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# RESEARCH CULTURE IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: TRENDS AND IMPLICATIONS

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***Abstract***
*There is an increasing need for the establishment of research culture in higher education institutions towards enhancing the quality of academics, teaching methods, and performance. This study sought to investigate the state of research culture and its trends and challenges, as well as the effect of research culture on teaching and academics. A descriptive survey design was used, and data was collected from 100 teachers using a research questionnaire. It emerged that research culture is not highly developed in institutions but is encouraged. However, there are some challenges like lack of adequate financing, excessive workload, and lack of enough time which are hampering research activities. The results also indicated that research culture has a significant positive effect on teaching, students' learning, and academics. From the responses by teachers, it was established that research activities have a role in developing innovative teaching practices. There is an increasing need for the establishment of research culture in higher education institutions towards enhancing the quality of academics, teaching methods, and performance. This study sought to investigate the state of research culture and its trends and challenges, as well as the effect of research culture on teaching and academics. A descriptive survey design was used, and data was collected from 100 teachers using a research questionnaire. It emerged that research culture is not highly developed in institutions but is encouraged. However, there are some challenges like lack of adequate financing, excessive workload, and lack of enough time which are hampering research activities. The results also indicated that research culture has a significant positive effect on teaching, students' learning, and academics. From the responses by teachers, it was established that research activities have a role in developing innovative teaching practices.*

***Keywords:*** *Research culture, Higher education, Academic development, Institutional Support, Research productivity*

## 1. Introduction

Observation from this research shows that the culture of research within educational institutions is gradually changing, and it is primarily contributing towards ensuring the quality of education and training of scholars. The findings indicate that as the faculty members are increasingly engaging in their research activities, there are still several challenges such as lack of funds, too much teaching and time that hinder research productivity. Access to resources, training and policy frameworks were also institutional support, which was found to be a key determinant in facilitating research engagement. Moreover, the study confirms that existence of a strong research culture positively influences teaching practice by enhancing innovation, critical thinking and enhanced student learning outcomes. As a result, colleges and universities are advised to adopt holistic solutions like increased financial rewards, reduced work pressure and official research development programs that can improve the culture of research and achieve sustainable academic growth. A good research culture not only enhances scientific development but also the teaching process and learning experiences of the students. As a result, the notion of research culture has become a prominent theme of discussion in the field of higher education (Tikhonova and Raitskaya, 2024).

Research culture is a collection of values, practices, norms, and institutional supports that facilitate and maintain research activities in the faculty and among students. It includes several aspects, such as financial support of research, the possibility of collaboration, institutional policies, and academic motivation. An established culture of research can help the faculty to be more active in academic activity, thus promoting intellectual development and academic quality (Olvido et al., 2021). In addition, facilities that are highly research-oriented are more likely to exhibit a high degree of productivity, innovation, and academic involvement.

Research culture is developed within institutions and regions differently, and in most cases, this depends on the structural, organizational, and individual factors. Research has demonstrated that the development of an effective research culture in many institutions of higher learning, especially in developing settings, is a problem of resources, institutional support, and research training (Roxas-Soriano et al., 2020). These issues make it difficult to achieve high-quality research and restrict the assimilation of research into teaching methods by faculty members.

Another vital aspect that affects research culture in higher education is faculty motivation. Motivated teachers will become more inclined to research, be involved in the production of knowledge, and use research-related practices in their instruction. Research engagement among faculty members is greatly influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors, including recognition, career growth, and institutional support (Watt and Richardson, 2020). Likewise, professional orientation and achievement goals are essential in determining the balance between teaching and research work (Daumiller and Dresel, 2020).

The strategic initiatives, as well as the institutional framework, are also critical in facilitating a sustainable research culture, in addition to the individual motivation. The relevance of the pillars has been found to be the leadership support, research infrastructure, collaboration, and policy development as the major elements of establishing and maintaining research-oriented academic environments (Padua et al., 2019). These elements aid in the creation of a supportive environment for research involvement and increase academic achievement.

While the significance of research culture has increasingly come to light, the absence of knowledge about its impact on teaching quality and overall academic performance of higher education establishments is still present. Although past research has mainly concentrated on research productivity and institutional performance, little has been done on the overall educational implications of research culture. Hence, it is paramount to discuss the tendencies, issues, and consequences of research culture in HEIs, especially considering the effectiveness of teaching and academic development.

