



## Data Article

## Dataset on the production, dissemination and uptake of social science research in Nigeria



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## ABSTRACT

This dataset presents data collected from three surveys, each among researchers, research administrators and policymakers across the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. The data were collected from 513 researchers, 118 research administrators and 60 policymakers drawn from randomly selected organizations that are implicated in Social Science Research (SSR) in Nigeria, which include: 53 universities; 5 research institutes; 17 government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and donors; 9 private consultancies; 26 civil society organisations, private consultancies; and 7 Houses of Assembly. The surveys assessed several factors that impart the production, dissemination and uptake of social science research (SSR) in Nigeria, including research personnel, funding, infrastructure, mentoring, communication practices and products, policy-friendliness, among many others. The data are important in understanding the status of SSR and its potential to influence sustainable development in a typical developing country like Nigeria. The usefulness of the data is many folds as every stakeholder in the research-policy-development nexus is implicated. Ultimately, the data is useful in characterizing SSR system and formulating policies to boost its status and potential.

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*List of abbreviations*

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DRA	Doing Research Assessment
GDN	Global Development Network
GFA	Government and Funding Agency
HEI	Higher Education Institution
MDA	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
NACETEM	National Centre for Technology Management
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PS	Private Sector
RI	Research Institute
SSR	Social Science Research
TETFUND	Tertiary Education and Trust Fund

**Specifications Table**

Subject	Social Sciences
Specific subject area	Production, dissemination and uptake of social science research
Type of data	Primary data Table
How data were acquired	Data were collected using three structured questionnaires, each for researchers, research administrators and policymakers. The questionnaires included both close-ended and Likert-scale questions with some open-ended questions that sought to elicit detailed explanations, as necessary. The questionnaires are provided as supplementary files
Data format	Raw
Parameters for data collection	The data were collected from 513 researchers, 118 research administrators and 60 policymakers drawn from universities, research institutes, private consultancies, civil society organisations, government and funding agencies, and Houses of Assembly across the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria
Description of data collection	The data collection was nationwide. Organizations were randomly selected and individual respondents were purposively selected within the organizations across roles (researcher, administrator or policymaker), departments/disciplines, gender (male and female) and qualifications (PhDs and non-PhDs).
Data source	Institution: [2] City/Town/Region: Ile-Ife, Osun State Country: Nigeria Funding: Global Development Network (GDN), India
Data accessibility	In a public repository Repository name: Mendeley Data Data identification number: Mendeley Data, V1, <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.17632/g2wstgcgwc.1">http://dx.doi.org/10.17632/g2wstgcgwc.1</a> Direct URL to data: <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.17632/g2wstgcgwc.1">http://dx.doi.org/10.17632/g2wstgcgwc.1</a>

**Value of the Data**

- The dataset is useful for understanding the status and structure of the social science research (SSR) system in Nigeria and its preparedness to inform sustainable development. The dataset is, to the best of our knowledge, the first of such on the social science research system in Nigeria.
- The data fills a critical research gap in understanding how, where and by whom social science research is carried out in one of Africa’s largest research hubs – Nigeria.
- The data can benefit different stakeholders in the research-policy-development nexus in formulating policy and targeting actions to fill the gaps the data will help to identify and characterize.

- Social science and development studies researchers can use the data to compare with other countries, determine further research and support systematic reviews in the future.
- Governments and donors can especially find the data useful in designing appropriate and workable strategies and programmes to support SSR in developing countries. Nigeria is a typical developing country in terms of its size and economy; lessons about Nigeria can be revealing and instructive for the rest of the developing world.

## 1. Data Description

The dataset provides, for the first time, detailed and nationally representative information on the social science research (SSR) system in Nigeria. The dataset is from three separate surveys implemented simultaneously, one each for a sample of researchers, administrators and policy-makers, as defined in [Box 1](#). The samples cut across the different actor categories; for instance, a researcher could be employed in a university, research institute or civil society organization. The surveys were self-administered. Data collection was done in July 2019. Survey instruments were hand-delivered to each respondent and later retrieved by a trained enumerator who was also on hand to provide any necessary clarifications. The dataset from each survey is provided in the public repository, making three datasets altogether.

### Box 1. Key Definitions for The Sampling.

A **researcher** is an individual employed in a research-related organisation (universities, research institutes, private consultancies or civil society organisations (CSOs) professionally engaged in the conception or creation of new knowledge through research, improving or developing concepts, theories, models, techniques, instrumentation, software or operational methods [3]. This definition is based neither on formal qualifications nor on levels of education, but on the actual activity of doing research and producing knowledge.

A **research administrator** is an individual in a leadership position in the research-related organizations covered (universities, research institutes, private consultancies and civil society organizations). These include administrative heads of academic/research institutions or departments/faculties/colleges.

