



Research Attitude, Achievement Motivation, and Self-Efficacy Among Post-Graduate Students Specializing in Primary Education

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Abstract : This study investigates the research attitude, achievement motivation, and self-efficacy concepts among post-graduate students specializing in primary education. The research aims to understand the interplay between these constructs and their implications for academic success and research engagement. A quantitative research design was employed, and data were collected using structured questionnaires from a sample of 62 post-graduate students. Descriptive statistics, and correlation analyses were conducted to examine the relationships between research attitude, achievement motivation, and self-efficacy. Statistical analyses showed non-significant correlations: between research attitude and achievement motivation (Kendall's tau_b = -.048, p = .881; Spearman's rho = -.036, p = .939), achievement motivation and self-efficacy (Kendall's tau_b = -.109, p = .708; Spearman's rho = -.204, p = .629), and research attitude and self-efficacy (Kendall's tau_b = .293, p = .362; Spearman's rho = .360, p = .427) among post-graduate students. The findings contribute to a better understanding of the factors influencing post-graduate students' research experiences and offer insights for academic institutions to enhance support mechanisms for student researchers. The implications of the study underscore the importance of fostering positive research attitudes, strengthening achievement motivation, and enhancing self-efficacy among post-graduate students specializing in primary education. Targeted interventions can optimize academic support and promote professional development in research-intensive environments.

Keyword : research attitude, achievement motivation, self-efficacy concept, post-graduate students

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How to Cite :

Introduction

Post-graduate students are individuals who have completed their undergraduate studies and pursue advanced education at the graduate level. They typically engage in specialized academic or professional programs, such as master's or doctoral degrees, to deepen their knowledge and expertise in specific fields. Post-graduate students are characterized by their commitment to scholarly inquiry, research endeavors, and professional development (Kadoke & Otieno, 2022). They often contribute to academic discourse through research publications, presentations, and collaborations with faculty and peers. Post-graduate education equips students with advanced skills,

critical thinking abilities, and specialized knowledge, preparing them for leadership roles in academia, industry, and various professional sectors (Igbozuruike & Ile, 2022).

Research attitude, achievement motivation, and self-efficacy are essential concepts that significantly impact the academic success and research productivity of post-graduate students. Understanding these constructs provides insights into the factors influencing their engagement in research activities and their ability to overcome challenges in the research process (Ncheke et al., 2024; Ani et al., 2015). Research attitude refers to the disposition or mindset that individuals hold towards research activities. Post-graduate students with positive research attitudes demonstrate enthusiasm, curiosity, and a passion for discovery, driving them to engage actively in research endeavors (Nwanneka & Nwobi, 2023). A study by Oladele (2023) found that post-graduate students who exhibit positive research attitudes are more likely to approach research tasks with diligence, perseverance, and a willingness to explore new ideas and methodologies.

Achievement motivation is the drive or desire to accomplish challenging goals and excel in academic or professional pursuits. Post-graduate students with high levels of achievement motivation set ambitious research goals and strive for excellence in their research endeavors (Gertrude & Anyanwu, 2022). Research by Ogunjimi et al., (2023) demonstrated that post-graduate students with strong achievement motivation are more likely to persist in the face of setbacks, maintain focus on their research objectives, and produce high-quality research outputs.

Self-efficacy refers to individuals' beliefs in their ability to successfully perform specific tasks or accomplish goals. In the context of research, self-efficacious post-graduate students possess confidence in their research skills, problem-solving abilities, and capacity to overcome research challenges (Qomariyah et al., 2023). Studies have shown that post-graduate students with high self-efficacy are more likely to engage in research activities, persist in the face of obstacles, and demonstrate greater research productivity (Mahanal et al., 2022).

These three constructs—research attitude, achievement motivation, and self-efficacy—are interrelated and collectively contribute to post-graduate students' research engagement and success. Post-graduate students with positive research attitudes are more likely to set ambitious research goals and demonstrate perseverance in their research pursuits, driven by their strong achievement motivation (Fong & Schallert, 2023). Moreover, their confidence in their research abilities, reflected in high self-efficacy, enables them to navigate the complexities of the research process with greater ease and effectiveness (Ghani et al., 2019).

