



Factors Limiting Research Productivity Among Lecturers In Higher Education Institutions In Somalia

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ABSTRACT

Research productivity, commonly measured by publications in peer-reviewed journals and academic conference presentations, is a critical benchmark in evaluating faculty performance and institutional ranking in higher education. Despite its global significance, there is limited research on this subject in the context of Somalia. This study investigates the national, institutional, and individual factors limiting research productivity among lecturers in higher education institutions in Somalia. The study is guided by Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which emphasizes the role of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, the study explores how these motivational dynamics impact research output.

The research adopted a descriptive cross-sectional survey design, utilizing a quantitative approach. Data were collected from 150 lecturers selected through probability random sampling from private universities and one public university. A structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale was used, and data were analyzed using SPSS version 20.0. Data were collected through Google forms from universities in Somalia. Findings reveal that most respondents are male (87.3%), aged between 31 and 42 years (75.3%), and hold a Master's degree (89.3%). Senior Lecturers comprised the largest group (60.7%). Key findings identify limited funding, inadequate institutional support, lack of motivation, and insufficient research skills and infrastructure as primary barriers to research productivity. The study emphasizes the importance of policy interventions that enhance institutional research support, capacity-building, and motivational incentives to foster a more robust research culture. These findings contribute to the scant literature on academic research productivity in Somalia and provide a foundation for informed educational reforms.

Key words: Research Productivity, Higher Education Institutions, Individual factors, National Factors, Institutional Factors, University Lecturers.

1. Introduction

Research productivity is a measure of accomplishment of a researcher. It is the number of research publications in peer-reviewed journals and academic presentations at conferences that are vital criteria for measuring productivity (Adebimpe et al., 2018). Research Productivity is a fundamental aspect of the rating and ranking systems in the Higher Education area (Henry et al., 2020). It became one of the most highly valued indicators used by institutions of higher education (Sukoco et al., 2023). University faculties that involve research practices are more useful than those that do not practice research in the process of teaching and learning (Cocal et al., 2017). Research productivity is considered a continuous work of a faculty member's career, specifically in faculty evaluation, university promotion and tenure (Kotrlik et al., 2002).

A study focuses on contextual, personal, and motivational factors that affected research productivity of the members of academic staff across disciplines showing that the three factors in combination with each other have an effect on staff members' research productivity (Naidoo, 2014). In contrast, Iqbal et al. (2018)

identified that none of the institutional, personal and environmental factors was found to be important for research culture in Punjab public universities. The study indicates that personal and institutional factors seemed as relatively more dominant in promotion of cultural research while environmental factors do not.

Moreover, LADIPO et al. (2022) examined the influential factors of the institution (Funding factors, Motivational factors, Environmental Factors and Organizational Culture) on the productivity of research in academic staff in universities of Nigerian. The result of the study indicates that the institutional factors correlated positively with research the production of academic staff in universities of Nigerian. Funding and Organizational culture were the most essential factors found to be leading factors that significantly contributed to the research production of the staff in the Nigerian selected universities.

In addition, Alemu (2023), investigated factors determining research productivity at the University of Madda Walabu and found out research administrations, lack of budget, an absence of facilities, and a lack of interest in doing research. Novita et al.(2023), reported that academic culture, creativity, managing knowledge, and expert commitment affect the lecturers' scientific research production. Another study showed that there is a need of facilities and suitable environment for learning. It also found factors such as the income of Industry, international outlook, low budget allocation to research, education and publications (Muhammad & Ahmed, 2023). Although there is clear evidence that administrators at many institutions together with academic staff realize the importance of research within the university structure, there is still an unacceptably low level of research productivity. However, this suggests that some universities undertake no research at all, while others produce research year after year and this reveals there is very little published information on research productivity in the context of Somalia. Therefore, this study investigates the factors limiting research productivity of Lecturers in Higher Education Institutions in Somalia. The study is guided by Self-Determination Theory (SDT), formulated by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan in 1985, focuses on how motivation—both intrinsic (internal drive) and extrinsic (external incentives)—influences behavior and performance. In the context of research productivity, SDT suggests that low intrinsic motivation (such as lack of personal interest or passion in the research topic) and over-reliance on extrinsic motivation (such as pressure to publish for career advancement, external evaluations, or funding rewards) can limit creativity, persistence, and engagement in research activities.

