

TRANSFORMATION OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH CULTURE IN NIGERIA: A PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the transformations in Nigerian academic research culture from a psychological perspective. A historical overview highlighted the evolution of research practices in Nigerian higher education, emphasizing colonial influences and post-independence developments. Three research questions guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study was conducted in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of 389 academic lecturers from the Faculty of Education at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Given the manageable size of the population, sampling techniques were not deemed necessary. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: Transformations in Nigerian Academic Research Culture Questionnaire (TNARCQ). The instrument was face validated by three experts, one from Educational Psychology Unit, and one from Sociology of Education Unit both in the Department of Educational Foundations, and one from Research Measurement and Evaluations Unit, Department of Science Education, all in the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The overall reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.84, as determined using the Cronbach Alpha method. The results were analyzed using mean scores and standard deviation. The findings of the study revealed that psychological factors significantly hindered researchers' behaviours and practices. The findings of the study also identified strategies to enhance academic research culture in Nigerian higher education as multifaceted and interconnected. The study also contributed by bridging gaps in understanding and recommending strategies to enhance research culture, emphasizing the importance of intrinsic motivation and supportive institutional frameworks.

Keywords: Academic research culture, psychological factors, Nigerian higher education, research productivity, institutional support

Introduction

The transformation of academic research culture in Nigeria has become a major concern scholars and educational stakeholders, particularly in relation to how it influences the psychological readiness, attitudes, and engagement of academics in research activities. Despite various reforms in higher education, technological advancement, and increasing global academic interaction, there is still a perceived inconsistency in the extent to which Nigerian academics fully embrace and sustain a productive research culture that reflects innovation, creativity, and continuous scholarly output. Academic research in Nigeria has undergone significant transformation, reflecting broader socio-political, economic, and technological changes. Historically, Nigerian academic research has its roots in colonial-era universities, such as the University of Ibadan, established in 1948, which initially focused on disciplines aligned with colonial interests (Fafunwa, 1974). Over time, research focus expanded to address local needs and contribute to national development (Adesina, 2010). In the post-independence era, Nigeria experienced a rapid expansion in higher education institutions aimed at promoting indigenous research (Ajayi, Goma, & Johnson, 1996). However, despite this expansion, several challenges such as political

instability, inadequate funding, and migration of skilled academics negatively affected the consolidation of a strong and stable research culture (Oni, 2000). These challenges contributed to a fragmented research environment in which research productivity often depended more on individual effort than on a structured institutional research system (Salmi & Hauptman, 2006).

In recent years, globalization, technological advancement, and increased international collaboration have further influenced the transformation of academic research culture in Nigeria (Obasi, 2020). The introduction of digital technologies has significantly changed research methodologies, data collection processes, and dissemination of scholarly work, thereby improving access to information and encouraging collaboration among researchers (Aina, 2010). Furthermore, there is increasing awareness of the role of research culture in promoting innovation, socio-economic development, and global competitiveness (Ekong, 2021). These changes suggest that academic research in Nigeria is undergoing continuous transformation, although the level of effectiveness of this transformation remains uneven across institutions. From a psychological perspective, the transformation of academic research culture is deeply connected to the cognitive and behavioral dispositions of researchers within the academic environment. It reflects how academics perceive research, respond to institutional expectations, and sustain motivation in the face of challenges. Psychological factors such as self-confidence in research ability, intrinsic motivation, resilience, and perception of institutional support play a significant role in determining the level of engagement in research activities (Bandura, 2001). Therefore, understanding these psychological dimensions is essential for explaining variations in research productivity and innovation among academics in Nigerian higher education institutions.