However, it is important to recognize that post-graduate students may experience challenges or barriers that impact their research attitude, achievement motivation, and self-efficacy. For example, factors such as limited resources, time constraints, supervisor support, and institutional barriers may influence post-graduate

students' perceptions of research and their confidence in their research abilities (Hoon et al., 2019; Ndukwe et al, 2018). Additionally, individual differences in personality traits, prior experiences, and socio-cultural backgrounds may shape post-graduate students' research attitudes, achievement motivation, and self-efficacy (Obaseki & Agu, 2019; Ani et al, 2020).

Positive research attitudes, high achievement motivation, and strong self-efficacy empower post-graduate students to engage actively in research activities, pursue ambitious research goals, and overcome challenges encountered in the research process. Understanding and fostering these constructs are essential for promoting academic excellence, research productivity, and professional development among post-graduate students. While previous research has explored these constructs individually, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding their interrelationships and collective impact on post-graduate students' research experiences. For example, studies by Adegboyega (2018) and Adegboyega (2018) have examined research attitude and achievement motivation separately but have not explored how these factors interact with self-efficacy among post-graduate students.

Additionally, research by Zhang et al., (2015), Bhatt & Bahadur (2018) and Chandrawaty & Widodo (2020) has focused on self-efficacy and achievement motivation but has not fully investigated their associations with research attitude in the post-graduate student population at Nnamdi Azikiwe University. By addressing these gaps, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the psychological factors that influence post-graduate students' engagement in research activities and their ability to overcome challenges in the research process. This research can inform educational practices and interventions aimed at enhancing post-graduate students' research attitudes, achievement motivation, and self-efficacy, ultimately contributing to their academic success and professional development. This study identified significant research gaps in understanding the interplay between research attitude, achievement motivation, and self-efficacy among post-graduate students. Unlike previous research focusing separately on these variables, this study comprehensively examined their correlations using robust statistical analyses. This unique contribution highlights the need for nuanced interventions tailored to enhance these psychological factors collectively, thereby fostering a supportive environment for post-graduate students' academic success and professional development in research-intensive settings.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research design. The participants in this study were post-graduate students enrolled at Nnamdi Azikiwe University. The sample size for this study was determined using statistical methods aimed at ensuring robustness and reliability in representing the post-graduate student population at

Nnamdi Azikiwe University. Factors considered included anticipated effect size, variability within the population regarding research attitudes, achievement motivation, and self-efficacy, and statistical power considerations to detect meaningful relationships. In this study, researchers employed validated scales to measure key psychological constructs among post-graduate students. The Research Attitude Scale was used to assess students' attitudes towards research, capturing aspects such as their interest in research topics, adaptability in complex research settings, and the application of critical thinking skills. For Achievement Motivation, researchers utilized the Achievement Motivation Scale to evaluate students' drive for academic excellence, goal-setting behaviors, persistence in overcoming research challenges, and their motivation to achieve impactful research outcomes. To gauge Self-Efficacy, researchers employed the General Self-Efficacy Scale, which measures students' confidence in their abilities to effectively perform research tasks, navigate uncertainties, and persistently pursue research goals despite obstacles.

Data were collected via structured questionnaires distributed electronically to post-graduate students at Nnamdi Azikiwe University. Participants completed the questionnaires voluntarily, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of responses. Prior to distribution, ethical guidelines were adhered to, emphasizing informed consent and protection of participants' rights. The electronic format facilitated efficient data collection, with 62 participants completing the questionnaires.

Descriptive statistics, such as means and standard deviations, were used to summarize the participants' demographic characteristics and scores on research attitude, achievement motivation, and self-efficacy. Correlation analyses, such as Kendall's tau_b and Spearman's rho, were conducted to examine the relationships between the variables. Kendall's tau_b and Spearman's rho are non-parametric correlation coefficients used to measure the strength and direction of association between two variables. Kendall's tau_b assesses the degree of concordance or discordance in the rankings of paired observations, making it suitable for ordinal data. It considers ties and is less sensitive to outliers. Spearman's rho, on the other hand, evaluates the monotonic relationship between variables by comparing their ranks. It is appropriate for ordinal and is also robust against outliers. Both coefficients range from -1 to 1, with higher values indicating stronger correlations, while 0 suggests no correlation.

Additionally, descriptive statistics was employed to explore the predictors of research attitude, achievement motivation, and self-efficacy among post-graduate students. This study adhered to ethical guidelines, including ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of responses.

