

DOES THE NATURE OF COLLABORATION CONTRIBUTE TO GRANT SUCCESS AMONG AFRICAN SCHOLARS?

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Objective: Collaboration is key in a globalised research environment. This study explored whether the nature of collaboration is a determinant of grant success among African scholars.

Methods: An Africa-wide online survey was distributed to African scholars between May and August 2023. The survey is still ongoing, but at the time of this analysis, 170 respondents had participated. Pearson Chi-square and binary logistic regression were used to assess the relationship between nature of collaboration and grant success.

Results: Most respondents were males (59%), aged 40 years and above (63%), without a PhD degree (56%), early career researchers (63%), and worked at public universities (58%). Less than a quarter (24%) had previously won research grants, but only 45% of these participated in collaborative research. Participation in collaborative research (49.4%) is shown to be highly significantly associated (p -value < 0.001) with research grants winning among African scientists. In adjusted logistic regression, those who participated in any level of collaborative research were significantly more likely (AOR=24.69, CI=1.51-403.58) to win grants than those who did not participate. However, those who had international collaboration were less likely (AOR=0.22, CI=0.25-1.87) to win a grant than those who had within-institution collaboration.

Conclusion: This preliminary data shows that while participation in any level of collaborative research positively contributes to grant success among African scholars, within-institution and national, rather than international collaboration, spurred the grant success reported. There is need for African scholars to continue to seek out and pursue fruitful collaboration within their institutions, countries, and across national borders to increase chances of achieving higher success rate in their research grant applications.

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