The importance of research culture in Nigerian higher education cannot be overstated. A strong research culture enhances academic quality by promoting critical thinking, intellectual rigor, and innovation among lecturers and students (Oni, 2000). It also contributes to socio-economic development by generating evidence-based solutions to national problems in areas such as agriculture, health, and engineering (Salmi & Hauptman, 2006). In addition, it fosters creativity and innovation within academic institutions, which are essential for addressing contemporary societal challenges (Amabile, 1996). A well-developed research culture also improves institutional reputation and global competitiveness through increased scholarly output and publications (Ajayi, Goma & Johnson, 1996). Furthermore, it supports continuous professional development and lifelong learning among academics by encouraging constant engagement with new knowledge and research practices (Bandura, 2001). Finally, the psychological perspective in academic research provides deeper insight into the cognitive, motivational, interpersonal, and emotional processes that influence scholarly activities. It explains how perception, reasoning, motivation, collaboration, leadership, and emotional regulation shape research engagement and productivity (Smith, 2015; Dweck, 2006). Interpersonal relationships within research teams and academic departments also influence research effectiveness, particularly in terms of communication and collaboration patterns (Katzenbach & Smith, 2003). Emotional factors such as curiosity, satisfaction, frustration, and persistence further determine how researchers navigate challenges in the research process (Isen, 2000). Consequently, integrating psychological understanding into the transformation of academic research culture is essential for strengthening research performance and enhancing academic excellence in Nigerian higher education institutions.

Transformation is increasingly recognized as a fundamental process through which systems, institutions, and individuals undergo significant and sustained change in response to evolving societal demands. In contemporary educational discourse, transformation goes beyond incremental improvement to involve deep structural and cultural shifts that redefine practices, values, and outcomes. Recent studies describe transformation as a process that fosters innovation, adaptability, and systemic change within institutions. Wong (2024) viewed transformation as a continuous process of innovation that enhances educational practices and institutional effectiveness. Sugito (2024) emphasized transformation as a learning-driven change process that enables individuals and systems to respond to complex societal challenges. Arif, Sinaga and Miswar (2025) described transformation as an educational process that nurtures problem-solving abilities and creativity for societal development. Nair, Bleasel, Mwangi, and Malau-Aduli (2025) defined transformation as a reflective and process-oriented change that leads to improved practices and sustained outcomes. Alzoraiki, Ahmad and Ateeq (2024) associated transformation with leadership-driven change that improves institutional performance and culture. Similarly, recent educational research has conceptualized transformation as the development of adaptive competencies required to meet the demands of rapidly changing global systems. Operationally, transformation in this study refers to a deliberate and systemic restructuring of academic research practices, values, and institutional frameworks in Nigeria to enhance relevance, innovation, and global competitiveness. As transformation focuses on restructuring knowledge systems, it directly leads to the consideration of academic research as the core mechanism through which such change is achieved.

Academic research constitutes the central mechanism for knowledge creation, validation, and dissemination within higher education institutions. It is widely regarded as a systematic and methodical process aimed at generating new insights and solving societal problems. Contemporary scholars define academic research as a structured inquiry process that contributes to evidence-based knowledge and innovation. Creswell and Creswell (2021) described academic research as a systematic process of inquiry involving data collection, analysis, and interpretation to answer research questions. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2020) defined it as a rigorous process of investigation designed to produce reliable and valid knowledge. Babbie (2021) viewed academic research as an empirical process that seeks to explain social phenomena through systematic observation and analysis. Bryman (2021) conceptualized it as an organized and critical investigation using scientific methods. Neuman (2020) described academic research as a structured process aimed at theory development and empirical validation. The World Bank (2020) also emphasized academic research as a key driver of innovation, productivity, and economic development in modern economies. Operationally, academic research in this study refers to structured scholarly activities conducted within Nigerian higher institutions to generate knowledge, address societal challenges, and contribute to national development. As academic research becomes institutionalized, it shapes shared norms and practices, thereby giving rise to academic research culture.

Academic research culture refers to the collective values, beliefs, norms, and practices that shape how research is conducted, supported, and valued within academic institutions. It reflects the intellectual climate and institutional environment that either promotes or constrains research productivity and innovation. Recent literature highlights the importance of research culture in determining the quality and impact of academic output. OECD (2021) defined research culture as the framework of institutional norms,

policies, and incentives that drive knowledge production. UNESCO (2023) described it as the enabling environment that supports research collaboration, innovation, and knowledge dissemination. Wang and Degol (2020) emphasized that institutional climate significantly influences academic engagement and productivity. Bloom, Lemos, Sadun and Van Reenen (2019) linked organizational culture with improved performance and productivity in educational systems. Grissom, Egalite and Lindsay (2021) highlighted that leadership practices significantly shape school and research culture. Iyiola and Adebayo (2021) described academic culture as the institutional environment that determines research effectiveness in developing economies. Operationally, academic research culture in this study refers to the shared institutional practices, norms, and attitudes within Nigerian universities that influence research productivity, innovation, and scholarly engagement. Since culture is shaped by human behavior, motivation, and cognition, understanding academic research culture requires examining it from a psychological perspective.

