

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.

This manuscript attempts to explain how the research productivity of developing countries is affected by internet diffusion.

The number of research papers published and the patents filed in each developing country are considered as the dependent variables representing research productivity, whereas internet diffusion is used as the main independent variable that explains research productivity. In addition, the researchers analyzed the effects of democracy, education policy, health expenditure, corruption, GDP per capita, government stability, and mining rent as the covariates.

The results show, as expected, that internet diffusion significantly makes a difference in the research productivity of developing countries. From the covariates, GDP per capita, tertiary education policy, and democracy significantly and positively influence the research productivity of developing countries, while corruption, mining rent, and stable long-tenured government negatively affect research productivity.

However, I do not agree with the explanation given by the authors that "national health expenditures negatively explain the productivity of researchers in developing countries. This is because, due to the low life expectancy prevailing in developing countries, these countries still allocate too few resources to health financing." This point could be left open for further research. Mentioning low life expectancy here is unacceptable, and the level of health financing is not discussed to conclude in such a way.

I do not see the explanation given for the ICRG database and World Happiness Database, as their abbreviations are used across the study.

In the study, ICT is mainly represented by the internet. However, ICT is least defined by the internet. It is a much broader concept than the internet, which may be a part of it. Hence, I would say, "Digitalization of research: does **Internet diffusion** improve scientific production in developing countries?"

Overall, the manuscript is worthy of reading, starting with an interesting introduction and vivid methodology, and presenting logical and coherent analysis.