

REGIONAL VARIATIONS IN RESEARCH QUALITY, PRODUCTIVITY, AND IMPACT IN AFRICA

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Objectives: Every piece of research must positively impact society, but to do this, a research output needs to be of high quality. This study assessed regional variations in research QPI in Africa.

Methods: African Science Frontiers Initiatives distributed a questionnaire to African scholars between March and August 2023. The current analysis was based on preliminary data from 257 respondents. Simple descriptive statistics and Pearson chi-square were used to analyse the data. Results Of the 257 survey respondents, 52.5% were males, 40.9% having a PhD, 29.6%, 5.8% and 64.6% were from North-East, Southern and West-Central Africa, respectively. Of these, 39.5%, 46.5% and 37.3%, on average, mentioned that their past and current research works have been of high quality in North-East, Southern and West-Central Africa. On the other hand, 90.8%, 80% and 94% in North-East, Southern and West-Central Africa, respectively, were optimistic that their research has contributed to their academic career development. The corresponding estimates were 75%, 73.3% and 85.5% for research contribution to solving problems in local environment and society. Despite this optimistic view of the impact of their research, only 28%, 40%, and 26.5% in North-East, Southern and West-Central Africa, respectively, indicated that their research has been used to formulate policy and guidelines within their institutions or country.

Conclusion: Although African scholars presented an optimistic view of the quality and impact of their research, when measured against key indicators of impact, their optimistic views faltered. The perceived views of QPI did not substantially vary between regions of the continent. There is need for institutional, national, and regional strategies to continue to enhance QPI among Africans.

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