In this study, the researchers put an emphasis on three primary objectives to investigate factors limiting research productivity among University Lecturers in Higher Education Institutions in Somalia: (1) To investigate the effect of national factors on research productivity of Lecturers in Institutions of Higher Education in Somalia; (2) To Find out the effect of institutional factors on research productivity of Lecturers in Institutions of Higher Education in Somalia and finally, (3) to examine the effect of individual factors on research productivity of Lecturers in Institutions of Higher Education in Somalia. The importance of this research is to make a contribution to the existing literature on research output in Somalia. The study structure is planned as follows. Section two concerns the literature review, section three creates the methodology of the research. Section four shows the Study Results and section five discusses the implications. Finally, section six provides policy recommendations.

2. Literature

What is known about research productivity is largely based upon empirical studies that investigate Factors affecting research productivity. As Balyer at el.(2021) show that Turkey universities faced challenges about their missions, funding, leadership, physical and academic infrastructure. NCHE (2022), found that a 1% raise in the Ratio of Gross Enrolment (RGE) of the higher education growth had the possible of causing to increase by 0.56, 0.27, 0.10 and 0.82 % in total factor (TF), technological progress, innovation advancement, and economic growth respectively. Heng et al., (2020), classified factors limiting research productivity into three different groups: national factors, institutional factors and individual factors.

2.1 National factors

According to Elnasri and Fox (2017), examined the role of public funding in research and innovation. The results of the study represented that public sector R&D spending affects the productivity of higher education and research agencies. Tai (2021), discovered that the general conception of open government is a new kind of governance that places a strong emphasis on openness (vision) and public involvement (voice). Lee et al., (2016), in situations where the size of the center for university-industry cooperation is an independent variable, central government R&D financing does not act as a mediator between universities and industry.

Study shows that national governments currently anticipate that universities become more productive and efficient in their research and teaching as research is a significant source of new knowledge that helps academically prepare the nation for entry into the economy based on knowledge, university staff members often realize that they should improve their research performance as a result. This showcases that the government gives funds to universities to create a research culture(Lertputtarak, 2008). The results showed that Namibia depends on foreign cooperation and it shares less than 0.03% of the world's information

globally, contributing only a scanty 0.36%. this shows that the Namibia government gives a small share of funding to research productivity (Leonard et al., 2022).

2.2 Institutional factors

Simisaye (2019), displayed major factors delaying research productivity of institutes of research were information availability, motivation, financial factors, and family factors. The study also found other factors impeding research production of the institutes of research. The results indicated challenges from the family, financial obstacle, insufficient information accessibility and information literacy to use resources, insufficient motivation from employer and inadequate research skills constitute the main challenges delaying research production of the research institutes. Other obstacles include: too much administrative duties, infrastructural shortage, inadequate mentoring, deficient research grant, and scarce information resources in the library. Another study found that there is no support or a little support from the university on scholarship and research work in terms of a number of evidences. The lecturers of the university were not fully developed and the majority of lecturers had no the ability to conduct research. The access of internet was a problem and lectures were not aware of the availability of e-libraries (Bukaliya & Muyengwa, 2012).

Kazoka and Wema (2012) stated factors influencing research capacity in Tanzania higher education institutions. The factors include competences, knowledge, and experiences in conducting research, existence of research policy and the awareness of the policy, motivation to do research, adequacy and availability of research resources. The study also showed that the Challenges faced were not enough research skills, collaboration between junior and senior academic staff were poor, and lack of commitment and pro-activeness in research performance. Quimbo & Sulabo (2014), represented Institutional Factors such as Research policy, Research funding, Research benefits and incentives. Hedjazi and Behravan (2011), four variables together make up an institution's characteristics: corporate management, facilities resources, network ways to connect with colleagues, and clearly defined research objectives.

2.3 Individual factors

Quimbo & Sulabo (2014), reported several variables that are to be related to research productivity which are individual factors that include age, gender, civil status, educational attainment and academic rank, the field of specialization, years in teaching, teaching load and research experience. Alemu (2023), Obtained that lack of interest in conducting research is one of the factors limiting research productivity. Individual factors impact the results of research, based on another investigation conducted (Wahid et al., 2022). Similarly, Another study indicated that human resource quantity and quality affect research productivity (Ragasa, 2016).

The study discovers that the increase in collaboration and co-authorship increases large-scale growth of research in individual research productivity and this explains that research collaboration with colleagues drives the individual to make significant research output (Kyvik & Aksnes, 2015).