Result and Discussion

Figure 1 provides mean and standard deviation scores for seven aspects of research attitude among post-graduate students. On average, students demonstrated a high level of interest in research endeavors (Item 1, Mean = 3.74) and an inclination to embrace challenges for innovative solutions (Item 2, Mean = 3.65). They also recognized research as fostering critical thinking skills (Item 3, Mean = 3.18) and exhibited adaptability in navigating complex research landscapes (Item 4, Mean = 3.06). Additionally, students showed curiosity in exploring uncharted territories (Item 5, Mean = 3.03) and approached research tasks with meticulous attention to detail (Item 6, Mean = 3.60). Their passion for discovery drove a relentless pursuit of excellence (Item 7, Mean = 3.40). Standard deviations varied across items, indicating different levels of variability in students' perceptions. Overall, the findings suggest positive attitudes towards research among post-graduate students, with consistent interest, adaptability, and attention to detail. While there is generally high agreement on these aspects, there's some variability in the extent of agreement, particularly regarding critical thinking skills and curiosity. These insights underscore the diverse yet generally positive research attitude prevalent among post-graduate students.

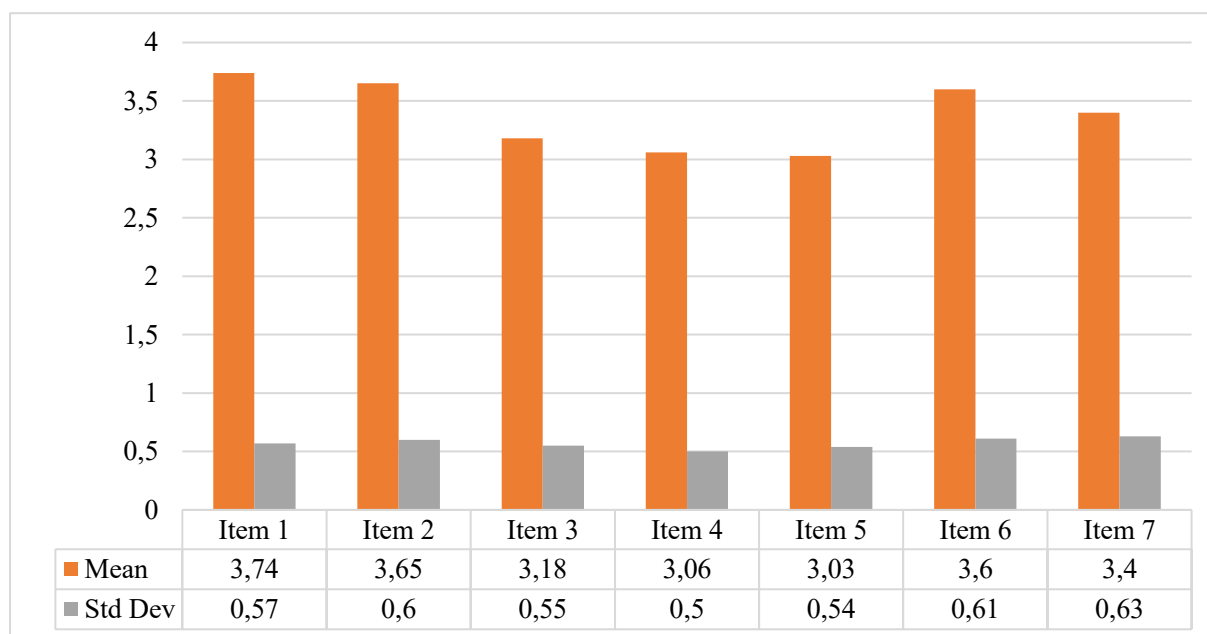


Figure 1.

Mean and Standard Deviation on the Research Attitude of Post-Graduate Students Towards Research.

Figure 2 illustrates mean and standard deviation scores for eight items assessing the achievement motivation of post-graduate students in research. The mean reflects the average rating of respondents' perceptions on each item, while the standard

deviation indicates the extent of variability in these ratings. Post-graduate students exhibit varying degrees of achievement motivation across different aspects of research. For instance, they display moderate levels of motivation towards academic excellence (Item 8; Mean = 3.02) and recognition through groundbreaking research (Item 11; Mean = 3.10). Conversely, they demonstrate stronger motivation in areas such as setting ambitious goals (Item 9; Mean = 3.56) and embracing challenges for growth (Item 12; Mean = 3.35).

