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SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS AS DETERMINANTS OF RESEARCH PRODUCTIVITY OF ACADEMIC STAFF IN PUBLIC POLYTECHNICS IN SOUTH-WEST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study was conducted to investigate the influence of socio-economic determinants on research productivity of academic staff of Nigerian Polytechnics. Specifically, the study examined the relationship between socio-economic of the academic staff and their research productivity and further predicted which socio-economic factors are actually promoting or limiting the pace of research productivity of Polytechnic staff in Nigeria. A cross-sectional data of 565 staff was collected through a multistage sampling technique from the study area., using structured questionnaire. Data were analysed by both descriptive and inferential statistics. Results showed that about 60% of the respondents were less than 50 years. The multiple regression results showed that research productivity is positively and significantly impacted by educational level (5.995), an academic status (1.969), monthly income (2.924), and work experience (3.13). The study concludes that socio-economic factors of individual lecturers, particularly their educational level, work experience and income are key determinants of research productivity. The study therefore, suggested that all theses factors should be taken into consideration by policy makers in the process of designing appropriate interventions that will ultimately enhance productivity of academic staff of tertiary institutions.

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Keywords: Correlation Analysis, Socio-economic, Research Productivity, Academic Staff

Introduction

Research productivity constitutes a fundamental component of academic works in Nigerian polytechnics, serving as a key metric for promotion, tenure, and institutional ranking (Okafor, 2019). The Nigerian polytechnic system, established to produce technical and vocational manpower, faces increasing pressure to contribute to knowledge generation through research. However, evidence suggests that research output in these institutions remains suboptimal compared to universities and international benchmarks (Haruna et al., 2023).

Despite the critical roles of research in academic advancement and institutional development, academic staff in Nigerian polytechnics according to Haruna et al. (2023) demonstrate low research productivity, with many failing to meet publication requirements for career progression. While previous studies have focused on individual skills (information literacy, computer self-efficacy) and work environment factors, the influence of socio-economic characteristics remain insufficiently examined in this context. Understanding which socio-economic factors correlate most strongly with research productivity could inform targeted interventions to enhance research output. Existing literature on research productivity in Nigerian higher education has predominantly focused on universities, with polytechnics receiving limited attention

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(Simisaye & Popoola, 2019). Moreover, studies examining socio-economic determinants have yielded inconsistent findings, with some emphasizing personal characteristics (age, gender,) and others highlighting structural factors (qualifications, rank). This study addresses these gaps by specifically investigating polytechnic academic staff a unique population with distinct institutional mandates and working conditions.

This paper aims to examine the relationship between socio-economic factors and research productivity among academic staff in Nigerian polytechnics, and also identify socio-economic factors influencing the research productivity. This study will provide evidence-based data for policymakers, National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), private institutions, government and heads of Polytechnics in Nigeria and beyond to formulate targeted interventions.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between socio-economic factors and research productivity of academic staff in public polytechnics in South-west, Nigeria?
2. Which socio-conomic factors significantly influence the research productivity of Academic staff of public polytechnics in South-west, Nigeria?

Literature Review

Concept of Socio-economic Factors

Socio-economic factors as used in this study cover age, gender, academic qualifications, family size, monthly salary, work experience and rank/academic status. Studies such as Simisaye & Popoola (2019) indicated that socio-economic factors could

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describe individuals' personalities and influence organisational behaviour to a large extent. The ways that people think and act in order to achieve their own goals are determined by their personalities. Numerous studies have demonstrated that socio-economic issues affect academic personnel and academics' research outputs. For instance Davidovitch & Eckhaus (2019) found that research productivity is impacted by socio-economic conditions.

Socio-economic factors such as marital status, age, family size, academic qualifications, monthly salary, gender, rank/academic status, employment status, and work experience determine the attitudes and behaviour of academic staff towards research productivity (Simisaye & Popoola, 2019). Demographic factors as reported in Malik et al. (2022) are correlated with research outputs. They explained that age and other socio-economic factors have been studied in numerous works, and the general observation is that these factors have variously impacted research productivity. For instance Ogoti (2018) noted that average research publications of academic staff drop with age. This view however contradicted Okiki (2016) who averred that many academic staff remain active even with advances in age; hence, there is no significant evidence that age determines a drop in research productivity.

A study on the roles of intervening variables on the relationship between information literacy skills and research output of researchers in Nigeria was carried out by Simisaye and Popoola (2022), the study found out that socio-economic factors (monthly salary, academic status, age, highest educational qualification, work experience, and

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employment status) have significant mediating effects on the relationship between information literacy skills and research productivity of academic staff. This implies that socio-economic factors are critical to research productivity of academics at any level.

