

Publish or Perish: What can reinforce faculty to participate in scholarly activity?

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Madam, the university faculty members are the main elements of education and research. The faculty member is not just an information provider or a teacher but they have many other roles including facilitation, assessment, curriculum and course planning and resource development. In addition to the multidimensional roles of faculty members of health professional institutes, a successful academic career of faculty members in medical institutes also depends on research participation and scholarly activity.¹ The expectations from faculty members to participate in research has increased for over half a century to an extent that it has become the most dominant and often the main criterion for appointment, tenure, up gradation and promotion at institutions of higher education. Faculty incentive and reward system depends a lot on research activities because most faculty members and administrators support the belief that research promotes teaching² but there are others who challenge it.³ Publication rates are a vital measure of individual and institutional performance that's why Academics are expected to publish. One of the main factor for promoting research is the intense requirement of university administrators to have faculty members with high national rankings. Another

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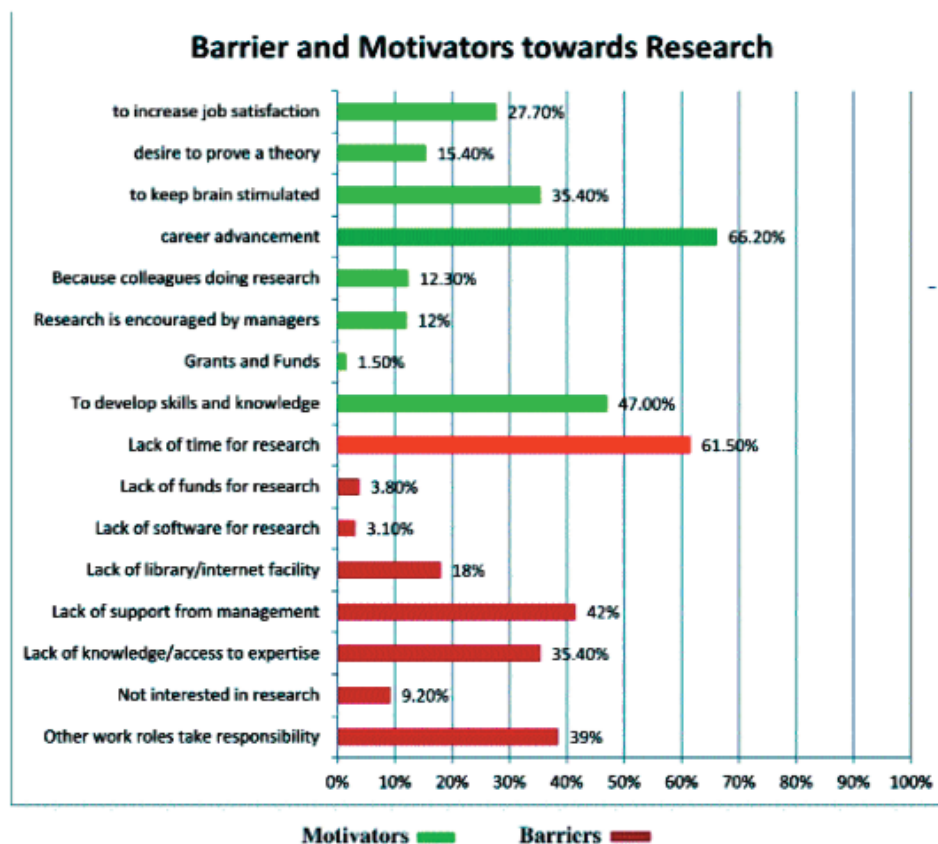


Figure: The barriers and motivators towards research among faculty members of allied health sciences of public and private universities in Punjab, Pakistan.

important factor is the increasing dependence of universities on external research funding to support basic operations.^{4,5} Due to this pressure, the research activities of faculty members are increased, not only at research universities but also at institutions with teaching as their primary mission, but they encounter numerous barriers to perform good quality research including few human resources, limited budget, and poor facilities that has also been reported in literature.⁶ A survey was conducted to explore the barriers and motivators towards research among faculty members of undergraduate programmes of allied health sciences.⁷ The most frequent barrier was found to be lack of time. The participation in scholarly activity was

also reported to be affected because faculty members lack the required skills and qualification for conducting a research. As a consequence of above mentioned constraints 63% of the respondent faculty members did not have any research publications and 9.3% respondents were not interested in research at all. On the other hand, the most reported motivator to be actively publishing and producing research was career advancement. In addition academicians also inclined towards research as they were encouraged by the management and administrators of universities but conversely the teachers also reported lack of support from the higher administration. It is recommended that the gaps and barriers identified by study participants should be rectified through effective interventions. Research training should be made compulsory during undergraduate as well as postgraduate degree programmes. In addition, faculty members should be allocated specific time for research activities as well as for participation in research training workshops. Further research is required at a larger scale that look at the quality of research training and output resulting from it.

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