Besides Jung et al. (2017), found no quadratic relationship between research productivity and age but there is a linear relationship between age and research production. The study reveals that individual-level publication output is strongly affected by personal factors. Some environmental, situational and behavioral factors also influence the number of publications of individuals. The most influencing factor is funding. Collaboration, time, academic rank and qualification also impact completely the research productivity of individuals (Wahid et al., 2022).

3. Methods

3.1 Research Design

This study used a descriptive methodology because the data were collected using a structured, well-defined instrument. Descriptive research intends to better comprehend current existences. The study employed a quantitative approach, which effectively provides data to address the research objectives. Specifically, a descriptive cross-sectional survey research design is utilized, collecting data from a diverse sample of lecturers at a single time point. This approach was chosen to avoid the need for multiple field visits.

3.2 Study population and sampling procedure

In this study, the population consisted of university faculty lecturers from private universities and one public university in Somalia. The study focused specifically on lecturers in these institutions. The sampled universities were all located in Somalia. A sample of 150 lecturers have been selected. The sampling method employed was probability random sampling.

3.3 Data collection instrument

For data collection, the researchers used a survey questionnaire for this study. The choice of a questionnaire was motivated by factors such as time efficiency and cost-effectiveness. The questionnaire primarily included close-ended items, and respondents were asked to rate their responses on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

3.4 Data Management and Analysis

After collecting the data, the researchers utilized the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) program (Version 20.0) to code and enter the data into a computer. The next step involved analyzing the data using a combination of descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. This approach allowed for a comprehensive examination of the data, combining summary statistics and inferential tests to derive meaningful insights.

4. Results and Discussion

This part introduces the viewpoints of the respondents of the study. The primary data were collected through questionnaire and the results were discussed in accordance with the specific objectives of the research. Data were presented by using Frequency distribution and Percentage. For the interpretation of the data, five point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree were employed.

Table 1: What is your Sex?

	Frequency	Percent
Male	131	87.3
Female	19	12.7
Total	150	100.0

Table 1 shows that 131(87.3%) out of 150 respondents were male while 19(12.7%) respondents were female.

Table 2: What is your age?

	Frequency	Percent
25-30 years	16	10.7
31-36 years	53	35.3
37-42 years	60	40.0
43 years and above	21	14.0
Total	150	100.0

Table 2 presents that the majority 60(40.0%) of the respondents aged 37-42 years, followed by 53(35.3%) in the 31-36 years second group. Respondents aged 43 years and above make up 21(14.0%), while the youngest group (25-30 years) accounts for only 10.7%. This indicates that most participants are between 31 and 42 years old, with fewer younger and older respondents in the study.

Table 3: What is your level of education?

	Frequency	Percent
Bachelor Degree	3	2.0
Master	134	89.3
PhD	13	8.7
Total	150	100.0

Table 3 presents the educational level of the 150 respondents, showing that the majority (89.3%) hold a **Master's degree**, while 8.7% have a **PhD**, and only 2.0% have a **Bachelor's degree**. This indicates that most participants have a high level of education, with nearly all holding postgraduate qualifications.

Table 4: What is your work experience?

	Frequency	Percent
1-5 years	48	32.0
6-11 years	77	51.3
12-17 years	22	14.7
18 years and above	3	2.0
Total	150	100.0

The table 4 presents the work experience distribution of the 150 respondents. The majority (51.3%) have **6-11 years** of experience, followed by 32.0% with **1-5 years**. About 14.7% have **12-17 years**, while only 2.0% have **18 years or more**. This indicates that most respondents have a **moderate level of experience (6-11 years)**, with fewer having extensive experience beyond 12 years.

Table 5: which faculty do you work?

	Frequency	Percent
Economics and management	54	36.0
Education and humanities	54	36.0
Health sciences	18	12.0
Engineering and computer science	16	10.7
Law	6	4.0
Agriculture and Veterinary science	2	1.3
Total	150	100.0

Table 5 illustrates how respondents are spread across various faculties. The two largest groups are from the **Economics and Management** and **Education and Humanities** faculties, each comprising **36.0%** of the respondents (54 individuals). The **Health Sciences** faculty accounts for **12.0%**, followed by **Engineering and Computer Science** with **10.7%**. The **Law** faculty makes up **4.0%**, and the smallest group is from the **Agriculture and Veterinary Science** faculty, with only **1.3%**. This highlights a greater concentration of respondents in the **Economics, Management, and Education faculties**, while other faculties have fewer participants.

Table 6: What is your professional rank?

