cover research-related expenses, disseminate findings, and participate in scholarly collaborations, thereby enhancing research productivity.

The benefits of access to research grants extend beyond financial support for individual projects. Grants foster research collaboration, scholarly visibility, and innovation, providing academic staff with resources such as research assistants, laboratory access, fieldwork support, and opportunities to present findings at conferences (Cech and Blair-Loy, 2019). Receiving competitive grants is also a marker of research excellence, attracting further collaborations and enhancing the reputation of both the researcher and their institution (Otobong, 2025). Additionally, access to research funding provides professional development opportunities, such as training in grant writing and

project management, which strengthen academic competence and career progression (Strekalova,, Kavak,, Rodriguez, Midence, Caplan, Thompson., Idris, Stiles, Pemu, Quarshie, Baez, Salazar Campo and Ofili, 2025). Consequently, access to research grants contributes to higher research output, capacity building, and global competitiveness.

Conversely, limited or no access to research grants can hinder research productivity and institutional development. Academic staff may be unable to cover essential costs such as laboratory materials, fieldwork, data acquisition, or publication fees, resulting in stalled or low-quality research (Baro, Bosah and Obi, 2017). This often leads to reduced publication output, weaker participation in international scholarly discourse, and diminished institutional reputation (Strekalova et al., 2025). Early-career researchers and those in under-resourced departments are disproportionately affected, widening disparities in research productivity across institutions (Bulus and Daniel, 2025). These and several other challenges underscore the importance of structured research funding.

Basically, funds are essential for the procurement of facilities, equipment, digital tools, laboratory materials and communication technologies required for effective research output in universities. Research grants are competitive financial awards provided to scholars or institutions to support systematic investigation and knowledge production. Asiyai (2019) explained that in the Nigerian university system, financial resources constitute a critical institutional input that sustains academic processes, research continuity and innovation. Ofoegbu and Nwadiani(2021) defined research grants as targeted financial support provided by government agencies, international organizations, private institutions or donor bodies to facilitate research activities aimed at solving societal, scientific or developmental problems.

In Nigerian universities, academic staff rely on research grants to access essential research inputs and to effectively implement research programmes that lead to quality scholarly outputs. Such grants enable academics to conduct empirical studies, attend conferences, publish in reputable journals and engage in collaborative research initiatives.Research funding is sourced from several channels, including the Federal Government through the **Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund),** international donor agencies, foreign research councils, non-governmental organizations, private sector partnerships and, in some cases, institutional research funds. Studies have consistently shown that TETFund interventions play a significant role in improving research capacity, infrastructure, and publication output in public universities (Saint, Hartnett and Strassner, 2020; Ogbodo, 2022).

Studies within the Nigerian context indicate that limited access to research grants remains a major constraint to university research productivity. Asiyai and Oghuvbu (2018) reported that inadequate funding significantly hampers lecturers' ability to undertake rigorous research, leading to low publication output and limited innovation. Similarly, Aina and Olorunsola (2020) noted that universities with better access to competitive research grants recorded higher levels of research engagement and interdisciplinary collaboration among academic staff. According to Ogbogu (2021), research funding promotes university industry linkages by facilitating knowledge transfer, applied research and problem-oriented studies that address national development needs. Sponsored research projects also expose academics to emerging research ideas, methodologies and practical challenges that shape future research agendas.

From the perspective of Nigerian academics, access to grants serves not only as a source of financial support but also as a motivation for research engagement and professional development. Ofoegbu, Onyekachi and Eze (2022) observed that academic staff who benefitted from research grants demonstrated higher levels of research commitment, collaborative publishing and innovation orientation compared to their counterparts without grant support. Funding relationships often involve sustained interaction between researchers and sponsoring bodies, which facilitates the exchange of ideas, mentoring and research capacity development. While public research grants in Nigeria, particularly those from TETFund, are primarily aimed at advancing public knowledge and institutional development, they may also indirectly influence research focus through thematic priorities and national development goals (Saint, Hartnett and Strassner, 2020). Access to research grants remains a crucial determinant of research productivity, innovation and knowledge dissemination in universities.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine professional development as a predictor of academic staff research productivity in universities in Anambra State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study determined the predictive value of access to research grants on academic staff research productivity in universities in Anambra State.