While the overall trend suggests positive attitudes towards achievement motivation, there's notable variability in responses, particularly evident in perseverance (Item 13; Std Dev = 0.73) and channeling ambition into tangible outcomes (Item 14; Std Dev = 0.64). This variability indicates differing perceptions among students regarding the importance and effectiveness of certain motivational factors. Overall, post-graduate students generally exhibit a strong drive towards achieving success in research, setting ambitious goals, and embracing challenges. However, the variability in responses highlights the nuanced nature of achievement motivation, with students prioritizing different aspects of research success.

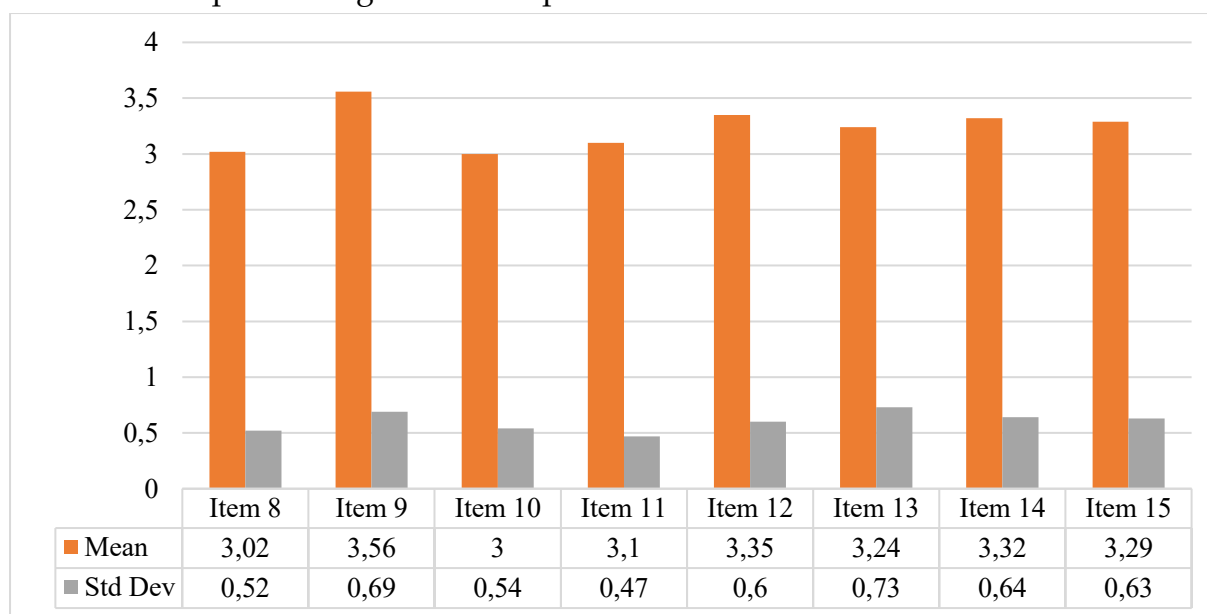


Figure 2.
Mean and Standard Deviation on the Achievement Motivation of Post-Graduate Students Towards Research.

Figure 3 presents mean and standard deviation scores for eight items assessing the self-efficacy of post-graduate students in research tasks. Self-efficacy refers to individuals' beliefs in their capabilities to successfully execute tasks and achieve desired outcomes. The mean reflects the average rating of respondents' perceptions on each item, while the standard deviation indicates the extent of variability in these

ratings around the mean. Post-graduate students demonstrate high self-efficacy in complex research tasks (Item 16, Mean = 3.76), indicating a strong belief in their abilities to tackle challenging research endeavors with confidence and competence. They approach challenges with confidence, believing in their abilities (Item 17, Mean = 3.50), demonstrating a positive attitude towards overcoming obstacles in their research pursuits.

Self-assurance empowers post-graduate students to tackle intricate research methodologies with ease (Item 18, Mean = 3.32), suggesting their confidence in handling complex research methods proficiently. Post-graduate students exhibit resilience, bouncing back from setbacks confidently (Item 19, Mean = 3.55), indicating their ability to recover from setbacks and persist in their research endeavors. They trust their skills, navigating research tasks with assurance (Item 20, Mean = 3.16), indicating a fundamental belief in their competence to successfully execute research tasks.

