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# SELF-EFFICACY AND RESEARCH OUTPUT AMONG LIBRARIANS IN POLYTECHNIC LIBRARIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** This article examines the self-efficacy and research output of librarians in polytechnic libraries in South-South Nigeria.

**Design, methodology, and approach:** This study adopted an *ex-post facto* research design and used a questionnaire to collect data from librarians in Polytechnic Libraries in South-South, Nigeria.

**Findings:** This study showed a moderate relationship between self-efficacy and the research output of librarians in polytechnic libraries in southern Nigeria. The study also revealed that self-efficacy will significantly predict research output among librarians in polytechnic libraries in southern Nigeria.

**Originality/value:** This study generated significant findings that are capable of encouraging polytechnic management to provide a foundation for a mentor-mentee policy. This is to make sure that librarians in polytechnics, particularly the junior ones, closely study senior librarians in the field of research so they may be able to use their high levels of self-efficacy to enhance their research output because the more one learns about research, the more confident one becomes in the ability to perform it.

**Keywords:** self-efficacy, research output, librarians, polytechnic libraries, Nigeria.

**Paper type:** research paper

## **Introduction**

Research is one of the most important aspects of librarianship at polytechnics. Improved librarians' research output is one of the most essential criteria for advancement, institutional prominence, and reputation (Bayat & Salehiniya, 2019). Palos and Maricutoiu (2019) found evidence of a link between academic achievement and psychological, behavioural, and social characteristics. Self-efficacy is defined as an individual's belief in their ability and skills to act (Khatony et al., 2020). Put another way, self-efficacy is a sense of competence, confidence, and the ability to adapt to research output challenges. Self-efficacy beliefs are significant in boosting research output. Klassen and Klassen (2018) found that there has been an upsurge in research on self-efficacy beliefs in different professions in recent years. The term "self-efficacy" was soon adopted by the academic community. One of the most significant psychological aspects for boosting academic performance and research output is self-efficacy (SE) (Hwang et al., 2016). Some of the qualities that may lead to low librarians' research output include motivational orientation, self-efficacy, emotional issues, computer skills, and poor interpersonal interactions.

According to Azizi et al. (2019), when an academic librarian's self-efficacy is strong, he or she is more likely to meet the research requirement for promotion and career advancement, and when it is low, the librarian is less likely to succeed in their research requirement and miss out on the promotion and be stagnated in their career. Research self-efficacy is one's belief in one's capacity to carry out research activities effectively (such as performing a literature review or analysing data). Research self-efficacy relates to appraisals of one's skills to do specialised research. Self-efficacy is confidence in one's ability to carry out research activities such as developing a research plan and carrying out the research process, which covers everything from library research and reading to writing and publishing (Hayat et al., 2018). According to Lalengmawia and Shuklain (2018), the concept of research output has piqued the interest of scholars and policy-makers in recent years. One of the most important indicators of polytechnic librarians' academic and career achievement is their research output. Some studies have attempted to compare research production between nations or academic fields as well as investigate the primary elements that boost faculty members' research productivity. Data collection and analysis are part of the research. When it comes to conducting research, a librarian's self-efficacy might affect productivity and research output. An academic librarian with

high self-efficacy in writing is more likely to use negative feedback on a paper to enhance his or her writing skills (Okonedo et al., 2015). Improved self-efficacy helped librarians in Nigerian polytechnics engage more in research and publication (van Lankveld et al., 2017).

Self-efficacy in research may be demonstrated by librarians, and librarians with low self-confidence or self-efficacy are more likely to avoid writing and publishing research articles. Even if they do, it may be a source of worry for them, whereas librarians with high self-efficacy may be inspired to keep studying and publishing research papers because they believe they are capable of doing so, enhancing their personal talents through practise. This belief is matched by a desire to publish. Librarians with a high degree of research self-efficacy are more likely than others to increase their publishing output. Individuals who trust in their competence to manage their affairs, on the other hand, develop self-efficacy after completing difficult tasks (Turkoglu et al., 2017).