Psychological perspective provides a framework for understanding the behavioral, cognitive, and motivational factors that influence individuals within a system. It explains how attitudes, perceptions, and mental processes shape human actions and institutional outcomes. In contemporary research, psychological perspective is increasingly used to analyze behavior within educational and organizational settings. Myers and DeWall (2020) defined psychological perspective as the scientific study of behavior and mental processes. Feldman (2021) described it as an approach to understanding how individuals think, feel, and act in different contexts. Santrock (2021) viewed it as a framework for analyzing cognitive, emotional, and social influences on behavior. Orji, Imbur, and Sunday (2024) emphasized that psychological perspectives are essential for understanding human behavior in educational systems, particularly in Nigeria. Singaram, Mayer, and Oosthuizen (2023) highlighted that psychological factors such as motivation and cognition are critical in shaping educational transformation and leadership outcomes. Currie and Widmer (2021) further linked psychological factors to decision-making and behavioral outcomes in education and health contexts. Operationally, psychological perspective in this study refers to the examination of attitudes, motivations, perceptions, and behavioral patterns of academics that influence research engagement and productivity in Nigerian institutions. This perspective ultimately explains how individual and collective behaviors drive the transformation of academic research culture in Nigeria.

Discovering the historical context of Nigerian academic research culture through a psychological lens reveals significant transformations influenced by both pre-colonial and colonial eras. Before the advent of colonial rule, Nigeria's indigenous societies had well-established systems of knowledge dissemination and education, deeply embedded in the fabric of their cultures. These traditional education systems were holistic, encompassing oral traditions, practical skills, and spiritual education, which were essential for community development and survival (Ajayi & Crowder, 1976). This indigenous knowledge system was not merely an accumulation of facts but a dynamic and interactive process involving community participation, oral histories, and practical demonstrations, fostering a strong sense of identity and continuity (Nwoye, 2013). The colonial era brought profound changes, as the British colonial administration introduced Western education, which fundamentally altered the educational landscape of Nigeria. The establishment of missionary schools and the introduction of formal education aimed at producing a workforce capable of administering colonial policies (Okunrotifa, 2003). This Western education model was characterized by a rigid curriculum, standardized testing, and an emphasis on literacy and numeracy, often at the expense of indigenous knowledge

systems. The psychological impact of this shift was significant, as it undermined the value of indigenous knowledge and positioned Western epistemologies as superior (Salami, 2007). This period saw the creation of a dichotomy between traditional knowledge and Western science, which continues to influence Nigerian academia today.

Post-independence Nigeria faced the challenge of reconciling these two educational paradigms. The country's leaders and scholars recognized the need to integrate indigenous knowledge with Western scientific methods to address local challenges effectively (Nwagwu, 2012). The establishment of universities and research institutions in the 1960s and 70s was a step towards building a robust research culture. These institutions aimed to produce knowledge that was relevant to Nigeria's socio-economic development. However, the process was fraught with difficulties, including limited funding, inadequate infrastructure, and a shortage of skilled researchers (Adebayo, 2010). These challenges hampered the development of a research culture that could fully harness the potential of Nigeria's rich indigenous knowledge base. In the contemporary context, there has been a resurgence of interest in indigenous knowledge systems within Nigerian academia. Scholars argue for the inclusion of traditional methodologies and epistemologies in research to address local issues more effectively (Ogunleye, 2015). This shift is part of a broader movement to decolonize education and research, promoting the recognition of diverse knowledge systems and methodologies. This approach aims to bridge the gap between traditional knowledge and modern science, fostering a more inclusive and holistic research culture (Onuoha & Okoro, 2019). Efforts to improve research quality and relevance in Nigerian universities are also gaining momentum, with increased focus on international collaborations, capacity building, and technological integration. These initiatives are crucial for enhancing the research landscape and ensuring that Nigerian academia contributes meaningfully to global knowledge production.