A **policymaker** is an individual working in government and funding agencies, including government ministries, departments and agencies; donor organisations; houses of assembly.

Source: Adapted from GDN 2017 Doing Research Assessments: Understanding Research Systems in developing Countries. Global Development Network Program Document. New Delhi: GDN

In addition to background information of the respondents including age group, gender, position, academic qualification, years of experience, discipline and nationality, each of the surveys includes three major sections: i) production of SSR; ii) dissemination of SSR; and iii) uptake of SSR. [Table 1](#) presents the Doing Research Assessment Framework developed by the Global Development Network [1], which guided the design of the survey instruments, and shows the issues covered under each major section. A set of structured questionnaires was used to collect information from the various stakeholder categories in the Nigerian SSR system. The questionnaires included both close-ended and Likert-scale questions with some open-ended questions

**Table 1**  
Doing research assessment framework.

	<b>1. Production</b>	<b>2. Diffusion</b>	<b>3. Policy uptake</b>
<b>Inputs</b>	1.1 Research inputs	2.1 Actors & networks	3.1 Policy-friendly research
<b>Activities</b>	1.2 Research culture and support services	2.2 Research communication practices	3.2 Research-based policy making
<b>Outputs</b>	1.3 Research output & training	2.3 Research communication products	3.3 Research-based policy tools
<b>Outcomes</b>	1.4 Opportunities & sustainability	2.4 Popularization of science	3.4 Research for better policies

Source: GDN 2017 Doing Research Assessments: Understanding Research Systems in developing Countries. Global Development Network Program Document. New Delhi: GDN

**Table 2**  
Profile of respondents.

Actor Category	Researchers	Administrators	Policymakers	Total
<b>Nationality</b>				
Nigerian	482	116	55	653
Foreigner	–	–	4	4
Not known (no response)	31	2	1	34
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>684</b>
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	351	83	41	475
Female	138	33	19	190
Not known (no response)	24	2	–	26
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>691</b>
<b>Highest Qualification</b>				
Bachelor	22	26	20	68
Master	193	20	26	239
PhD	259	60	10	329
Postdoctoral	14	8	1	23
Not known (no response)	25	4	3	32
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>691</b>

that sought to elicit detailed explanations, as necessary. The questionnaires are provided as supplementary files.

## 2. Profile of Respondents

The profile of the respondents is presented in Table 2. With the exception of the policymakers category, where we had four foreign respondents (affiliated with international donor organizations), all respondents were Nigerian. About a third of the respondents across all actor categories were female. Nearly 70 percent of the 61 respondents to the policymakers' survey have a post-graduate qualification.<sup>1</sup>

## 3. Experimental Design, Material and Methods

### (a) Sampling of institutions

We categorized the key research actors involved in social science research (SSR) in Nigeria as follows:

- i. Higher education institutions (HEIs) comprising federal, state and private universities;
- ii. Government and funding agencies (GFAs) comprising foreign donors, local donors, regulators, national agencies, national ministries and research institutes;
- iii. Private sector organizations (PS) comprising for-profit think tanks and consultancies as well as businesses that hire researchers; and
- iv. Civil society organizations (CSOs) comprising non-governmental organizations (NGOs), opinion leaders, non-profit think tanks and the media.

Because of the dispersed nature of SSR in Nigeria and the absence of reliable sampling frames for some of the actor categories, our sampling proceeded in four sequential steps. As a first step, using all available sources, we compiled a list of all institutions in the four actor categories:

<sup>1</sup> Not all the respondents to the policymakers' survey were legislators or people who actually make policies. The respondents included professional staff in the institutions that we covered, who work with/for the policymakers.

**Table 3**

Breakdown of institution-level sample and retrieved responses across actor categories.

Actor Category	Total	Sample	Retrieved
Universities	170	53	53
Private Sector	65	15	9
Civil Society	1,515	26	26
Government and Funding Agencies	MDAs and Donors Research Institutes Houses of Assembly	33 5 7	17 5 7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,825</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>117</b>

universities, GFAs, private sector organizations and CSOs. From this list, we used our first-hand knowledge of the research landscape to exclude those that are clearly not associated with SSR. The second step was to send this list to a set of experts for validation. Our subsequent sampling was based on these validated lists of 1,825 organizations – which we deemed to be sufficiently comprehensive to represent the SSR system in Nigeria. In the third step, which involved two stages, we employed a stratified sampling method to ensure representativeness. Our sampling of GFAs was limited to research institutes. Since there were only a few research institutes that focus on SSR, we undertook a census of them. The other components of the GFA category – donors and legislators – were purposively sampled. We considered this to be appropriate given the narrow focus of legislators on policymaking, and of foreign donors on funding of research production and dissemination. A random sample is theoretically preferable but, in practice, this would have increased the cost of primary data collection without necessarily improving the quality and representativeness of the data.