According to Forester et al. (2017), professional self-efficacy is a type of self-efficacy that is specific to a person's profession. It refers to a person's apparent ability to apply all of the skills necessary for a certain job or function at the same time, thereby influencing his or her professional life. Self-efficacy is the belief that a librarian has the confidence and capability to respond correctly to a situation for which he or she has been trained. Librarians who doubt their efficacy are more likely to see recurrent success as the result of hard work rather than proof of their skill, whereas self-assured people are more confident in their talents after comparable accomplishments. Librarians in polytechnics with low self-efficacy, even when capable of accomplishing research and publication tasks, perceive it as labour, stress, or struggle rather than attributing it to their competence and ability, which makes the job unpleasant and leads to a propensity to avoid performing such activities. Librarians with high self-efficacy, on the other hand, attribute their success to their competence and ability, which gives them confidence and motivation to participate in similar activities.

According to Adeeko et al. (2017), librarians in south-west Nigeria have a high degree of self-efficacy. Furthermore, the authors concluded that, despite the intense workload in Nigerian academic libraries, librarians had excellent coping capacities based on a strong self-perception of themselves on the job. Librarians who feel they are self-efficacious are more likely to put up

sufficient effort in research and publication mandates, whereas those who do not believe they are self-efficacious are more likely to give up too soon and fail in their promotion assessment. From the explanation above, self-efficacy has been connected to improved research output. For several reasons, academics are compelled to perform research. A desire to publish, the availability of an enabling environment, and an individual's perception of his position all drive research. Many librarians are self-conscious about their writing. Self-efficacy might help librarians in polytechnic libraries to be more successful in their research and publishing endeavours. Self-efficacy increases as a consequence of accomplishing difficult tasks when a person believes in his or her competence to handle his or her affairs (Turkoglu et al., 2017).

### **Statement of the problem**

A key metric for measuring academic librarian productivity is research output. The polytechnics' decision-making on academic appointments, tenure, career development, promotions, institutional assessment, ranking, and recognition on a local and worldwide level is a clear indication of its significance. As a result, academic librarians must routinely do research in order to provide the volume of research necessary for promotion. Academic librarians' ability to do research is crucial to their professional development because promotions are nearly completely based on it.

Ogunkoya et al. (2020) noted the poor research production from the polytechnic system among its academic staff despite the advantages of research output academic librarians in career promotion. Could a lack of research self-efficacy among librarians in polytechnics be the cause of their poor research output? For academic librarians in polytechnics to grow in their chosen careers and be able to defend their academic status, they must have a thorough understanding of what motivates or works against them in research and publishing. In light of this, the study attempt to investigate Self-Efficacy, and Research Output Librarians in Polytechnic Libraries in South-South Nigeria

### **Research Question**

The following question is answered in this study:

1. What is the relationship between self-efficacy and research output among academic librarians in polytechnic libraries in South- South Nigeria?

### **Hypothesis**

The following hypothesis is tested in this study:

1. Self-efficacy will not significantly predict research output among the librarians in polytechnic libraries in South-South, Nigeria.

### **Literature review**

The National University Commission (NUC) of Nigeria, on the other hand, was empowered by decree No. 16 of 1990 to release a guideline stressing publication standards for librarians that are identical to those for academics before promotion. Librarians in Nigerian universities are therefore required to publish an equivalent number of articles as academics before progressing in their professions, and this is also applicable to librarians in polytechnic libraries (Oni & Eziam, 2014). Librarians in Nigerian polytechnics must embrace the reality of engaging in research and publishing the findings in scholarly journals. The consequence of not waking up to this reality of undertaking research and publishing is accepting to perish in the academic deep blue sea.

In a related development, the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) (2013) Revised Schemes of Service for Polytechnics listed the following publication requirements for librarians in polytechnics to advance in their chosen career: A librarian II is expected to have at least one conference or seminar paper. Senior librarians are expected to have two conference or seminar papers. Principal librarians are expected to have at least one journal article published and three national conference or seminar papers. Assistant chief librarians must have at least three article publications, eight national conference or seminar papers, and two chapters' contributions in a standard textbook. Chief librarians must present at least four article publications, three national conference or seminar papers, and four chapters in a book or two standard textbooks. A polytechnic librarian is expected to have at least twelve journal article publications, twenty-one conference or seminar papers, five chapters in standard textbooks, or

two standard textbooks. The publication requirements of the NBTE are binding on all the government-owned polytechnics in Nigeria.