The transformation of academic research culture in Nigerian universities has attracted considerable scholarly attention due to its implications for national development and global competitiveness. Scholars such as Ogunleye (2015) and Adebayo (2010) have extensively explored these transformations, highlighting the influence of historical, social, and institutional factors on research practices within Nigerian academia. Adebayo (2010) emphasizes the challenges faced by Nigerian universities in fostering a conducive environment for research, including inadequate funding and infrastructural deficits. Nwagwu (2012) discusses post-independence efforts to establish universities and research institutions aimed at producing knowledge relevant to Nigeria's developmental needs. Salami (2007) explores the psychological impacts of colonial education on Nigerian academia, highlighting how Western epistemologies were privileged over indigenous knowledge systems. Ogunleye (2015) advocates for the inclusion of traditional methodologies and indigenous knowledge in research practices, arguing that integrating diverse epistemologies can enrich research outcomes and promote a more inclusive research culture. Similarly, Onuoha and Okoro (2019) posited efforts to decolonize Nigerian academia through initiatives aimed at revitalizing indigenous knowledge systems and bridging the gap between traditional knowledge and modern scientific methodologies. Hence, these studies collectively underscore the dynamic nature of research culture transformations in Nigeria, reflecting ongoing efforts to reconcile indigenous knowledge with global scientific standards and enhance research quality within Nigerian universities.

Exploratory academic research culture through a psychological lens provides insights into the cognitive, behavioral, and socio-emotional dimensions that shape research practices within Nigerian universities. According to Agu (2015), cognitive factors

encompass how researchers perceive and interpret knowledge, often influenced by historical and cultural contexts. These factors affect research design and data interpretation, revealing the tension between traditional knowledge systems and modern scientific methodologies. Behavioral aspects, as highlighted by Mansaray (2020), focus on observable actions such as research methodologies, publication practices, and ethical considerations. Nigerian academia faces challenges such as publication pressure and institutional barriers that impact research behaviors. Socio-emotional factors, as discussed by Ubahakwe (2017), explore the emotional dimensions of academic life, including motivation, stress management, and professional identity formation. Researchers in Nigeria navigate a complex socio-emotional landscape characterized by funding uncertainties and career aspirations. Understanding these psychological dimensions, as articulated by Chin and Benne (2022), offers a comprehensive view of academic research culture, highlighting opportunities to enhance research quality, foster innovation, and promote scholarly excellence within Nigerian higher education institutions.

Transformations in Nigerian Academic Research Culture reflect a dynamic evolution influenced by historical, psychological, and contemporary factors. Historically, Nigerian academic research has evolved from pre-colonial knowledge systems to colonial-era educational policies imposing Western paradigms (Ogunleye, 2018). Post-independence, there was a move towards indigenizing research practices to align with national aspirations (Adeyemi, 2016). Contemporary shifts include the integration of global research standards, technological advancements, and interdisciplinary collaboration (Oyewumi & Oluwatobi, 2020). Psychologically, these transformations are evident in shifts in research methodologies, academic motivations, and institutional frameworks (Afolayan, 2019). Nigerian researchers increasingly adopt evidence-based approaches emphasizing innovation, ethical standards, and societal impact (Oladimeji & Amao, 2017). These perspectives underscore cognitive and behavioral dimensions, necessitating adaptive strategies amidst changing global dynamics (Adeleke & Amusan, 2021). Contemporary Nigerian academic research culture blends traditional values, modern methodologies, and global connectivity, aiming to address local challenges while contributing to global knowledge systems (Okorie & Nwagwu, 2019). Understanding these transformations is critical for enhancing research quality, promoting academic excellence, and fostering sustainable development in Nigeria's higher education landscape.

Currently, research on academic research culture in Nigeria often focuses on institutional challenges, funding issues, and educational policies. There is significant literature exploring historical influences, such as colonial legacies and post-independence developments, on academic research practices in Nigeria. Psychological perspectives in this context are increasingly recognized, with studies delving into motivation theories, cognitive development theories, and social cognitive theories as they relate to academic research. However, there remains a notable gap in understanding the comprehensive role of psychological factors in shaping academic research culture in Nigerian higher education. While existing research provides insights into the challenges and historical contexts, there is limited integration of psychological theories to explain the behavioral aspects of researchers and the dynamic shifts in research priorities and methodologies over time. Additionally, there is a need for empirical studies that systematically explore how psychological factors influence research culture transformation in Nigeria, particularly focusing on effective strategies to enhance motivation, reduce stress, and foster a supportive academic environment. For this reason, this identified gap highlights the opportunity for further research to contribute nuanced insights into the intersection of

psychological factors and academic research culture, thereby enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of research practices in Nigerian higher education.