Self-efficacy fosters a proactive approach to problem-solving in research (Item 21, Mean = 2.97), highlighting the role of confidence in driving proactive problem-solving behavior among post-graduate students. Post-graduate students leverage their strengths, adapting to diverse research contexts (Item 22, Mean = 3.55), suggesting their ability to adapt and excel in various research settings. Confidence in their capabilities fuels creativity in tackling research challenges (Item 23, Mean = 3.08), indicating that self-efficacious students are more likely to approach research challenges with creativity and innovation. Finally, post-graduate students embrace uncertainty, viewing it as an opportunity for growth (Item 24, Mean = 3.21), suggesting their ability to navigate ambiguity and uncertainty in research settings with confidence and optimism. Overall, the data indicates that post-graduate students generally possess a strong sense of self-efficacy in research tasks, with some variability in perceptions across different aspects. These findings underscore the importance of self-

belief and confidence in driving success and innovation in research endeavors among post-graduate students.

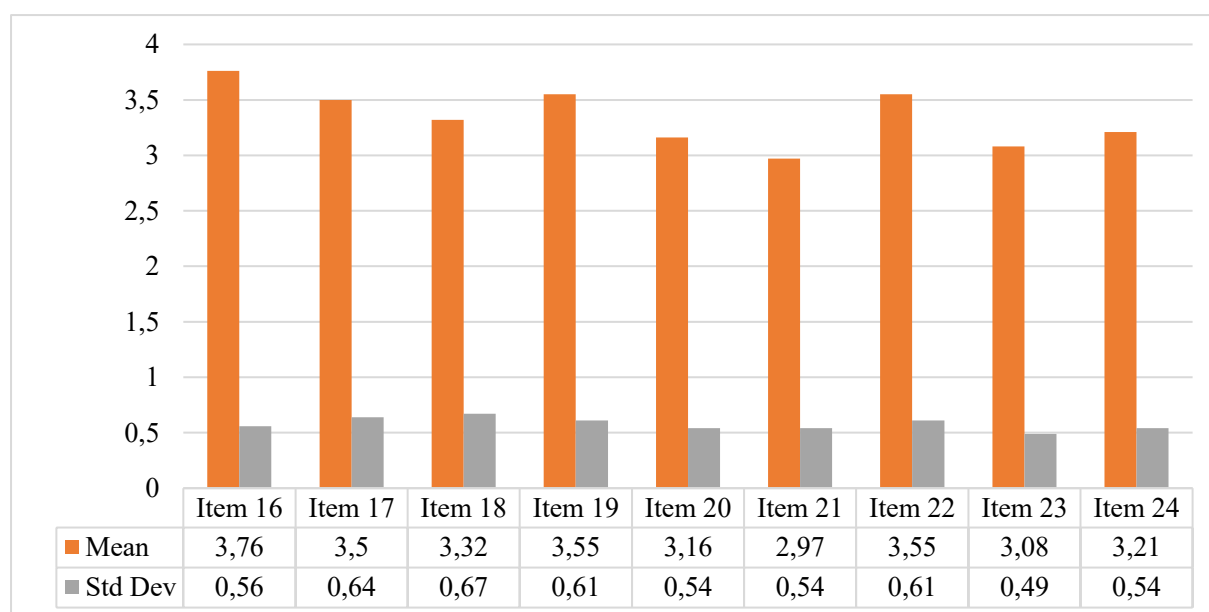


Figure 3.

Mean and Standard Deviation on the Self-Efficacy of Post-Graduate Students in Research Tasks

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant correlation between research attitude and achievement motivation.

Table 1.

Correlation Between Research Attitude and Achievement Motivation.

			Research Attitude	Achievement Motivation
Kendall's tau_b	Research Attitude	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.048
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.881
	Achievement Motivation	Correlation Coefficient	-.048	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.881	.
Spearman's rho	Research Attitude	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.036
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.939

Achievement Motivation	Correlation Coefficient	-.036	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.939	.