Promotions are advancements in a staff member's rank that are outlined in the service plan. To be promoted, librarians in the polytechnic must produce an equivalent number of articles as their lecturer colleagues. The most often used metric of the quantity or amount of research production, according to Creswell (2014), is a numerical publication count over a certain period. The two essential elements of quantity and quality were at the centre of the argument over the most accepted measure of research production. The most common metric for measuring research productivity is the number of publications. Numerous factors have been linked to research performance. There appeared to be two kinds of linkage between research productivity and individual and institutional characteristics in an assessment of factors related to research productivity in African higher education institutions (Uwizeye et al., 2021). Books, articles published in respected journals, technical reports, conference papers and proceedings, and book chapters are examples of publications that constitute research output. Research papers cannot be undervalued in an academic setting such as a polytechnic since they are the most important indicator of an academic librarian's output.

Self-efficacy is an important component of librarians' research success. Self-efficacy is a valuable aim in and of itself, and it is a significant mediating variable that promotes a range of desired outcomes, including librarians' research productivity. In other words, self-efficacy can affect personal success, such as the research productivity of librarians. Librarians with a high level of positive self-efficacy are more likely to do high-quality research. As a result, librarians in Nigeria produce high or low research output, influenced by their self-efficacy, whether positive or negative (Odaci, 2013). Tiyuri et al. (2018) discovered a substantial association between research self-efficacy and academic success in a survey of post-graduate students at the Tehran University of Medical Sciences. Basak (2017) found a link between librarians' experiences, self-efficacy, and life happiness in another study. Udaya (2015) emphasised that self-efficacy and emotional intelligence are important to librarians' research output.

Based on social cognition theory, Iroegbu (2015) investigated the theoretical link between self-efficacy and research output and discovered that self-efficacy influences research

output. Researching self-efficacy is one of the topics associated with self-efficacy (RSE). RSE is a measure of librarians' confidence in their ability to conduct scientific research. Librarians' ideas about their confidence have a beneficial influence on their ability to perform better. There is a favourable and strong association between RSE, research, and the academic success of librarians (Davari et al., 2015; Tiyuri et al., 2018). Furthermore, RSE is linked to the ambition to do research. Librarians with poor self-efficacy lack confidence in their research abilities. Furthermore, their research performance is sub-par. Librarians with high self-efficacy, on the other hand, are confident in their research and publications. As a consequence, they succeed in their research endeavours and avoid career stagnation (Bierer et al., 2015). Self-efficacy beliefs underpin human motivation, well-being, and personal achievement. Self-efficacy is a psychological element that influences human performance. Although the information and skills they possess have a tremendous influence on librarians' judgements and behaviours.

According to Tiyuri et al. (2018), considering how few studies have been conducted between self-efficacy and academic performance, Librarians can analyse the outcomes of their efforts and utilise those interpretations to boost their confidence in their ability to do research. Research and publication successes, on the other hand, boost self-efficacy or confidence, but failures decrease it. Self-efficacy ratings are partly impacted by the vicarious experience of watching others accomplish tasks. Research difficulties include non-cognitive factors such as fear, lack of motivation, confidence, and time and stress management in the conduct of research. Research self-efficacy is one of the main factors influencing the successful conduct of research (Bocar, 2014). According to Potvin and Hasni (2014), anything that motivates positive behaviour towards objects of interest is an inherent reason or motive and is sometimes considered a vital component in making decisions. It is more difficult to increase self-efficacy beliefs through positive reinforcement than it is to remove them through negative criticism. People avoid professions and situations they feel are beyond their capabilities, but they do take on and complete things they believe they can handle. Librarians must have a high level of self-efficacy to overcome research anxiety.

Adekunle and Madukoma (2022) investigated the influence of research self-efficacy on the research productivity of doctoral students in universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study employed a survey research design drawn on a sample of 309 respondents out of a target



population of 1,418 doctoral students from six participating universities, guided by the Research Advisor's Table. The findings of the study established that the research productivity of doctoral students in universities in Ogun State, Nigeria, was low. The low research productivity manifested itself in the form of unusually prolonged doctoral education, high attrition rates, difficulties or inability to complete a doctoral thesis, which is the hallmark of doctoral education, and poor research publication measured in quality and quantity. The study also established a significant positive relationship between research self-efficacy and the research productivity of doctoral students. The study concluded by recommending a periodic review of the curriculum to reflect changes in the ever-dynamic information landscape.