Socio-economic Factors and Research Productivity

Socio-economic factors have been viewed by Chengbo and Yangi (2021) as factors that have been aligned or associated with personal characteristics of individuals. Socio-economic also refers to social science that studies how economic activities affect and are shaped by social processes (Hellmich, 2015). Socio-economic factors, as far as this study is concerned, cover marital status, age, family size, academic qualification, monthly salary, gender, rank/academic status, and work experience of academic staff in Nigerian poly.

Socioe-conomic considerations play a significant role in describing individual personalities and influencing organizational behaviour (Simisaye & Popoola, 2019). Each person's personality dictates how they think and behave when achieving their own goals, that is the reason Babalola (2014) pointed out that socioe-conomic factors affect research productivity based on this assumption. Numerous studies such as Simisaye and Abiloro (2020) have shown that academic staff research productivity is influenced by socio-economic circumstances. The relationship between academic staff members' research productivity and their information literacy skills is most cases strengthen by socio-economic factors, including monthly salary, academic status, age, highest level of education, work experience, employment status and so on.

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Previous research presents mixed findings regarding socio-economic determinants of research productivity. Studies have consistently shown that higher academic qualifications (particularly PhD degree) correlate with greater research output (Chepkorir, 2018; Babalola, 2018). Doctoral training typically includes rigorous research methodology components that prepare academics for independent scholarship. Also Academic Status/Rank; Higher academic ranks (senior lecturer, professor) generally associate with increased publications, Eckhaus & Darvidovitch, (2021); Jameel & Ahmed, (2020) noted that this increase in publications by high ranking academics was possibly due to reduced teaching loads, mentorship opportunities, and research leadership roles.

Work Experience: The relationship between experience and productivity follows an inverted U-curve in some studies, with mid-career academics being most productive (Yen et al., 2020). However, Oyeyemi et al. (2019) found that other research suggests linear positive relationships between research work experience research productivity. Financial Remuneration: Evidence on salary effects is mixed. While adequate compensation may reduce financial stress and enable research activities (Nafiu et al., 2014), some studies find weak correlations between salary and productivity (Natividad–Franco & Dela, 2023).

Demographic Factors: Age, gender, and family responsibilities show inconsistent correlations across studies, with contextual factors significantly moderating these relationships (Hunter & Leahey, 2017; Linda et al., 2021).

Conceptual Framework: Human Capital Theory

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The current study is anchored in Human capital theory which postulates that investments in education, training, and experience enhance individual productivity (Becker, 1964). In Nigerian Polytechnic context, the study conceptualizes that socio-economic determinants of academic staff of Polytechnic have direct associations with research productivity of academic staff, this suggests that higher educational qualifications, greater work experience, and career advancement (academic status) should correlate with increased research output. This study examines these propositions in the polytechnic context

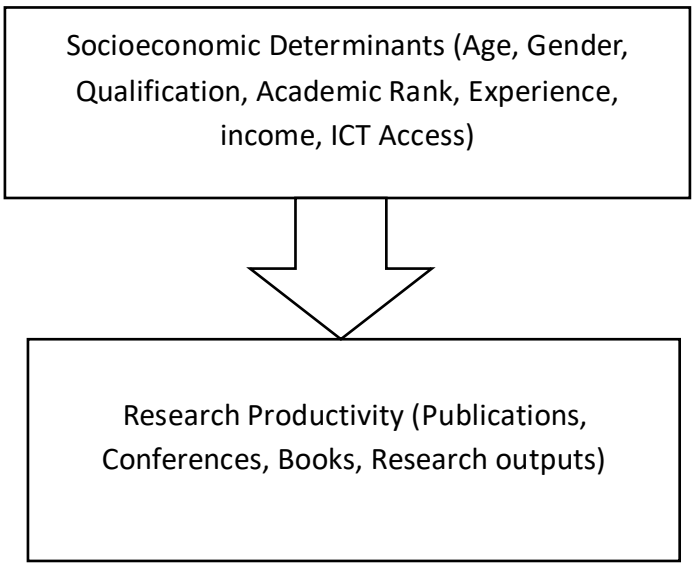


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for the Relationship between Research Productivity and socio-economic factors.

The Nigerian Polytechnic Context

Nigerian polytechnics emphasise technical and vocational education, potentially influencing research priorities and publication patterns. The institutional culture, promotion criteria, and resource allocation in polytechnics according to Dung-Gwon (2014) differ from universities, necessitating context-specific investigations.