Scope of the Study

This study was delimited to professional development as a predictor of academic staff research productivity in universities in Anambra State, Nigeria. The content scope covered one independent variable, research grant and one dependent variable, which is academic staff research productivity.

The geographical coverage of this study was be delimited to two public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Research Question

The following research questions guided the study.

What is the predictive value of access to research grants on academic staff research productivity in universities in Anambra State?

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

There is no significant predictive value of access to research grants on academic staff research productivity in universities in Anambra State.

Methodology

This study adopted correlational research design. A correlational research design seeks to establish relationship between two or more variables as well as predict the relevance of a variable over the other. The design is considered appropriate for this study as the study seeks to predict the relationship between professional development and academic staff research productivity as it exists presently in universities in Anambra State, Nigeria.

The population of this study comprised 3,276 academic staff in the two public universities in Anambra State. The total population of lecturers in the two universities under study is 3,276. Nnamdi Azikiwe University has a total number of 2,609 academic staff while Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University has 667 academic staff. The data were obtained from the registry of the two Universities in October 2025.

In order to ensure adequate representation of respondents for the study, a multi-stage sampling procedure involving a combination of sampling techniques was adopted. At the first stage, the population of academic staff in the two public universities in Anambra State; Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU) and Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU), was considered in its entirety. At the second stage, Taro Yamane's formula was used to determine a manageable sample size of 356 academic staff from the total population, reducing the population to a size that could be effectively studied. The sample size was proportionally allocated to each university based

on their respective population sizes, resulting in 284 academic staff from NAU and 72 academic staff from COOU. **At the third stage, faculty-level stratification was employed within each university to ensure that the selected academic staff cut across all academic disciplines. Finally, simple random sampling was used within each faculty stratum to select the required number of respondents, thereby giving all lecturers within each faculty an equal opportunity of being selected for the study.** Two questionnaires structured by the researcher were used for data collection. The research instrument was subjected to face and content validity. It was administered after the reliability was tested and considered reliable.

Data collected were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences Version 26, (SPSS:26). The Simple Linear Regression were used to answer research question while regression T-test was used to test the hyppthesis. In answering the research questions, the interpretation of the regression coefficients was guided by the decision rule suggested by Stephen (2017). According to this rule, regression coefficient values ranging from 0.00 to 0.20 was regarded as negligible, values between 0.21 and 0.40 were considered low, those between 0.41 and 0.60 were interpreted as moderate, coefficients ranging from 0.61 to 0.80 were classified as high, while values between 0.81 and 1.00 were judged as very high. With respect to the testing of hypotheses, decisions were based on the probability (p-value) criterion. Where the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) were rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) were accepted. When the p-value was greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis were accepted and the alternative hypothesis were rejected.

Results

Research Question : What is the predictive value of access to research grants on academic staff research productivity in universities in Anambra State?

Table 1: Summary of the Regression Results of the Predictive Value of Access to Research Grants on Academic Staff Research Productivity in Universities in Anambra State

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta(*β*)	t	Decision

(Constant)	.078	.145		.538	Strong Positive Predictive Value
Access to Research Grants	.910	.046	.735	19.685	

R= 0.735, R Square = 0.540, Adjusted R^2= 0.539, F = 387.497.

Data in Table 1showed the summary of the regression results of the predictive value of access to research grants on academic staff research productivity in universities in Anambra State. The results revealed that the R= .735, R Square = .540, Adjusted R^2=.539, F = 387.497. Access to research grants has 54% predictive value for academic staff research productivity in universities in Anambra State. This implies that access to research grants has a strong positive predictive value on academic staff research productivity in universities in Anambra State.