First, we created a matrix that categorized the organizations in the sampling frames into homogenous subgroups based on three criteria: the category of institution (universities, private sector, research institute, CSO), geographic location (north-east, north-west, north-central, south-east, south-west, south-central), and size (small, medium, large). We were unable to obtain the actual number of researchers employed by each organization so we determined their size – small (S), medium (M) or large (L) – based on informed estimates.<sup>2</sup> At this point, we had a total of 60 theoretical subgroups.<sup>3</sup> This number of subgroups is admittedly difficult to manage for the purpose of data collection, so we implemented a second step to narrow it down. Given the detailed categorizations, some cells in the matrix of subgroups were empty, so we removed them. A few additional subgroups, particularly in the private sector, had too few organizations, so these were also removed. In the end, we had a total of 33 subgroups (See supplementary file ‘Sampling Table’). Each subgroup could be considered as a relatively homogenous group of actors. Based on this, we randomly selected a proportionally representative set of 139 institutions so that the contribution of each subgroup to the final sample was proportional to its share in the sampling frame. In the final dataset, we have responses from a total of 117 organisations (Table 3).

### (b) Sampling of researchers and administrators

Researchers were selected mainly from universities and research institutes, where we randomly sampled ten researchers each. In the Nigerian context, the primary mandate of research institutes, much like that of universities, is the conduct of research to provide evidence for policy. They do not engage in policymaking activities (uptake of research). We considered them, therefore, unsuitable for the policymakers’ survey. Instead, they were included in the sampling for researchers’ and administrators’ surveys. From each private sector and civil society

<sup>2</sup> Our informed estimates were based on our first-hand knowledge of the system and information from scoping interviews.

<sup>3</sup> The CSO category is quite large and difficult to fully map. We could not reliably estimate the number of social science researchers employed by the CSOs and, as such, could not categorize them according to size.

**Table 4**  
Selection of sample for policymakers' survey.

Institution type (number)	Respondent Designation	Number of respondents
GFA (33)	1 executive officer from each organization	33
National Assembly (1)	1 member from each of the 5 committees	5
State Houses of Assembly (6)	1 member from the 5 committees in each of the 6 State Houses of Assembly	30
All Houses of Assembly (7)	The main administrative officer	7
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>75</b>

**Table 5**  
Breakdown of individual-level sample and retrieved responses.

Category	Sampled (n=805)			Retrieved (n=691)		
	Researchers	Administrators	Policymakers	Researchers	Administrators	Policymakers
Universities	500	100	–	391	81	–
Research Institutes	50	10	–	31	6	–
Private sector	15	15		8	5	2*
CSO	20	20		24	20	–
GFA			20	–	–	6
International Donors			13	3	2	8
Houses of Assembly			42	–	–	43
Uncategorized				56	4	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>585</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>60</b>

\* Even though we did not include private sector firms in the sample for policymakers survey, we found two private consultancies – Abuja Enterprise Agency and Data Lead Africa – suitable during the survey because they also perform some research and research uptake roles.

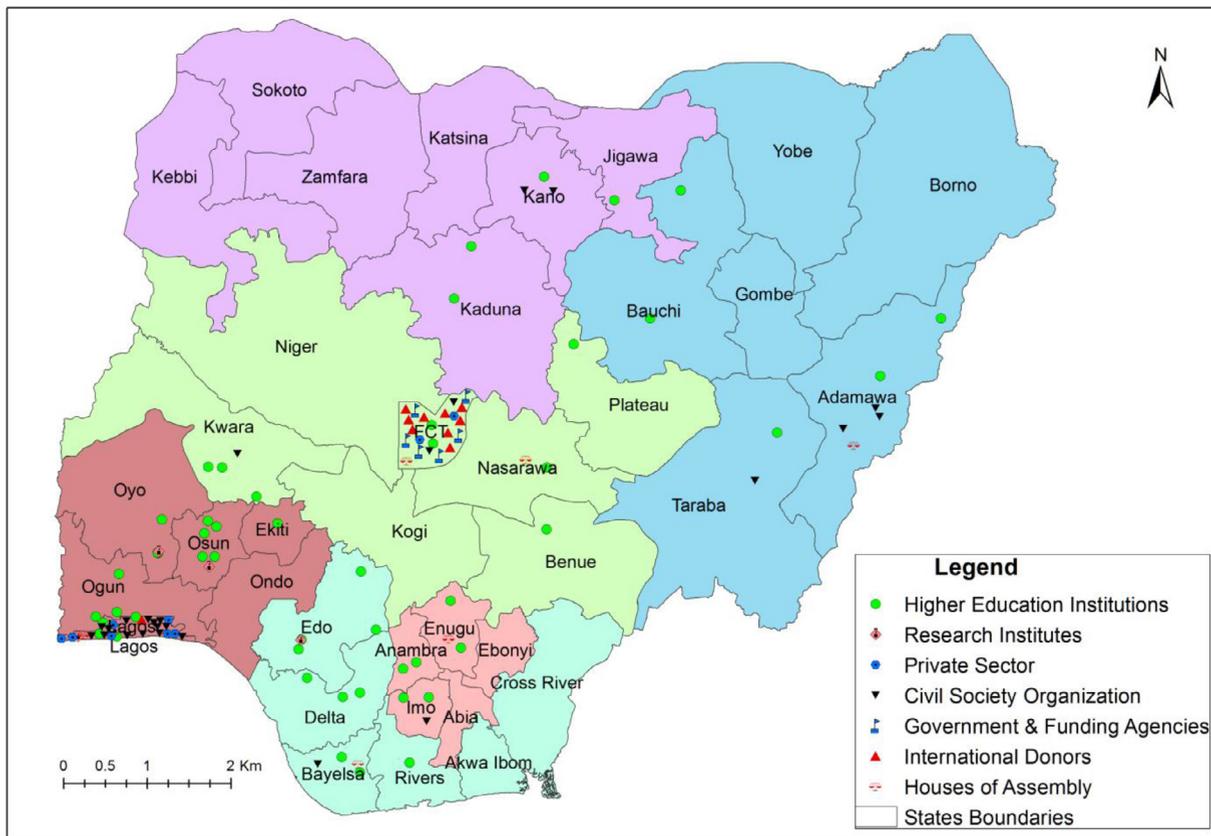
organization, we selected one researcher because these organizations typically hire few or no social science researchers.