Statement of the Problem:

The transformation of academic research culture in Nigeria has become a central concern in higher education, particularly in relation to how it shapes the productivity, creativity, and psychological engagement of academics in research activities. Ideally, a transformed research culture in Nigerian universities and other higher institutions should reflect a highly supportive academic environment where researchers are motivated, mentally prepared, and institutionally encouraged to engage in continuous knowledge production, innovation, and scholarly collaboration. In such an ideal situation, academics are expected to demonstrate strong research commitment, high levels of intrinsic motivation, positive attitudes toward inquiry, and resilience in overcoming research-related challenges, thereby contributing meaningfully to national development and global academic competitiveness. However, the reality within many Nigerian higher education institutions suggests a significant gap between ideal and actual practice. Despite ongoing reforms, technological improvements, and increased awareness of the importance of research, many academics still experience low research motivation, limited psychological readiness, inadequate institutional support, and resistance to changing research expectations. These challenges are further reflected in inconsistent research output, limited innovation, and weak collaboration among researchers in several institutions. In many cases, the transformation of academic research culture appears to be more structural than psychological, as changes in policies and systems have not fully translated into corresponding changes in individual attitudes, beliefs, and research behaviors. This gap between the expected ideal research culture and the prevailing reality indicates a deeper underlying problem related to the psychological dimensions of research engagement among academics. It suggests that while structural and technological transformations are ongoing, the extent to which these changes are internalized and reflected in researchers' motivation, self-efficacy, and commitment remains uncertain. Therefore, the problem of this study is to investigate the transformation of academic research culture in Nigeria from a psychological perspective, with particular attention to how psychological factors influence the effectiveness of this transformation in enhancing research engagement, productivity, and innovation in higher education institutions.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate how psychological factors influence the transformation of academic research culture in Nigerian higher education institutions. Specifically, the study sought:

1. To investigate the factors that hinder academic research culture in Nigerian higher education.
2. To examine the role of psychological factors in shaping research culture in Nigerian higher education.
3. To determine strategies to enhance academic research culture in Nigerian higher education.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the factors that hinder academic research culture in Nigerian higher education?

2. What role do psychological factors play in shaping research culture in Nigerian higher education?
3. What are the strategies to enhance academic research culture in Nigerian higher education?

Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study was conducted in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria. The study was conducted at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, a leading institution in Nigerian higher education. This university's rich history of academic excellence makes it an ideal setting to examine transformations in academic research culture. Through focusing on this institution, the study uncovered factors affecting research culture and proposed strategies to enhance academic research productivity and sustainability, addressing broader educational challenges in Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of 389 academic lecturers from the Faculty of Education at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Given the manageable size of the population, sampling techniques were not deemed necessary. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: Transformations in Nigerian Academic Research Culture Questionnaire (TNARCQ). The instrument was face validated by three experts, one from Educational Psychology Unit, and one from Sociology of Education Unit both in the Department of Educational Foundations, and one from Research Measurement and Evaluations Unit, Department of Science Education, all in the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The overall reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.84, as determined using the Cronbach Alpha method. The results were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The questionnaire employed a Likert scale with the following options: Strongly Agree (SA) assigned a value of 4, Agree (A) assigned a value of 3, Disagree (D) assigned a value of 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) assigned a value of 1. Positively worded items were coded using these values directly, while negatively worded items were coded in reverse. The mean score from the coded responses was calculated as 2.50. The findings of the study revealed that psychological factors significantly hindered researchers' behaviours and practices. The findings of the study also identified strategies to enhance academic research culture in Nigerian higher education as multifaceted and interconnected. The study also contributed by bridging gaps in understanding and recommending strategies to enhance research culture, emphasizing the importance of intrinsic motivation and supportive institutional frameworks.