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Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study is three thousand eight hundred forty-nine (3,849) academic staff of public polytechnics in South-West, Nigeria. This includes 3,009 lecturers, 767 technologist and 73 librarians. 10 polytechnics whose years of establishment fall within the surveyed period of the study were selected for the study. Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sampling technique and simple random sampling method was used to determine a sample of 311 lecturers and 216 technologists respectively, while total enumeration technique was adopted to capture all the librarians in the studied polytechnics, this is because the total population of librarians in the surveyed polytechnics is not too large. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach's alpha method. The reliability coefficient obtained was above 0.70, indicating that the instrument was reliable and suitable for data collection.

A total of 600 copies of questionnaire were distributed out of which 565 were successfully retrieved and used. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics**.** Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to describe respondents' socio-economic characteristics and level of research productivity. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to determine the relationship between socio-economic factors and research productivity of academic staff. In addition, multiple regression analysis was employed to examine the relative contributions of socio-economic variables to research

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productivity. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance**.** All analyses were conducted using SPSS version 25.

Econometric Model

The explicit regression equation is:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1i} + \beta_2 X_{2i} + \beta_3 X_{3i} + \beta_4 X_{4i} + \beta_5 X_{5i} + \beta_6 X_{6i} + + \beta_n X_{ni} + \varepsilon_i (1)$$

Where:

Y_i= Research productivity of the i-th academic staff

β_0= Intercept

$\beta_1 - \beta_9$= Regression coefficients

ε_i= Error term

Table 1: Description of variables used in the model

Code	Variable	Type	Coding
Y	Research productivity	Continuous	No. of publications / index
X1	Age	Continuous	Years
X2	Gender	Dummy	Male = 1, Female = 0
X3	Education	Ordinal	ND=1, HND=2, BSc=3, MSc=4, PhD=5
X4	Marital status	Dummy	Married=1, Otherwise=0
X5	Work experience	Continuous	Years
X6	Family size	Continuous	Number
X7	Academic status	Ordinal	Lecturer III=1 … Chief Lecturer=5
X8	Monthly salary	Continuous	Naira
X9	Employment status	Dummy	Full-time=1, Part-time=0

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Results and Discussion

Table 2: The Socio-demographic Profile of Respondents (n = 565)

Socio-economic factors	Frequency	Percentage
Age range:		
20-30 years	84	14.9
31-40 years	171	30.3
41-50 years	166	29.4
51 years and above	144	25.5
Gender:		
Male	376	66.5
Female	189	33.5
Educational qualification:		
HND	82	14.5
B.Sc.	154	27.3
PGD	81	14.3
M.Sc.	211	37.3
M. Phil.	24	4.2
PhD	13	2.3
Marital status:		
Single	149	26.4
Married	400	70.8
Divorced	5	0.9
Widow/widower	11	1.9
Work experience		
5-10 years	301	53.3
11-16 years	133	23.5
17-22 years	86	15.2
23 years and above	45	8
Family size:		
1-5	466	82.5
6-10	94	16.6
16-20	3	0.5
21 and above	2	0.4
Academic status:		
Tech Instructor	123	21.8
Assistant Lecturer	110	19.5
Lecturer III	47	8.3

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Lecturer II	62	11
Lecturer I	71	12.6
Senior Lecturer	55	9.7
Principal Lecturer	37	6.5
Chief Lecturer	15	2.7
Librarian	45	8
Monthly salary:		
Less than ₦100,000	230	40.7
₦100,000-149,000	220	38.9
₦150,000-199,000	37	6.5
₦200,000-299,000	33	5.8
₦300,000-399,000	33	5.8
₦400,000-499,000	8	1.4
₦500,000 and above	4	0.7
Employment status:		
Full time	415	73.5
Part time	78	13.8
Adjunct	72	12.7

Source: Field survey, 2026

Table 2 presents the distribution of academic staff in selected public polytechnics in South-west Nigeria by their socio-economic characteristics. The table revealed that Rufus Giwa Polytechnic had the highest respondents (13.3%), followed by Federal Polytechnic Ado-Ekiti (11.9%), while Gateway ICT Polytechnic, Sapaade recorded the least (6.0%). The faculty of applied science accounted for 39.9% of respondents, while engineering and environmental engineering technologies had 27.4% and 34.7% of respondents, respectively. The age distribution revealed that the majority of the staff were within the 31–40 years age range (30.3%), followed by those aged 41–50 years (29.4%), and 25.5% are 51 years and above. This indicated a relatively balanced workforce in terms of age diversity, with a strong presence of mid-career academics. Gender-wise, the table showed a considerable gender gap, as 66.5% of the respondents were male, while only 33.5% were female. In terms of educational qualifications, about 37.3% were M.Sc. holders, followed by a B.Sc. (27.3%), while a smaller proportion has a Ph.D. (2.3%) and M.Phil. (4.2%). This distribution implies that a significant portion of the workforce possesses postgraduate-level qualifications,

