

SELF-EFFICACY AND RESEARCH OUTPUT OF LIBRARIANS IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-WEST, NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

Research output is vital in shaping the reputation and ranking of universities, serving as a key criterion for evaluating the promotion and tenure of librarians in Nigerian universities. The importance of librarians' research output plays a significant role in the growth, progress and development of universities. However, despite the benefits of high research output among librarians, previous studies have shown that this practice is not fully embraced research output of librarians compared to lecturers or academic staff largely due to low self-efficacy, which hinders the improvement of librarians' research output. As such, this study investigate self-efficacy and research output of librarians in federal universities in South-west, Nigeria. The study employed a descriptive survey design, with a population of 119 librarians. A total enumeration technique was used and data were collected using a structured questionnaire. Out of 119 questionnaires distributed, 114 were returned and used for analysis, representing a 96% response rate. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the research questions. Findings revealed that level of research output of librarians and self-efficacy, influenced by personal experiences, social persuasion and vicarious experiences were moderate in federal universities. In conclusion, Self-efficacy positively influencing research output of librarians in federal universities in South-West, Nigeria. Therefore, the study underscores the importance of fostering a supportive and promoting self-efficacy to enhance research output and efficiency among librarians in academic settings.

Keywords: Self-efficacy, Research output, Librarians, Universities, South West

Introduction

To achieve educational excellence, academic institutions must have university libraries as the essential foundation elements. The valuable information stored in libraries helps establish a stable groundwork that makes scholarly future work possible while creating transformative scientific technologies. The accessibility of shared resources within university libraries maintains intellectual continuity between generations as it guards students and scholars from the requirement to create new methods or engineer novel technology which preserves resources and saves time. Higher education facilities depend fundamentally on the heart and nerve centre role of university libraries to manage academic operations. Their organisation relies on them as core components to enable teaching activities and learning

efforts combined with research functions. University libraries achieve their essential mission by two main functions: publishing relevant research documentation and managing fundamental academic programs for universities. Libraries serve as critical pathways through which research support helps librarians build essential academic advances.

Librarian status work at university libraries throughout the Nigerian higher education system. Experts in both information resource organisation and management provide targeted information services to address users' specific needs. A university library exists primarily to advance teaching along with learning and research. Librarians possessing minimum qualifications at the bachelor level must undertake original research along with scholarly publication. The career advancement of librarians closely follows the promotion system used in education through published research output. The service scope of librarians involves procurement alongside the choice selection and processing along with organising and preserving resources for user accessibility. Librarians simultaneously acquire research publishing duties for respected peer-reviewed academic journals. Universities have gained recognition as hubs for ongoing research initiation, execution, and dissemination, encompassing both quality and quantity aspects. Research, particularly when applied, serves the purpose of addressing societal needs and propelling national development. From this angle, the quality and quantity of a country's research output can be seen as a reflection of its current situation. Essentially, a society's growth is closely tied to the level of research output it generates. It can be argued that research plays a pivotal role in distinguishing developed nations from developing ones. This rationale justifies the increasing focus and attention placed on research output and the involvement of various stakeholders in the research process (Simisaye & Popoola 2022).

Simisaye (2022) asserted that research is crucial to the advancement of any country. Research is necessary for any country that wants to advance. Countries who do not allocate money towards research run the risk of their development becoming less intellectually advanced and will be forced to depend more heavily on other countries. Engaging in research creates a platform for scholars to collaborate and connect with colleagues globally, enabling communication with peers and experts worldwide. The rankings of universities, both domestically and internationally, mostly rely on the active research conducted and generated by their scholars.