RESULTS

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on factors that hinder academic research culture in Nigerian higher education

S/N	Item Statement	Mean			Rank	Decision
		M	SD	Set		
1	Limited funding opportunities and financial constraints.	2.66	0.09	2.66	6	A
2	Inadequate research infrastructure and facilities.	2.56	0.09	2.56	7	A
3	Insufficient government support and policies.	2.77	0.08	2.77	3	A
4	Ethical challenges related to research conduct.	2.76	0.08	2.76	4	A
5	Lack of collaboration among researchers	2.53	0.10	2.53	8	A

	and institutions.					
6	Leadership issues and challenges in management.	2.50	0.10	2.50	9	A
7	Cultural and societal attitudes towards research.	2.87	0.07	2.87	2	A
8	Publishing challenges and issues with academic recognition.	2.70	0.08	2.70	5	A
9	Institutional bureaucracy and administrative barriers.	2.97	0.06	2.97	1	A
Aggregate score		2.70	0.08	2.70		A

Table 1 revealed the mean ratings and standard deviation of responses on factors that hinder academic research culture in Nigerian higher education. Items listed above met the criterion mean score of 2.50 and beyond which indicate acceptance by respondents. The result was finalized with the overall mean score of 2.70 and standard deviation of 0.08 correspondingly. The accepted factors include: Limited funding opportunities and financial constraints; inadequate research infrastructure and facilities; insufficient government support and policies; ethical challenges related to research conduct; lack of collaboration among researchers and institutions, among others.

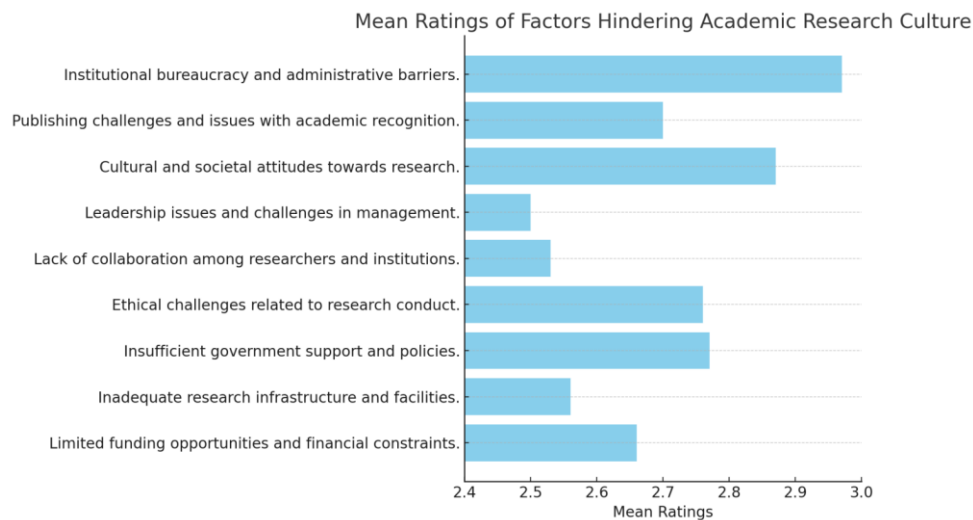


Figure 1: The bar chart displays the mean ratings of factors hindering academic research culture in Nigerian higher education. Each bar represents the average score given to specific challenges, with a higher mean indicating a greater perceived impact on research culture. From the chart, it is evident that "Institutional bureaucracy and administrative barriers" received the highest mean rating of 2.97, indicating it is viewed as the most significant obstacle. Following this, "Cultural and societal attitudes towards research" and "Insufficient government support and policies" also emerged as critical factors with mean ratings of 2.87 and 2.77, respectively. Conversely, "Leadership issues and challenges in management" had the lowest mean rating of 2.50, suggesting it is perceived as a less significant challenge compared to others listed. Overall, the data highlights the multifaceted nature of challenges faced in enhancing the academic research culture, emphasizing the need for targeted strategies to address these barriers.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on the roles psychological factors play in shaping research culture in Nigerian higher education

S/N	Item Statement	M	SD	Mean Set	Rank	Decision
1	Shapes organizational culture and research direction	2.60	0.09	2.60	8	A
2	Guides researchers' conduct and decision-making	2.75	0.08	2.75	5	A
3	Affects researchers' interpersonal relationships	2.88	0.07	2.88	3	A
4	Influences researchers' response to challenges and changes	2.67	0.09	2.67	7	A
5	Facilitates teamwork and knowledge sharing	2.91	0.06	2.91	2	A
6	Determines researchers' resilience and persistence	2.76	0.08	2.76	4	A
7	Shapes researchers' focus and direction	2.66	0.09	2.66	9	A
8	Drives personal engagement and curiosity	2.99	0.05	2.99	1	A
9	Affects researchers' belief in their ability to succeed	2.74	0.08	2.74	6	A
10	Influences researchers' persistence and dedication	3.01	0.05	3.01	1	A
Aggregate score		2.80	0.07	2.80		A