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reflecting a fairly well-qualified staff base. The data also revealed that 70.8% of respondents are married, making it the dominant marital status, with only 26.4% being single and a minimal percentage being divorced (0.9%) or widowed (1.9%). In terms of work experience, 53.3% of the academic staff have been employed for 5–10 years, reflecting a workforce with moderate professional experience. Examining the family size, the majority (82.5%) of the academic staff have between 1 and 5 family members, which is consistent with typical family sizes in Nigeria. The academic status of the respondents showed that most of them are at the lower levels of the academic hierarchy, with 21.8% working as technical instructors and 19.5% as assistant lecturers. For senior positions, chief lecturer accounted for only 2.7% of the staff. Regarding income, most staff earned less than ₦200,000 monthly, with 40.7% earning below ₦100,000, and 38.9% earn between ₦100,000 and ₦199,000. Employment is predominantly full-time (73.5%), indicating that most staff have stable job positions within these institutions

Correlational Analysis

Research question one: What is the relationship between socio-economic factors and research productivity of academic staff in public polytechnics in South-west, Nigeria?

Table 3: Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficients between Socio-economic Factors and Research Productivity

Socio-economic Factor	Correlation (r)	Coeff. of determination (r^2)	p-value
Educational Qualification	0.394	0.1552	< .001
Academic Status	0.353	0.1246	< .001
Work Experience	0.275	0.0756	< .001
Age	0.249	0.0620	< .001
Monthly Salary	0.179	0.0320	< .001
Marital Status	0.131	0.0172	0.002
Gender	-0.039	0.0015	0.358
Family Size	0.047	0.0022	0.268
Employment Status	0.015	0.000225	0.72

Source: Field survey, 2026

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As shown in Table 3, the Pearson correlation analysis conducted reveals the relationship between socio-economic variables and research productivity of academic staff in Nigerian polytechnics. The results indicate that positive significant relationship exist between research productivity and several socio-economic factors. Specifically, research productivity shows a significant positive relationship with educational qualification ($r = 0.394$, $p < .01$), academic status ($r = 0.353$, $p < .01$), work experience ($r = 0.275$, $p < .01$), age ($r = 0.249$, $p < .01$), monthly salary ($r = 0.179$, $p < .01$), and marital status ($r = 0.131$, $p > .01$). The six of them explained as much as 43.4% of the variability that occurred in research productivity of academic staff of the Nigerian polytechnics. For example, educational qualification of academic staff of the sample analysed appeared to have a strong positive relationship with their research productivity in the study area, this was followed by academic status (12,5%). Similarly work experience of academic staff marginally explains as low as 7.5% of the variability in research productivity. This finding supports earlier studies by Simisaye and Popoola (2022); Chengbo and Yangi (2021); Babalola (2018) that found positive relationship between educational qualification and research productivity. This study further explains the importance of higher educational qualification in research activity, particularly advanced degrees like doctoral qualifications which are expected to provide methodological training, scholarly networks, and research confidence that enhance publication outputs.

However, variables like gender, family size and employment status are not only weak, but also remain insignificant in socioeconomic-research productivity relationship. The coefficient of age, monthly salary and marital status are extremely weak but positive and provide little information. This finding is in association with Natividad-Franco and Dela (2023) whose study revealed that an improvement in research productivity could not be attributed to enhanced salary of academic staff.

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Research question two: Which socio-conomic factors significantly influence the research productivity of academic staff of public polytechnics?

Table 4. Multiple Regression Results for Socio-economic Determinants of Research Productivity.

Variable	Coeff,	Std. Err.	T-ratio	Pvalue
Constant	-2.45	7.314	-0.335	0.738
Age	1.825	1.254	1.455	0.146
Gender	0.831	2.355	0.353	0.724
Educational qualification	5.995	0.971	6.176	0.001
Marital status	1.713	2.033	0.843	0.400
Work experience	3.136	1.328	2.362	0.019
Family size	-3.671	2.335	-1.572	0.116
Academic status	1.968	0.499	3.948	0.001
Monthly salary	2.924	0.985	2.97	0.003
Employment status	-1.495	3.235	-0.462	0.644
Model summary				
F(9, 555)	18.45			
Prob>F	0.001			
Adjusted R2	0.218			
Obs	565			

Source: Field survey, 2026

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Table 4 shows the multiple regression effects of socio-economic factors on research productivity of academic staff of Public Polytechnics in South-west, Nigeria. The overall regression model was statistically significant $F(9, 555) = 18.45$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the set of socio-economic variables jointly explained a significant proportion of the variance in research productivity. The adjusted R squared (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.218$) was 0.218, indicating that 21.8% of the variation in research productivity is explained by the socio-economic factors included in the model.