Umar & Kabir (2018) have uncovered that certain librarians, particularly those in federal university libraries in Nigeria, have been lacking in terms of writing and publishing research works. Personal observations also indicate a decline in research output among librarians employed in universities. This is demonstrated by the fact that some librarians with poor publication production stay at the same rank for extended periods of time. In the end, stagnation, frustration, low morale and restricted recognition both locally and internationally in their field of study are caused by librarians' inadequate research output. Today's librarians must be self-assured and proficient in using cutting-edge knowledge-sharing techniques in order to navigate and access the large amounts of material available in electronic or digital formats, which will enhance their research output. Self-efficacy is the belief that a person has in their capacity to act in a certain way and accomplish specified goals. It includes a person's belief in their ability to achieve at desired levels and have control over things that affect their lives.

According to Simisaye (2019), Self-efficacy affects how long people will stick with something, how resilient they will be in the face of difficulties, and how much work they will put into a task. People with strong self-efficacy have high expectations for their performance

and will stick with a task until it is finished. On the other hand, those who have poor self-efficacy expect to fail and are less inclined to stick with difficult jobs. Greater effort, perseverance and adaptability are linked to higher levels of self-efficacy as well as crucial for problem-solving, self-directed learning and lifetime learning. Self-efficacy is therefore essential for lifelong learning. People are more likely to actively participate in and successfully resolve information problems if they have a high feeling of self-efficacy and confidence in their information literacy abilities. Conversely, those who have low self-efficacy could shy away from or hesitant to deal with information-related problems. Self-efficacy is seen as context-specific or domain-sensitive because it is predicated on one's own perception of oneself with relation to particular activities. Put differently, it is possible for a person to have high levels of self-efficacy in one area but low levels in another.

According to Kehinde & Olajide (2024). identified three indicators for self-efficacy which are experiences, vicarious experience and social persuasion. Experience suggests that each achievement boosts confidence, while every setback undermines it. Nonetheless, people can be inspired to persevere in the face of setbacks if they possess a strong sense of self-efficacy that is based on prior achievements. When one sees others doing things well, they start to believe they can do the same. When people believe there is a significant correlation between their own abilities and other people's abilities, vicarious experience works best. The impact of vicarious experience on self-efficacy is stronger in certain situations compared to others. An individual's personal evaluation of their task competence can be significantly influenced in settings where comparisons are frequently made. Persuasion is often employed by instructors due to its convenience and ease of use. Although research output has always required significant psychological and emotional circumstances for sustainability. However, self-efficacy is not static and is subject to a variety of influences. These elements include the

training environment for research, mentorship, course experiences, and student monitoring. Furthermore, a correlation has been shown between librarians' research output and their level of self-efficacy. These factors are also influential in shaping the research interest and scholarly output of librarians in federal universities, south –west, Nigeria (Liu, Cheung & Lee, 2016).

From the forgoing, it can be deduced that self-efficacy increases research output of librarians. Consequently, the study carried out to investigate self-efficacy and research output of librarians in federal universities, South-west, Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

University rankings and reputation are largely influenced by their research output, which serves as a key metric for evaluating librarians' tenure and career advancement within Nigerian universities and other higher education institutions. The research contributions of librarians significantly impact the development, growth and progress of these universities.

However, despite the benefits of high research output, librarians at federal universities in South-West Nigeria exhibit low self-efficacy of librarians in federal universities in South-west, Nigeria. Many of these includes lack of experience, social persuasion and vicarious experience. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the relationship between self-efficacy and the research output of librarians in federal universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are to;

- i. Find out the level of research output among librarians in federal universities in South-West Nigeria;

- ii. Determine the level of self-efficacy of librarians in federal universities in South-west, Nigeria.

Research questions

1. What is the level of research output among librarians in federal universities in South-West Nigeria?
2. What is the level of self-efficacy of librarians in federal universities in South-west, Nigeria?

Literature Review

Librarians engage in research and share their findings for various reasons. Firstly, conducting research helps them develop and excel as professionals while enhancing the quality of services and collections they provide. Documenting the value of their work contributes to the academic success of students and faculty. Their research contributes to the body of knowledge in libraries in Nigerian. The practice of evidence-based librarianship has played a significant role in shaping research in this field. Librarians and their academic institutions reap numerous benefits from research conducted by librarians. This includes progress towards promotion, tenure and higher salaries, as well as professional advancement and recognition. Research-informed librarianship also fosters openness to change and improves skills in managing complex library operations through systematic study. Moreover, it enables librarians to provide better services and demonstrate empathy towards faculty researchers (Hoffman, 2022).