Delosa et al. (2021) performed research on graduate students' research self-efficacy, interest in research, and research knowledge. One of the purposes of graduate education is to generate graduates who are skilled in research. The goal of this study is to see how particular elements like research efficacy and research interest influence students' research knowledge. Students participating in the school's Master's and Doctoral programmes are the study participants. The research was conducted using a descriptive research approach. The findings revealed that graduate students had a strong interest in research and a high degree of self-efficacy, but they lacked research expertise. Furthermore, research curiosity contributes significantly to research knowledge, but research self-efficacy has a detrimental impact on students' research knowledge. These findings suggest that the School of Education should prioritise the development of graduate students' research interests. These also imply that, in addition to efficacy and interest, there may be additional aspects to consider that contribute to students' research knowledge.

Blankenstein (2018) investigated how self-efficacy beliefs for academic writing and collaboration and intrinsic motivation for academic writing and research develop during an undergraduate research project. Research skills are important for university graduates, but little is known about undergraduates' motivation for research. In this study, self-efficacy beliefs and intrinsic motivation for several research activities were measured three times during an undergraduate research project (N = 147 students). To promote self-efficacy for writing and collaboration, a collaboration script was developed and tested on half of the students. Twelve students were interviewed three times to gather in-depth information about motivational and self-

efficacy beliefs. All measures except intrinsic motivation for research increased significantly during the project. Interview results suggest that active mastery and positive social interdependence promote self-efficacy. Feelings of relatedness seemed to promote intrinsic motivation for writing. Lack of autonomy and low perceived relevance may explain why motivation for research remained stable. The script had no impact on self-efficacy beliefs. Relatedness, autonomy, and positive social interdependence may boost motivation for research, but more evidence is needed.

## **Methods**

This *ex-post facto* research design was adopted in this study. *Ex-post facto* research design is considered appropriate because it investigates the relationship among variables in the study in which the dependent variable has already occurred, thus making the study descriptive rather than experimental in nature (Maheshwari, 2018). The population of this study consists of eighty-four (84) librarians in South-South, Nigeria. The entire eighty-four (84) librarians that made up the population were used in this study because the population was considered to be small. Total enumeration sampling is used when the entire population is small and shares well-defined features, as using only a fraction of it may not measure what is desired; it can eliminate any possible bias that can arise from the sampling technique (Canonizado, 2021). The research instrument used for data collection in this study is a questionnaire. The questionnaire is based on validated Self-Efficacy Scale for Scholarly Writing developed by Kavanoz and Yuksel (2016). However, their items were reworded or modified to reflect the present study. A five-point scale ranging from "very great extent, "great extent, "moderate extent, "small extent, and "no extent" was adopted in this study. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents in their respective offices at the polytechnics under study. The data obtained from the administration of the questionnaire were analysed using frequency counts for biodata, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was used to answer the research question. A simple regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis.

## **Findings and discussion**

### **Table 1: Status of the Librarians**

Status	Frequency	Percentage
Librarian II	15	20.8
Librarian I	6	8.3
Senior Librarian	12	16.7
Principal Librarian	12	16.7
Assistant Chief Librarian	10	13.9
Chief Librarian	7	9.7
Polytechnic Librarian	10	13.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1 shows that there are 15 (20.8%) Librarian II, 12 (16.7%) Senior Librarians and Principal Librarians, 10 (13.9%) Assistant Chief Librarians and Polytechnic Librarians, 7 (9.7%) Chief Librarians, and 6 (8.3%) Librarian I. Thus, a majority of the librarians from the polytechnics in South-South, Nigeria, are in the status of Librarian II. The possible reason could be that most of the libraries may have just carried out a recruitment exercise..

**Table 2: Relationship between Self-Efficacy and Research Output among librarians in Polytechnic Libraries in South-South, Nigeria**

		Research Output
<b>Self-Efficacy Scale</b>	Pearson' s Correlation	.533**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	72

A Pearson's correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between self-efficacy and the research output of librarians in polytechnic libraries. There was a moderate correlation between the two variables, Pearson's correlation coefficient  $r (=0.533)$ , meaning 53%. Since the significant value (sig.2-tailed) is.000 (which is less than.05). This means that there is a

moderate relationship between self-efficacy and the research output of librarians in polytechnic libraries in southern Nigeria.