The sampling of social science researchers in each university and research institute was done purposively across departments or disciplines, gender (male/female) and qualification (PhDs and non-PhDs). Where it was impossible to fulfil all these criteria, especially for the private sector and CSOs, all researchers available were sampled for the survey. Research administrators were selected from the same institutions/organizations that researchers were selected from. The selected administrators were all individuals in a leadership position – that is, heads of social science-related departments or research supervisors.

**(c) Sampling of policymakers**

We randomly selected a respondent in an executive or decision-making position from each of the 33 GFA institutions (Table 3). In addition, we included a sample of legislators in the policymakers' survey because of their important role in formulating policies. We sampled from ten committees in the National Assembly whose activities are clearly related to social sciences, and from committees in the Houses of Assembly in six states – one from each geopolitical zone of the country. The main clerk of each of the Houses of Assembly was also sampled. The selected states were Lagos (south west), Bayelsa (south central), Enugu (south-east), Nassarawa (north central), Kano (north west), and Adamawa (north east). This selection is sufficiently representative for the purpose of this study as every State House of Assembly is similar both in structure and operation. The committees selected in each House of Assembly include:

1. Cooperation & Integration in Africa & NEPAD
2. Tertiary Institutions & TETFUND
3. Poverty Alleviation & Social Welfare
4. National Planning & Economic Affairs
5. Employment, Labour & Productivity



**Fig. 1.** Geographical spread of the sampled institutions.

6. Sustainable Development Goals
7. Culture and Tourism
8. Communications
9. Environment
10. Women Affairs

In each committee, a questionnaire was administered to either the chairman or secretary (whoever was more readily available or accessible). In some cases, we were only able to reach the main administrative officer of the House (i.e. the Clerk).

#### 4. Final Samples

Table 5 provides specific numbers on the sample. In all, 585 researchers, 145 administrators and 75 policymakers were randomly surveyed, making a total of 805 individuals from 139 organizations. We were able to use completed questionnaires from 691 respondents across 117 institutions, including 513 researchers, 118 administrators, 60 policymakers and a further 61 who did not indicate their institutions. This yields a response rate of 84 percent at the institutional level, and 86 percent at the individual level. Fig. 1 shows the geographical distribution of the institutions covered.

#### Ethics Statement

In implementing the surveys, informed consent was a key ethical issue that was considered. Every participant gave their consent before questionnaires were administered. Essentially, they were informed about what participation in the study would entail. Every questionnaire was accompanied with a letter that explained the purpose of the study and the role of the implementing agency.

#### CRedit Author Statement

**Abiodun Egbetokun:** Conceptualization, Writing review & editing; **Adedayo Olofinyehun:** Data curation, Writing original draft.

#### Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships which have or could be perceived to have influenced the work reported in this article.

#### Data Availability

[Dataset on the production, dissemination and uptake of social science research in Nigeria \(Original data\)](#) (Mendeley Data)

#### Acknowledgements

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## Supplementary Materials

Supplementary material associated with this article can be found in the online version at doi:[10.1016/j.dib.2021.106932](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dib.2021.106932).

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