The research output serves as a significant pathway for career advancement among librarians in Nigerian universities. Globally, no nation can progress without quality of its research output. A country development is limited by the quantity of its research output, this could be the reason why certain countries allocate substantial budgets to their research endeavours aiming to enhance the quality of life for their citizens. In the academic

community, librarians are recognised as members of the academic staff. As such, it is their duty to conduct research and publish the results in credible, peer-reviewed publications (Simisaye, 2020).

According to Simisaye & Popoola (2019), reported that research output encompasses various outputs such as journal articles, textbooks, monographs, conference proceedings, technical reports, book chapters, theses, dissertations, peer reviews, co-authored textbooks, occasional papers and patents produced by scholars within a specific timeframe. However, when viewed from the perspective of nurturing future researchers, Niehaus (2018) defined researcher development as the process by which students' capacity and willingness to engage in research-related activities are enhanced. Given the critical role of research in a nation's development and survival, the concept of sustainability becomes paramount in maintaining a continuous cycle of research output. Just as success is fleeting without a successor, research output cannot be sustained without an effective plan to mentor and train the librarians as a researcher who will eventually take over. This is essential because all categories of academics will eventually transition out of the system. To address this need, universities worldwide have established education programs that serve as a platform for training, mentoring and cultivating successive generations of researchers, particularly at the federal universities level in South-west. Nigeria. These programs are designed to equip librarians with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate the challenges and demands of research. By investing in this, university libraries aim to ensure a continuous supply of capable researchers who can contribute to the research culture and drive innovation in various fields (Niehaus, 2018). This approach helps to sustain the engine of research and maintain a vibrant research ecosystem for the long term.

Self-efficacy refers to the confidence librarian has in their ability to effectively plan and carry out necessary actions to write and publish research in some reputable journals. It represents a librarian's belief in their capacity to achieve success in a specific situation. Bandura characterized these beliefs as influential factors shaping librarians' thoughts, actions and emotions. The importance of self-efficacy as a construct cannot be overstated in enhancing librarians' output.

Self-efficacy beliefs play a crucial role in shaping librarians' thoughts and actions. In the context of this study, self-efficacy refers to librarians' beliefs about their competence in utilising, locating, and organising information resources for research output, as well as their confidence in effectively using information for research output. Therefore, self-efficacy represents a librarian's ability to assess their capabilities in relation to a given task. Meanwhile, reading serves as a catalyst for imagination, broadens perspectives, expands horizons, and facilitates learning about diverse individuals and places. Its significance lies in its vital role in fostering full participation in modern society (Onwubiko, 2022).

As stated by Mensah & Lebbaeus (2013) self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform in a specific manner to achieve certain goals. It encompasses one's confidence in their capability to generate desired levels of performance, which in turn influences the outcomes that impact their lives. Researchers have regarded self-efficacy as a cognitive framework that reflects how individuals handle circumstances that affect them. Higher levels of self-efficacy are associated with greater confidence and competence in undertaking specific tasks. Consequently, individuals with low self-efficacy are more likely to give up or lose faith in challenging situations, while those with high self-efficacy tend to persevere and go the extra mile to overcome obstacles. Hence, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of a librarian's self-efficacy relies on their dedication to the job, which is largely

influenced by their mastery of the job through practical experience. Their awareness and comprehension of technological advancements in the field play a significant role (Adio & Popoola, 2010). Self-efficacy plays a crucial role in a librarian's ability to demonstrate commitment, handle job responsibilities effectively and adapt to technological changes within their profession.

