

Review of: "Digitalization of research: do ICT improve scientific production in developing countries?"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The title of the article attracted my attention as it seemed interesting. But, after going through the article, many questions and issues arise which need clarification and need to be addressed to further improve its quality.

- Mention the year of research or when data extraction started from different sources to make it clear when the research was conducted. Provide the reason why the period 2000-2016 was selected for the study as, in my opinion, much more development, events, and studies took place during 2017-2023 in the field of ICT, impacting scientific activities (especially the use of the internet and online services during the Covid-19 pandemic).
- The paper fails to explain the concept of ICT or provide the definition of the term ICT, which is the main theme. A justification is needed as to why only the internet was chosen for the study, as ICT is a very broad term. The paper lacks to address the selection criteria used for the published articles and patents (like the sampling procedure, etc.). You can add the reasons as limitations of the study.
- The citations used in the introduction are mostly old; try replacing them with more recent ones wherever possible. All the abbreviations used, especially in the Tables, should be explained clearly, and the variables also need to be defined clearly; for example, "what is mining rent?" What do 1, 2, 3, and 4 in Table I stand for? The information about the missing data, as the number of codes is less than 70, is lacking; how did you tackle this issue?
- Needs improvement in the conclusions and recommendations section. Especially as you address the 2000-2016 for study, you can give recommendations for further study considering the period onwards from 2016 or so.
- Some in-text citations are not included in the list of references (UNESCO, WB); likewise, some of the references in the list of references are not cited in the text. Cross-check all and delete the references/in-text citations which are not in the article. Also, check the referencing style used by the journal and then follow it consistently. Some of the references are incomplete, like World Happiness Database and WDI; at least give the URL for information.
- Overall, I would suggest that the authors should thoroughly go through/review the article and address the issues highlighted to further improve the quality of the article for clarity, depth, and understanding.