	Frequency	Percent
Lecturer	48	32.0
Senior Lecturer	91	60.7
Assistant Professor	2	1.3
Associate Professor	7	4.7
Professor	2	1.3
Total	150	100.0

Table 6 presents the distribution of respondents based on their academic rank. The majority of respondents were **Senior Lecturers**, comprising **60.7%** (91 individuals), followed by **Lecturers** with **32.0%** (48 individuals). Smaller proportions include **Associate Professors** (4.7%), and **Assistant Professors** and **Professors**, each representing **1.3%** of the total respondents. This indicates that most participants hold positions as Senior Lecturers, with fewer in higher academic ranks.

Table 7: National Factors Affecting Research Productivity

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Inadequate government funding limits research productivity.	4 (2.7%)	7 (4.7%)	9(6.0%)	70(46.7%)	60 (40.0%)
Weak national research policies.	3 (2.0%)	12(8.0%)	9(6.0%)	55(36.7%)	71 (47.3%)
Insufficient investment in research infrastructure at the national level.	4 (2.7%)	10(6.7%)	9(6.0%)	55(36.7%)	72 (48.0%)
Lack of effective national-level knowledge sharing mechanisms.	4 (2.7%)	10(6.7%)	8(5.3%)	55(36.7%)	73 (48.7%)

The majority of respondents agreed that inadequate government funding, weak national research policies, insufficient investment in research infrastructure, and lack of effective knowledge-sharing mechanisms are major national-level barriers affecting research productivity. These findings indicate that respondents perceive national-level support and policies as crucial determinants of academic research performance. The results showed that Namibia depends on foreign cooperation and it shares less than 0.03% of the world's information globally, contributing only a scanty 0.36%. this shows that the Namibia government gives a small share of funding to research productivity(Leonard et al., 2022).

Table 8: Institutional Factors Affecting Research Productivity

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Poor research infrastructure hinders academic research.	4 (2.7%)	13(8.7%)	10(6.7%)	57(38.0%)	66 (44.0%)
Insufficient institutional funding limits research.	2 (1.3%)	11(7.3%)	10(6.7%)	56(37.3%)	71 (47.3%)
Lack of strong institutional policies to effectively support research.	4 (2.7%)	8 (5.3%)	10(6.7%)	55(36.7%)	73 (48.7%)
My institution provides strong support and mentorship that facilitates my research career.	57 (38.0%)	64(42.7%)	11(7.3%)	15(10.0%)	3 (2.0%)
My institution offers valuable research training opportunities that enhance my skills.	64 (42.7%)	56(37.3%)	12(8.0%)	13 (8.7%)	5 (3.3%)

The majority of respondents agreed that poor research infrastructure, insufficient institutional funding, and lack of strong institutional policies significantly hinder research. Moreover, most respondents disagreed that their institutions provide strong mentorship or valuable training opportunities, suggesting weak institutional support structures that negatively impact research capacity and productivity. Quimbo & Sulabo (2014), represented Institutional Factors such as Research policy, Research funding, Research benefits and incentives.

Table 9: Individual-Level Factors Affecting Research Productivity

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Limited research skills hinder productivity.	5 (3.3%)	14(9.3%)	10(6.7%)	54(36.0%)	67(44.7%)
Lack of incentives to enhance research productivity.	5 (3.3%)	14(9.3%)	12(8.0%)	55(36.7%)	64 (42.7%)
Heavy teaching workload affects research productivity.	4 (2.7%)	13(8.7%)	10(6.7%)	53(35.3%)	70 (46.7%)
Limited personal funding restricts research.	4 (2.7%)	13(8.7%)	11(7.3%)	57(38.0%)	65 (43.3%)
Limited research experience hinders progress.	4 (2.7%)	13(8.7%)	11(7.3%)	55(36.7%)	67 (44.7%)
I have sufficient access to the resources to conduct high-quality research.	4 (2.7%)	14(9.3%)	11(7.3%)	57(38.0%)	64 (42.7%)
I actively engage in productive collaborations that enhance the quality of my research.	5 (3.3%)	13(8.7%)	12(8.0%)	56(37.3%)	64 (42.7%)
My workload is manageable, allowing sufficient time for productive research activities.	64 (42.7%)	57(38.0%)	12(8.0%)	12 (8.0%)	5 (3.3%)