Table 2 presents the mean ratings and standard deviations of responses regarding the roles that psychological factors play in shaping the research culture within Nigerian higher education. All items listed achieved a mean score of 2.50 or higher, indicating acceptance among respondents. The overall mean score was calculated at $\bar{x}=2.80$ with a standard deviation of $SD=0.07$. Among the accepted roles, drives personal engagement and curiosity ranked the highest with a mean of $\bar{x}=2.99$, followed closely by facilitates teamwork and knowledge sharing ($\bar{x}=2.91$) and affects researchers' interpersonal relationships ($\bar{x}=2.88$). Other notable factors include guides researchers' conduct and decision-making ($\bar{x}=2.75$) and determines researchers' resilience and persistence ($\bar{x}=2.76$). Lower-ranked roles, though still accepted, include shapes organizational culture and research direction ($\bar{x}=2.60$) and shapes researchers' focus and direction ($\bar{x}=2.66$). These findings highlight the significant impact of psychological factors on various aspects of researchers' experiences and behaviors, underscoring the importance of fostering a supportive research culture in higher education institutions.



Figure 2: The chart reveals that "Influences researchers' persistence and dedication" received the highest mean score of 3.01, indicating it plays a crucial role in shaping research culture. This is closely followed by "Drives personal engagement and curiosity" with a mean of 2.99 and "Facilitates teamwork and knowledge sharing" at 2.91. These results suggest that fostering personal engagement and collaboration among researchers is vital for enhancing research productivity and innovation. On the contrary, the lowest-ranked factors, such as "Shapes organizational culture and research direction" (mean of 2.60) and "Shapes researchers' focus and direction" (mean of 2.66), indicate that while they are accepted as influential, their impact is perceived to be less significant than others. In general, with a collective mean score of 2.80 and a low standard deviation of 0.07, it is evident that psychological factors are widely recognized as essential in shaping the research culture in higher education institutions. These findings underscore the importance of addressing these factors to cultivate a more supportive and effective research environment.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on the strategies to enhance academic research culture in Nigerian higher education

S/N	Item Statement	M	SD	Mean		
				Set	Rank	Decision
1	Foster interdisciplinary and international partnerships.	2.99	0.05	2.99	4	A
2	Reward research excellence and innovation.	3.00	0.05	3.00	3	A
3	Develop policies that promote a conducive research environment.	2.87	0.07	2.87	6	A
4	Increase funding opportunities and grants for researchers.	2.66	0.09	2.66	7	A
5	Establish mentoring schemes for junior researchers.	3.03	0.05	3.03	2	A
6	Provide support for publishing in reputable journals.	3.11	0.03	3.11	1	A
7	Utilize digital tools and platforms for research.	2.92	0.06	2.92	5	A
8	Involve local communities in research initiatives.	2.55	0.09	2.55	8	A
Aggregate score		2.89	0.06	2.89		A

The results presented in Table 2 illustrate the mean ratings and standard deviations of responses regarding strategies to enhance the academic research culture in Nigerian higher education. All items listed achieved a mean score of 2.50 or higher, indicating acceptance among respondents. The overall mean score was calculated at 2.89, with a standard deviation of 0.06. Accepted strategies identified include fostering interdisciplinary and international partnerships, rewarding research excellence and innovation, developing policies that promote a conducive research environment, increasing funding opportunities and grants for researchers, establishing mentoring schemes for junior researchers, and providing support for publishing in reputable journals, among others. This indicates a consensus on the importance of these strategies in fostering a robust research culture within higher education institutions.