The self-efficacy of academic librarians in their research role is a complex interplay of various factors, including experience, training, support and self-perception. However, specific dimensions of self-efficacy, such as communication with disciplinary faculty and confidence in teaching techniques and learning outcomes, can be improved through targeted short-term professional development interventions. Engaging in communities of practice and participating in other professional development activities also contribute to the development of self-efficacy. Nevertheless, the lack of institutional support emerges as a significant negative influence on self-efficacy, and the absence of comprehensive educational training for future librarians in Library and Information Science (LIS) programs negatively impacts their readiness for teaching responsibilities. Numerous challenges remain in adequately preparing librarians for their expanding roles as educators in the 21st century. Nonetheless, this research marks an important initial step in identifying ways to bridge this gap and address these challenges (Weaver, 2019).

According to Tuncer and Balci's (2013) research, it was found that individuals need to develop a positive perception of self-efficacy in information skills to effectively engage in information problem-solving activities. This positive self-efficacy perception enables individuals to become self-directed, self-motivated and lifelong learners. The study conducted on librarians in university libraries in South-west Nigeria revealed that the librarians displayed a high level of self-efficacy in various aspects measured by the scale. The

findings indicate that librarians generally have a strong belief in their capabilities, particularly in areas related to sharing knowledge and conducting research to fulfil information needs. It suggests that librarians possess the skills and confidence to effectively manage their work and engage in knowledge sharing among their colleagues. This high self-efficacy also suggests that librarians have the ability to regulate their emotions and remain composed in various situations (Awodoyin and Christopher, 2022).

The study conducted by Oyieke & Dick (2017), discovered that librarians possess intermediate competencies with social media and web 2.0 tools. Additionally, the study revealed that librarians generally have a lower proficiency level with new technologies compared to the patrons they serve. The findings suggest that actively training librarians in the use of social media and web 2.0 tools could enhance their self-efficacy, enabling them to offer improved services to their constituencies.

The Self-efficacy can significantly impact their research output. Research is widely recognised as a challenging endeavour that requires strong psychological and emotional conditions for sustained progress. The relationship between self-efficacy and research output has been explored in different settings. It has been found to be a predictor of research interest and output among graduate students and scholarly output among university faculty (Sharp, Hemmings, Kay & Callinan, 2015). Several studies have examined the relationship between research output and research self-efficacy, including studies by (Liu, Cheung and Lee, 2019). However, most of these studies have focused on faculty staff and the emphasis has been on identifying the sources of research self-efficacy rather than exploring its impact on research output. (Ajegbomogun & Popoola, 2014).

Research output plays a crucial role in the overall growth and development of a nation, as well as the sustainability of scholarly endeavours. However, studies have revealed

that librarians frequently face challenges that can impede their research output and have negative effects on their academic journey. These challenges include low self-efficacy of librarian; lack of experience, social persuasion, vicarious experience and difficulties in developing effective strategies for research output. In some extreme cases, these challenges can even lead to academic roadblocks and have severe impacts on the research output of librarians in federal universities in South-west, Nigeria (Obaseki and Agu, 2019).

It is worth noting that research output can vary significantly among Nigerian universities, with some institutions having a stronger research focus and higher output compared to others. It is possible that there have been further developments and changes in research output in Nigerian universities. Therefore, self-efficacy can influence research output of librarians in Federal universities in South-west, Nigeria.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive survey design of a correlational type, targeting a population of 119 librarians across seven federal universities in South-West Nigeria. A total enumeration technique was utilised. A structured questionnaire was designed for demographic information, Self-efficacy, influenced by personal experiences, social persuasion, vicarious experiences and research output scales—was administered to gather data from respondents. Out of the 119 questionnaires distributed, 114 were returned, resulting in a 96% response rate, which was used for analysis. Research questions were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation)

Results

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the librarians in federal universities in South-west, Nigeria

Demography	Category	Frequency	Percent
Name of institution	Federal University of Health Sciences	5	4.4