The findings indicate that limited research skills, inadequate incentives, heavy teaching workload, and limited personal funding are major individual-level barriers to research productivity. Respondents also noted challenges related to research experience and time management. However, some reported engaging in collaborations and having sufficient access to resources, showing mixed experiences at the personal level. This suggests that most respondents feel their workload is not manageable and does not provide enough time for productive research activities. Kyvik and Aksnes (2015) further support this, noting that collaboration enhances output, especially for early-career researchers. Beyond the internal context, Ragasa (2016) argued that both the quality and quantity of human capital are decisive for research productivity, suggesting that capacity development and mentoring are critical interventions. Kazoka and Wema (2012) pointed out that insufficient collaboration between junior and senior faculty and poor institutional research culture undermine performance. This is reinforced by Bukaliya and Muyengwa (2012), who reported that many lecturers lacked skills and support to conduct research due to weak institutional structures. In support of these findings, Altbach et al. (2019) emphasized that institutional governance, leadership, and professional development are core to fostering research cultures in low-resource environments. Lertputtarak (2008) further emphasized the role of government in fostering a research culture by setting strategic agendas and allocating resources. New evidence by Obembe et al. (2020) and Tai (2021) shows that open governance and increased public investment can dramatically enhance research productivity in fragile or recovering states.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the factors limiting research productivity among university lecturers in Higher Education Institutions in Mogadishu, Somalia. Drawing on Self-Determination Theory (SDT), the study explored how national, institutional, and individual-level factors influence lecturers' ability to engage in and produce academic research. The analysis of the data collected from 150 university lecturers revealed several key insights.

This study confirms that the challenges facing research productivity in Somali universities are multidimensional, emerging from national, institutional, and individual domains. Each of these levels presents unique but interconnected barriers.

At the individual level, findings revealed that many lecturers face constraints such as limited research experience, inadequate research skills, lack of intrinsic motivation, and insufficient collaboration. These findings are consistent with Alemu (2023), who found that a lack of interest and experience significantly hinders academic research productivity. Wahid et al. (2022) also highlighted personal attributes—such as academic rank, research exposure, and time availability—as key influences on research performance.

At the institutional level, the study showed that Somali universities suffer from poor research infrastructure, a lack of mentorship, limited internet and digital library access, and insufficient funding or incentives. Simisaye (2019) identified similar challenges in research institutes, where factors like information access, institutional motivation, and financial constraints were major setbacks.

At the national level, the study showed that inadequate government funding, weak national policies, and lack of a coordinated research strategy significantly limit academic research output. This is in line with the findings of Elnasri and Fox (2017), who found that public R&D spending directly impacts the productivity of higher education institutions. Leonard et al. (2022) observed that Namibia, like Somalia, invests minimally in research and contributes little to global academic knowledge, highlighting the consequences of poor national prioritization.

Taken together, the barriers identified at each level reinforce the need for a systemic approach to reform. Improvements must be coordinated across all levels—building individual research capacity, strengthening institutional frameworks, and embedding research as a national development priority.

6. Recommendations

In light of the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to improve research productivity in Somali higher education institutions:

1. National-Level Interventions

Increase Government Investment: The Somali government should allocate more funding to research and development, prioritizing academic research in national development strategies.

Develop National Research Policies: Establish a comprehensive research policy that promotes academic research, ensures quality standards, and provides frameworks for university-industry and international collaboration.

2. Institutional-Level Reforms

Establish Research Support Systems: Universities should create research centers, digital libraries, and resource access platforms to support staff research activities.

Provide Research Training and Mentorship: Continuous professional development programs focusing on research methodology, publication writing, and grant acquisition should be provided.

Incentivize Research: Institutions should introduce incentives such as financial rewards, promotions, and recognition for staff who engage in meaningful research.

Reduce Teaching Loads: Rebalancing teaching and administrative responsibilities to allow more time for research is essential for fostering a productive academic environment.

3. Individual-Level Support

Foster Collaboration: Encourage both local and international research collaborations and co-authorship to improve knowledge sharing and research quality.

Enhance Motivation: Promote intrinsic motivation by aligning research opportunities with lecturers' areas of interest and providing autonomy in research agendas.

Promote Inclusivity and Gender Balance: Develop policies and programs that support the participation of women and underrepresented groups in academic research.

4. Future Research

Additional studies should be conducted on the effectiveness of specific interventions in boosting research output, and qualitative research could further explore the lived experiences of lecturers with regard to research engagement.

By addressing these multi-dimensional challenges with a coordinated and strategic approach, Somalia's higher education institutions can foster a more robust research culture and contribute meaningfully to the global academic community.

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