Out of nine predictors, only four were statistically significant. The educational qualification of respondents was positive and statistically significant at 1% level with strong impact on research productivity ($\beta = 5.995$, $t = 6.176$, $p < 0.01$). This was followed by academic status($\beta = 1.968$, $t = 3.948$, $p < 0.01$), monthly salary ($\beta = 2.924$, $t = 2.970$, $p < 0.01$), and work experience($\beta = 3.136$, $t = 2.362$, $p < 0.05$). They all have positive significant influence on research productivity. However, age, gender, marital status, family size, and employment status were found to be insignificant impact on research productivity at 5% probability level.

This study on the assessment of the influence of socio-economic determinants on the research productivity of academic staff of Nigeria Polytechnics, found that educational qualification correlates most strongly with research productivity aligns with human capital theory. Advanced degrees (particularly doctoral qualifications) provide methodological training, scholarly networks, and research confidence that enhance publication output.

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The low percentage of PhD holders (2.3%) in the sample may partly explain the overall low research productivity in Nigerian polytechnics.

The significant correlation between academic status and productivity supports career progression theories in academia. Higher-ranked academics typically have lighter teaching loads, mentorship roles, and greater access to research resources that facilitate research outputs. The finding was corroborated by Eckhaus and Darvidovitch (2021) whose finding revealed that the research productivity of academic staff increases as they progress in status. The predominance of junior academic staff in the sample (over 40% at instructor/assistant lecturer levels) represents a structural constraint on institutional research capacity. The positive correlation between work experience and productivity suggests that cumulative knowledge and institutional familiarity contribute to research effectiveness. However, the moderate strength of this correlation (r = .275) indicates that experience alone is insufficient without other enabling factors.

The findings extend human capital theory by demonstrating that in resource-constrained academic environments like Nigerian polytechnics, structural capital (educational qualifications, formal rank) matters more than personal capital (age, gender, family circumstances).

The results of multiple regression performed further strengthen the outcome of the correlations. For example, the educational level of the respondents maintained its positive and overwhelmingly significant at 1%, thus indicating that a higher educational

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level promotes higher number of publications which also translate into higher productivity.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations: self-reported data may involve recall bias; the cross-sectional design precludes causal inferences; and the focus on Southwest Nigeria limits generalisability. Future research should employ longitudinal designs, incorporate qualitative methods to understand mechanisms behind correlations, and compare polytechnics across different Nigerian regions.

Recommendations

Based on the results, the study suggests the followings.

1 Socio-economic factors should be taken into consideration by policy makers in the process of designing appropriate interventions that will ultimately enhance productivity of academic staff of tertiary institutions.

2 For academic career progression, the Polytechnic managements should stringently attach promotion processes to productivity earned through number of quality papers published in Scopus, number of citations in Google scholar,

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contributions to book chapters, number of conferences attendance, specific number of sole authors, etc.

3 The monthly income of Polytechnic staff is poor, meaning that polytechnic lecturers financial constraints, may limit polytechnic lecturers' ability to devote adequate time and resources to rigorous academic research. Therefore, the concerned authorities should improve the welfare of polytechnic staff to enable them compete favourably with their counterpart in the universities.

4 Targeted Research Support: Rather than blanket approaches, institutions should target research grants, conference funding, and publication assistance towards staff with higher qualifications and demonstrated research potential.

5 Redefine Productivity Metrics: Given the polytechnic mandate for applied knowledge, research productivity indicators should perhaps include technical reports, patents, and industry collaborations alongside traditional publications.

Conclusion

This study was conducted assess the influence of socioeconomic determinants on the research productivity of academic staff of Nigeria Polytechnics. The study concluded that about 60% of the respondents were less that 50 years, with mean income (N126,000) of the polytechnic staff relatively low, reflecting lack of motivation by employers. Most of them have married and staff population favours the junior cadre and very few staff are found on the senior cadre. The study also showed that socio-economic

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factors, particularly educational qualifications, monthly income, work experience and academic status are major factors impacting research productivity among academic staff in Nigerian polytechnics. Based on the findings, the study has contributed to knowledge by suggesting that integrating socio-economic determinants into policy related to polytechnic education will offer a road-map that will help build sustainable research cultures.

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