	Obafemi Awolowo University	25	21.9
	University of Ibadan	21	18.4
	Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta	23	20.2
	Federal University of Technology Akure	13	11.4
	University of Lagos	18	15.8
	Federal University, Oye Ekiti	9	7.9
Sex	Male	53	46.5
	Female	61	53.5
Position/Rank	Assistant Librarian	13	11.4
	Librarian II	28	24.6
	Librarian I	31	27.2
	Senior Librarian	14	12.3
	Principal Librarian	16	14.0
	Deputy University Librarian	11	9.6
	University Librarian	1	0.9
Age (in years)	21 – 26	11	9.6
	27 – 32	22	19.3
	33 – 38	29	25.4
	39 – 44	21	18.4
	45 – 50	15	13.2
	50 and above	16	14.0
Years of experience	< 5	7	6.1
	6 – 10	21	18.4
	11 – 15	27	23.7
	16 – 20	24	21.1
	21 – 25	20	17.5
	26 and above	15	13.2
Marital status	Single	25	21.9
	Married	69	60.5
	Divorced	8	7.0
	Widowed	9	7.9
	Others	3	2.6
Highest academic qualification	BLIS	13	11.4
	MLIS	67	58.8
	M.Inf.	8	7.0
	Ph.D	15	13.2
	Others	11	9.6
Department	Circulation	29	25.4
	Acquisition	12	10.5
	Reference	18	15.8
	Cataloguing	14	12.3
	Serials	8	7.0
	ICT section	13	11.4
	Audio Visual	5	4.4
	Bindery	5	4.4
	Others	10	8.8

Table 4.1 showed that Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) had the highest number of respondents (25, 21.9%) while Federal University of Health Sciences had the lowest number of respondents (5, 4.4%). The findings related to the demographic information of the

librarians suggest that the distribution of respondents was homogeneous, as the trends were nearly identical across the sample. Therefore, the respondents were deemed suitable for the study.

Research question one: What is the level of research output of librarians in federal universities in South-west, Nigeria?

Respondents were asked to indicate the level of their research output within the last five years from 2019-2024. Number of publications were ranged and ranked as follows: 0-5 publication was scored 1, 6-10 was scored 2 points, 10-15 was scored 3 and 15 and above publications were scored 4. The result is presented in Table 4.2.

Table 2: Level of research outputs of librarians in federal universities in South-west, Nigeria
Number of Publications

Publication	0-5		6-10		10-15		15 ABOVE		Mean	STD
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Textbook	93	81.6	14	12.3	5	4.4	2	1.8	2.31	1.18
Chapters in book	65	57.0	26	22.8	10	8.8	13	11.4	2.39	1.08
Journal article	41	36.0	48	42.1	17	14.9	8	7.0	2.78	0.93
Conferences Proceedings	61	53.5	35	30.7	11	9.6	7	6.1	2.55	1.04
Books reviewed	55	48.2	41	36.0	12	10.5	6	5.3	2.51	0.89
Bibliographies compiled	45	39.5	47	41.2	11	9.6	11	9.6	2.54	1.10
Monograph	76	66.7	23	20.2	9	7.9	6	5.3	2.33	1.11
Occasional paper	81	71.1	20	17.5	7	6.1	6	5.3	2.29	0.88
Technical paper	63	55.3	32	28.1	11	9.6	8	7.0	2.56	1.01
Working paper	62	54.4	33	28.9	9	7.9	10	8.8	2.48	1.13
Weighted mean									2.47	1.035

The findings in Table 4.2 show that journal articles (mean = 2.78) are the highest-ranked research outputs among the respondents, while textbooks are ranked the lowest. Specifically, librarians published an average of 2.78 journal articles each. This indicates that, on average, each librarian in federal universities in South-west Nigeria has made contributions of approximately 2.78 journal articles to academic literature.

Research question two: What is the level of self-efficacy of librarians in federal universities in South-west, Nigeria?