**Table 3: Model Summary Table of Prediction between Self-Efficacy and Research Output among librarians in Polytechnic Libraries in South-South, Nigeria**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.533 <sup>a</sup>	.284	.273	.90374

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Efficacy Scale

**Table 4: ANOVA Summary Table of Prediction between Self-Efficacy and Research Output among librarians in Polytechnic Libraries in South-South, Nigeria**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	22.633	1	22.633	27.711	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	57.172	70	.817		
	Total	79.805	71			

a. Dependent Variable: Research Output

b. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Efficacy Scale

**Table 5: Coefficient Summary Table of Prediction between Self-Efficacy and Research Output among librarians in Polytechnic Libraries**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
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		<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>		
1	(Constant)	-.301	.538		-.560	.577
	Self-Efficacy Scale	.898	.171	.533	5.264	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Research Output

In Tables 3, 4, and 5, a simple linear regression was used to predict self-efficacy and research output among librarians. Librarians' self-efficacy explained a significant amount of the variance in career research output:  $F(1, 70) = 27.711$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $R^2 = .533$ ,  $R \text{ adjusted} = .284$ . The regression coefficient ( $B = .898$ ) indicated that an increase in librarians' self-efficacy corresponds, on average, to an increase in their career research output. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, implying that self-efficacy will significantly predict research output among librarians in polytechnic libraries in South-South Nigeria. This means that the extent of librarians' self-efficacy will predict librarians' research output in the polytechnic libraries.

## **Discussion of findings**

The study showed a moderate relationship between self-efficacy and the research output of librarians in polytechnic libraries in southern Nigeria. This implies that an increase in librarians' self-efficacy may lead to a corresponding increase in their research output. The finding agrees with Iroegbu (2015) who investigated the theoretical link between self-efficacy and research output and discovered that self-efficacy influences research output. Researching self-efficacy is one of the topics associated with self-efficacy (RSE). RSE is a measure of librarians' confidence in their ability to conduct scientific research. Librarians' ideas about their confidence have a beneficial influence on their ability to perform better. There is a favourable and strong association between RSE, research, and the academic success of librarians (Davari et al., 2015; Tiyuri et al., 2018).

The finding revealed that self-efficacy will significantly predict research output among librarians in polytechnic libraries in South-South Nigeria. This means that the extent of librarians' self-efficacy can predict librarians career research output in the polytechnic libraries. The finding agrees with Adekunle and Madukoma (2022) investigated the influence of research self-efficacy on research productivity of doctoral students in universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study employed a survey research design drawing on a sample of 309 respondents out of a target population of 1,418 doctoral students from six participating universities guided by the Research Advisor's Table. Findings of the study established that research productivity of doctoral students in universities in Ogun State, Nigeria was low. The low research productivity manifested in form of unusually prolonged doctoral education, high attrition rates, difficulties/inability to complete doctoral thesis which is the hallmark of doctoral education and poor research publication measured in quality and quantity. The study also established a positive significant relationship between research self-efficacy and research productivity of doctoral students.

## **Conclusion**

The belief in one's ability to undertake research (such as writing a literature review or analysing data) is known as research self-efficacy. Evaluations of a person's capacity to do specialist research are related to self-efficacy in research. Self-efficacy is a concept that refers to the motivation behind why people decide to concentrate on certain tasks and how much effort they put into them. There is a moderate correlation between self-efficacy and the research productivity of librarians at polytechnic libraries in south-south Nigeria. Another element that may impact the research output of librarians is their sense of their own research efficacy. The study also showed that among librarians, self-efficacy will strongly predict research production. Self-efficacy has been connected to librarians' greater research production. The amount of self-assurance and confidence among polytechnic librarians in Nigeria will affect the volume of their research production. It need strong psychological and emotional conditions to maintain the rigorous nature of research.

## **Recommendations**

1. Polytechnic management needs to provide a foundation for a mentor-mentee policy. This is to make sure that librarians in polytechnics, particularly the junior ones, closely study senior librarians in the field of research so they may be able to use their high levels of self-efficacy to enhance their research output because the more one learns about research, the more confident one becomes in the ability to perform it.
2. Polytechnic management and library administrators should focus on improving the research capacities of librarians through frequent trainings, seminars, conferences, and research collaborations with renowned researchers.

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