Test of Hypothesis

There is no significant predictive value of access to research grants on academic staff research productivity in universities in Anambra State

Table 2 Summary of the Regression Results of the Significant Predictive Value of Access to Research Grants on Academic Staff Research Productivity in Universities in Anambra State

	Unstandardized Coefficients		**Standardized Coefficients**			
	B	**Std. Error**	**Beta(*β*)**	**t**	**P-Value**	**Decision**
(Constant)	.078	.145		.538	0.000	Significant
Access to Research Grants	.910	.046	.735	19.685		

R= 0.735, R Square = 0.540, Adjusted R^2= 0.539, F = 387.497.

Data in the Table 2 showed the summary of the regression results of the predictive value of access to research grants on academic staff research productivity in universities in Anambra State. The results revealed that the R= 0.735, R Square = 0.540, Adjusted R^2= 0.539, F = 387.497. Access to research grants has 54% predictive value for academic staff research productivity in universities in Anambra State. More so, the p-value (0.000) is below the 0.05 significance level. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was retained. Hence, access to research grants has significant predictive value on academic staff research productivity in universities in Anambra State. This implies that access to research grants has a significant and strong positive predictive value on academic staff research productivity in universities in Anambra State.

Discussion of Findings

Findings on the predictive value of access to research grants on academic staff research productivity in universities in Anambra State revealed that access to research grants has a strong positive predictive value on academic staff research productivity in universities in Anambra State. The result also showed that access to research grant significantly predict academic staff research productivity in universities in Anambra State. This suggests that adequate funding mechanisms serve as critical enablers for scholars to undertake rigorous empirical investigations, acquire necessary research materials, and disseminate their findings through reputable academic channels. The availability of research grants also reduces financial barriers that often constrain academic staff from pursuing innovative research projects, thereby enhancing both the quantity and quality of scholarly output in these institutions. The findings are in line with Ibe and Chukwu (2023) which revealed that university funding impacts improved research infrastructure and diversification of research areas. Lawal (2022) also corroborated this finding by revealing that academic staff who had access to grant funding sources demonstrated enhanced research capabilities in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Similarly, Idika, Gabriel, Ajah, Okeke, Anakwue and Ejoh (2023) emphasized that access to research grants significantly influences lecturers' capacity for knowledge production and sharing in Nigerian universities. Akomolafe and Aremu (2016) further supported this by demonstrating that research grant funding, particularly from foreign organizations, positively influenced research output among academic staff in Nigerian universities. The consistent findings across these studies underscore the critical role of research grant accessibility in determining academic staff research productivity, as it provides the necessary financial resources for conducting comprehensive investigations, acquiring modern research equipment and publishing in high-impact journals. When academic staff have guaranteed access to research grants, they are more likely to engage in sustained research activities, collaborate with

other scholars and contribute meaningfully to knowledge advancement in their respective fields. In summary, access to research grants has a significant and strong positive predictive value on academic staff research productivity in universities in Anambra State.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The government, through relevant agencies such as TETFund and the National Universities Commission (NUC), should increase budgetary allocations for research grants to universities for research productivity.

2. The government should create diversified funding sources, including partnerships with private organizations, international donor agencies and industry stakeholders, to ensure sustainable an adequate research funding that supports academic staff research productivity in universities.

Conclusion

This study has shown that access to research grants plays a very important role in improving academic staff research productivity in universities in Anambra State. The findings clearly indicate that when lecturers have access to adequate research funding, they are more likely to carry out quality research, publish their work, and contribute to knowledge development. Research grants not only provide financial support but also encourage collaboration, innovation, and professional growth among academic staff. The significant relationship found in this study confirms that research funding is a key factor in determining the level of research output in universities. Therefore, improving access to research grants will help strengthen research capacity, increase institutional visibility, and enhance the overall performance of universities. In sum, for universities in Anambra State to improve their research productivity and global competitiveness, there must be sustained investment in research funding and deliberate efforts to make grant opportunities more accessible to academic staff.

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