The correlation analysis using Kendall's tau_b and Spearman's rho methods reveals no statistically significant relationship between research attitude and achievement motivation, as indicated by high p-values (.881 and .939, respectively). Both methods suggest very weak negative correlations, but these associations are not significant. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is a correlation between research attitude and achievement motivation is rejected based on the lack of statistical significance in the data.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant correlation between achievement motivation and self-efficacy in research tasks

Table 2.
Correlation Between Achievement Motivation and Self-Efficacy in Research Tasks

		Achievement Motivation	Self- efficacy
Kendall's tau_b	Achievement Motivation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2- tailed)	.708
	Self-efficacy	Correlation Coefficient	-.109
		Sig. (2- tailed)	.708
Spearman's rho	Achievement Motivation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2- tailed)	.629
	Self-efficacy	Correlation Coefficient	-.204
		Sig. (2- tailed)	.629

The correlation analysis using both Kendall's tau_b and Spearman's rho methods indicates no statistically significant relationship between achievement motivation and self-efficacy in research tasks. With p-values of .708 and .629 respectively, both correlations fail to reach significance. This suggests that the hypothesis positing a correlation between achievement motivation and self-efficacy is rejected based on the lack of statistical evidence in the data. In other words, there is insufficient support to conclude that there is a meaningful relationship between these two variables in the context of research tasks.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant correlation between research attitude and self-efficacy in research tasks.

Table 3. Correlation Between Research Attitude and Self-Efficacy in Research Tasks

			Self- efficacy	Research Attitude
Kendall's tau_b	Self-efficacy	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.293
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.362
	Research Attitude	Correlation Coefficient	.293	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.362	.
	Self-efficacy	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.360
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.427
Spearman's rho	Self-efficacy	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.360
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.427
	Research Attitude	Correlation Coefficient	.360	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.427	.

The correlation analysis using Kendall's tau_b and Spearman's rho methods shows a moderate positive correlation between research attitude and self-efficacy in research tasks. However, with p-values of .362 and .427 respectively, these correlations are not statistically significant. Consequently, the hypothesis proposing a correlation between research attitude and self-efficacy cannot be accepted based on the current data. While there seems to be a tendency for individuals with higher research attitudes

to also exhibit higher self-efficacy in research tasks, this relationship lacks statistical significance.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant correlation between research attitude, achievement motivation, and self-efficacy in predicting research productivity.

Table 4. Correlation Between Research Attitude, Achievement Motivation, and Self-Efficacy in Predicting Research Productivity

			self- efficacy	Research Attitude	Achievement Motivation
Kendall's tau_b	Self-efficacy	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.293	-.109
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.362	.708
	Research Attitude	Correlation Coefficient	.293	1.000	-.048
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.362	.	.881
	Achievement Motivation	Correlation Coefficient	-.109	-.048	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.708	.881	.
Spearman's rho	Self-efficacy	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.360	-.204
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.427	.629
	Research Attitude	Correlation Coefficient	.360	1.000	-.036
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.427	.	.939
	Achievement Motivation	Correlation Coefficient	-.204	-.036	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.629	.939	.

The correlation analysis in table 4 reveals several relationships among self-efficacy, research attitude, and achievement motivation among post-graduate students. Self-efficacy shows a significant positive correlation with research attitude, indicating that higher self-efficacy tends to align with more positive attitudes towards research endeavors. However, while there are weak negative correlations between self-efficacy and achievement motivation, as well as between research attitude and achievement motivation, these correlations are not statistically significant. Therefore, the hypothesis suggesting a positive relationship between self-efficacy, research attitude, and achievement motivation is partially accepted. The significant positive correlation between self-efficacy and research attitude supports the hypothesis, indicating that self-efficacy influences research attitudes positively. However, the non-significant correlations with achievement motivation suggest that the relationship between self-efficacy and achievement motivation, as well as between research attitude and achievement motivation, requires further investigation to draw conclusive results.