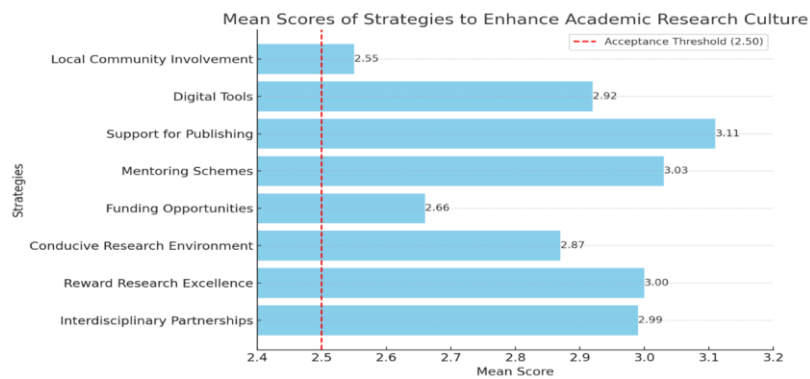


Figure 3: The bar chart illustrates the mean scores of strategies aimed at enhancing the academic research culture in Nigerian higher education. Key findings include that Support for Publishing (Mean = 3.11) and Mentoring Schemes (Mean = 3.03) are the most favored strategies, highlighting their significance for fostering research excellence. Additionally, Reward Research Excellence received a mean score of 3.00, indicating the importance of incentivizing researchers. Conversely, Involve Local Communities in Research Initiatives (Mean = 2.55) scored the lowest, suggesting that while community involvement is valued, it is not prioritized. Increase Funding Opportunities also ranked low (Mean = 2.66), indicating concerns about research resource availability. Overall, all strategies scored above the acceptance threshold of 2.50, with an overall mean score of 2.89 reflecting a positive attitude toward these proposed strategies.

Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that factors hindering academic research culture in Nigerian higher education are multifaceted. Such factors include institutional support, with participants emphasizing the importance of adequate funding, infrastructure, and administrative policies conducive to research. This finding resonates with previous research by Salmi and Hauptman (2006), which highlighted the pivotal role of institutional resources in fostering a vibrant research environment. Additionally, the study underscored the significance of academic leadership and mentorship in nurturing a research-oriented culture, aligning with the insights of Grissom, Egalite and Lindsay (2021) on the impact of visionary leadership in Nigerian universities.

The findings of the study revealed that psychological factors such as motivation, self-efficacy, and intrinsic interest significantly influence research culture in Nigerian higher education. Participants in this study expressed that intrinsic motivation, driven by personal interest in research topics and career advancement, plays a pivotal role in sustaining research productivity. This corroborates Myers and DeWalla (2020) findings on the motivational dynamics among Nigerian researchers, highlighting the importance of fostering intrinsic motivation through targeted interventions and supportive institutional frameworks.

The findings of the study also identified strategies to enhance academic research culture in Nigerian higher education as multifaceted and interconnected. Participants emphasized the need for comprehensive training programmes on research methodologies and grant writing, echoing the counsels of (Aina, 2010). Collaborative research initiatives and international partnerships were also identified as effective strategies to broaden research horizons and enhance the quality of scholarly outputs. These strategies align with

global best practices and underscore the importance of proactive institutional policies aimed at fostering a collaborative and innovative research environment.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes significantly to understanding Nigerian academic research culture from a psychological perspective. It synthesizes historical influences and psychological theories to explain how these shape researchers' behaviors and productivity in Nigerian higher education. By identifying key factors and presenting case studies of successful transformations, the study offers actionable insights for fostering a conducive research environment. Overall, it provides a comprehensive framework for enhancing research culture and innovation within Nigerian universities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights the diverse influences shaping Nigerian academic research culture, emphasizing psychological factors. The findings underscore the significance of intrinsic motivation, stress management, and collaborative environments in fostering a positive research climate. Moving forward, addressing these factors through supportive policies and targeted interventions is crucial for enhancing research excellence in Nigerian higher education. By leveraging psychological insights, institutions can promote an environment conducive to innovation and interdisciplinary collaboration. Further research is needed to explore specific interventions and their long-term impacts, guiding efforts to strengthen Nigerian academic research culture and its contribution to global scholarship.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were preferred:

1. Nigerian higher institutions should implement mentorship programs to support early-career researchers and provide guidance.
2. Nigerian higher institutions support should be enhanced through dedicated funding opportunities and research grants.
3. Collaboration should be encouraged through joint research initiatives both within Nigerian universities and with international partners.
4. Clear and transparent research policies and guidelines should be developed to streamline processes.
5. Investments should be made in advanced research infrastructure and technology to facilitate innovative research practices.

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