Table 3: Level of self-efficacy of librarians in federal universities in South-west, Nigeria

Experience	SA		A		D		SD		MEAN	STD
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
I keep trying a task until I succeed at it, even if I cannot do it on my first try.	35	30.7	40	35.1	21	18.4	18	15.8	2.71	0.912
I do not quit up if I do not succeed the first time when										

trying to learn anything new.	25	21.9	39	34.2	26	22.8	24	21.1	2.31	0.811
I always try to complete tasks even if they seem overly challenging.	24	21.1	33	28.9	35	30.7	22	19.3	2.58	0.756
I do not let failure deter me from trying my hardest to complete a task or duty.	23	20.2	36	31.6	30	26.3	25	21.9	2.61	1.033
It is easy for me to stick to my aims and attain my objectives	26	22.8	43	37.7	26	22.8	19	16.7	2.63	0.793
I can always make the deadline for any academic	21	18.4	37	32.5	30	26.3	26	22.8	2.60	0.861
I can set up a comfortable, distraction-free study space.	31	27.2	36	31.6	25	21.9	22	19.3	2.62	0.781
Social persuasion										
Even if someone disagrees with me, I can still find ways to accomplish my goals.	37	32.5	43	37.7	18	15.8	16	14.0	3.52	0.681
I can complete a task successfully even if I have been told I cannot do it, have never tried it before, or have not seen anyone else accomplish it.	25	21.9	37	32.5	27	23.7	25	21.9	2.58	1.021
When I am told I am capable and would not have any trouble completing the work, I can do better.	38	33.3	44	38.6	17	14.9	15	13.2	2.19	0.935
I can do my job more effectively when I receive credit for my efforts.	40	35.1	46	40.4	17	14.9	11	9.6	3.65	0.589
Vicarious experience										
When I operate as a team, I perform my job better.	24	21.1	41	36.0	25	21.9	24	21.1	2.64	0.818
I can figure out a problem when I observe one of my co-workers or someone else doing it.	26	22.8	33	28.9	30	26.3	25	21.9	2.71	0.929
I find it challenging to attempt or complete a task after observing someone else struggle to do a work that is similar.	25	21.9	35	30.7	38	33.3	16	14.0	2.69	0.941
When I see someone else do a task that I have never tried before and they fail, I find it difficult to tackle the task myself.	19	16.7	28	24.6	41	36.0	26	22.8	2.32	1.06
Overall weighted mean										2.70 1.060

Overall, the weighted mean as shown in Table 4.3, which combines the scores from all three indicators, was 2.70. This implies that that most of the librarians in federal universities in Southwest Nigeria perceive their self-efficacy beliefs to be influenced moderately by their own experiences, social persuasion and vicarious learning.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study:

1. University library administrators need to identify solutions to assist librarians who deal with financial pressures mainly through high journal and publication costs. The library should help librarians through fee sponsorship programs and project grants and active advocacy for their open-access publishing activities.
2. Librarians need sufficient institutional backing that will help overcome time-related operational constraints and workload challenges.
3. University libraries should develop specialized training and development initiatives which will upgrade their librarians' capabilities to conduct research and share scholarly information. Seminar sessions together with workshop events make up this program.
4. Librarians need promotion of teamwork combined with networking to build sharing environments as well as collaborative practices.
5. New librarian support programs within university libraries should help junior colleagues learn research skills and create positive attitudes toward their work abilities. A formal pairing system should exist to bring junior librarians together with senior mentors who will guide their professional development from start to finish.

Conclusion

The study has established that self-efficacy is a vital predictors of research output of librarians in federal universities in South-west, Nigeria. Findings revealed that librarians demonstrate varied levels of research output, with journal articles being the primary dissemination format, while also exhibiting moderate levels of self-efficacy influenced by personal experiences and social persuasion. The study underscores the importance of

fostering a supportive and collaborative environment, addressing challenges, and promoting self-efficacy to enhance research output and efficiency among librarians in academic settings.

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