Discussions

Post-graduate students' attitudes towards research are characterized by enthusiasm, adaptability, critical thinking, attention to detail, and a relentless pursuit of excellence. They demonstrate a keen interest in research endeavors, embracing challenges and striving for innovative solutions. This finding is supported by a related study conducted by Pattanayak (2019), who observed that post-graduate students exhibit curiosity and passion for discovery, propelling them to delve deeper into uncharted territories. In contrast, while post-graduate students are generally enthusiastic about research, some studies suggest variations in their levels of critical thinking skills. For instance, a study by Yousefi and Mohammadi (2016) found that while many post-graduate students demonstrate strong critical thinking abilities, others may struggle to apply these skills effectively in complex research landscapes. Similarly, in a study by Asad et al., (2023), it was noted that while post-graduate students generally display adaptability in their research approach, there are instances where they may encounter challenges in navigating certain research contexts. The implication of this study's findings on post-graduate students' research attitudes suggests a nuanced understanding of critical thinking, adaptability, and enthusiasm. Recognizing variations in these attributes can inform educational interventions tailored to support students in navigating complex research landscapes effectively, fostering a culture of innovation and excellence in academic pursuits.

Post-graduate students demonstrate high levels of achievement motivation in their pursuit of academic excellence and impactful research contributions. They set ambitious goals and thrive on challenges, viewing obstacles as opportunities for

growth. This finding is supported by Modise (2023), who observed that post-graduate students are driven by a relentless pursuit of knowledge and innovation, channeling their ambition into tangible research outcomes. In contrast, while post-graduate students are generally achievement-oriented, some studies suggest variations in their approaches to overcoming obstacles. For instance, Prathapan (2022) found that while many post-graduate students exhibit perseverance in the face of challenges, others may struggle to maintain a laser focus on their research objectives. Similarly, Valerio (2022) noted that while post-graduate students seek recognition through groundbreaking research endeavors, there are instances where they may encounter difficulties in maintaining their motivation over time. The implication is that post-graduate students' high achievement motivation highlights their drive for academic excellence and impactful research. Understanding variations in their perseverance and focus can guide strategies to sustain motivation and overcome obstacles, promoting consistent research productivity and innovation in academic pursuits.

Post-graduate students demonstrate strong self-efficacy in research tasks, approaching challenges with confidence and resilience. This finding is consistent with the observations of Alsadig and Zakariya, A. (2023), who noted that post-graduate students exhibit high levels of self-assurance in navigating intricate research methodologies. In contrast, while post-graduate students generally display confidence in their abilities, some studies suggest variations in their approaches to problem-solving. For instance, Ngoasong (2022) found that while many post-graduate students leverage their strengths to adapt to diverse research contexts, others may struggle with uncertainty and view it as a barrier to growth. Similarly, Kautish et al., (2022) observed that while self-efficacy empowers post-graduate students to tackle research tasks proactively, there are instances where they may encounter challenges in maintaining their confidence over time. Overall, post-graduate students' self-efficacy in Nigeria reflects a combination of confidence, resilience, and adaptability in navigating complex research landscapes. This implies that post-graduate students' strong self-efficacy in research tasks underscores their confidence and resilience in navigating complex methodologies. Variations in problem-solving approaches suggest the need for targeted support to enhance consistency in tackling challenges and maintaining confidence over time.

Directions for Future Research.

Future research could delve into longitudinal studies to track how post-graduate students' self-efficacy evolves over their academic journey. Exploring factors influencing variations in problem-solving approaches could provide insights into developing tailored interventions. Comparative studies across different universities or regions could offer broader perspectives on cultural and institutional influences on self-efficacy. Additionally, investigating the impact of specific training programs or

mentoring initiatives on enhancing self-efficacy and resilience in research tasks could inform best practices for supporting post-graduate students' professional development and academic success.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study investigated the research attitude, achievement motivation, and self-efficacy concepts among post-graduate students. The findings suggest that post-graduate students at the university generally exhibit positive research attitudes and high levels of self-efficacy, which positively influence their engagement in research endeavors. However, the study did not find significant correlations between self-efficacy and achievement motivation, nor between research attitude and achievement motivation.

These results indicate that while self-efficacy and research attitude play important roles in post-graduate students' research pursuits, achievement motivation may operate independently or be influenced by factors beyond the scope of this study. Practically, understanding post-graduate students' strong self-efficacy can guide educators and institutions in designing targeted support programs. Enhancing confidence and resilience in research tasks can foster a more conducive environment for academic success and professional growth among post-graduate students. Future research could explore additional variables or contextual factors that may contribute to post-graduate students' achievement motivation in the research context. Overall, understanding the dynamics of research attitude, achievement motivation, and self-efficacy among post-graduate students is crucial for fostering a supportive research environment and promoting academic excellence.

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