The present study aims to:

- To examine the current state of research culture in higher education institutions.
- To identify emerging trends and challenges influencing research practices.
- To analyze the impact of research culture on teaching quality and academic development.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Research Design

In the current study, the research design was selected as descriptive survey research design in an attempt to examine the research culture among institutes of higher learning. This particular approach was deemed suitable for this investigation since it allows systematic data collection and analysis in an effort to describe the present situation or state of affairs related to the research culture in academia.

### 2.2 Study Area and Participants

This study took place at some of the institutions of higher education, such as the universities and colleges. The faculty members and the academic staff were considered to be the target population since they were the direct participants in the teaching and research process. The subjects chosen for participation had previous involvement in the research-related activities and were purposively sampled.

### 2.3 Data Collection Instrument

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed considering the objectives of the study and literature. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part A was based on demographics of the respondents, which included

variables like gender, qualifications, and years of teaching experience. Part B covered the statement-based questions regarding research culture, institutional support, challenges, and its effects on teaching and academic development in order to assess the most important aspects that play a role in conducting research at higher educational institutes.
As regards the variables in Part B of the questionnaire, a five-point Likert scale was used to measure the respondents' perceptions and attitudes. In this regard, the five points consisted of the number 1, which stood for "Strongly Disagree"; the number 2, which stood for "Disagree"; the number 3, which stood for "Neutral"; the number 4, which stood for "Agree"; and the number 5, which stood for "Strongly Agree."

### 2.4 Validity and Reliability

Validity of the questions was sought through review by subject matter experts. This ensured that changes could be made based on the input received from them so as to improve relevance and comprehension.
To ensure reliability, a pilot test was conducted on a small group of the respondents, and internal consistency of the instrument was determined by Cronbach's alpha, which resulted in a value of 0.82, which is good reliability.

### 2.5 Data Collection Procedure

The data have been gathered using online and offline channels. Faculty members were given questionnaires to which they gave their consent after seeking authorization by the respective institutions. The participants were made aware of the study purpose, and their answers were gathered voluntarily whilst maintaining confidentiality and anonymity.

### 2.6 Variables of the Study

In this analysis, emphasis was placed on various variables that were divided into independent and dependent variables to determine the impact that the research culture has on educational achievements. The independent variables involved institutional support for research, research participation, provision of necessary resources, and faculty motivation. Institutional support is concerned with aspects such as financing and administrative support as well as policies while research participation focuses on faculty involvement in various research activities. Resources involve provision of infrastructure and data while faculty motivation relates to incentives that encourage faculty members to engage in research activities. On the other hand, the dependent variables include teaching quality and academic development, which indicate the influence of research culture on instructional quality and professional development of teachers.
The data that were collected were analyzed through descriptive statistics in order to have an understanding of the answers given. These include the use of frequency distribution in order to show respondent traits and trends, percentage analysis to determine comparison, and finally the use of means to understand respondent perceptions towards certain statements. The selection of these methods was based on the effectiveness of the analysis of questionnaire-type data. Data presentations used tables and graphs, such as bar and pie charts.

## 3. Results and Analysis

### 3.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic distribution shows that the sample will consist of academically experienced and qualified respondents and makes the findings more credible. The fact that the majority of the participants have earned PhDs (66%), implies that they are currently involved in research-related outcomes and thus their perceptions are very pertinent to the study. Also, the distribution of teaching experience indicates that most of the respondents have an experience exceeding five years of experience, which suggests that they have enough exposure to institutional research practices and academic settings. This multiplicity of experience makes it possible to have a more in-depth view of the culture of research in various career phases.

**Table 1.** Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 100)

| Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 58 | 58% |
| | Female | 42 | 42% |
| Qualification | Master's Degree | 34 | 34% |
| | PhD | 66 | 66% |
| Teaching Experience | < 5 years | 22 | 22% |
| | 5–10 years | 38 | 38% |
| | > 10 years | 40 | 40% |

### 3.2 Research Culture in Higher Education Institutions

The results show that the culture of research in the institutions of higher learning is mostly viewed as a positive one especially when it comes to the provision of encouragement and support of policy. The mean score of research encouragement (4.12) was high indicating that institutions are supporting research engagement among the faculty members. Nevertheless, the comparatively moderate scores of facilities (3.68) and collaboration (3.85) are indicative that the intention to encourage research is present, though the practical implementation might be rather restricted. The role of this institutional support-operational effectiveness gap is to emphasize the need to improve infrastructure and build networks of cooperation. The overall results show that the research culture is in the process of change, which still has not

been maximized.

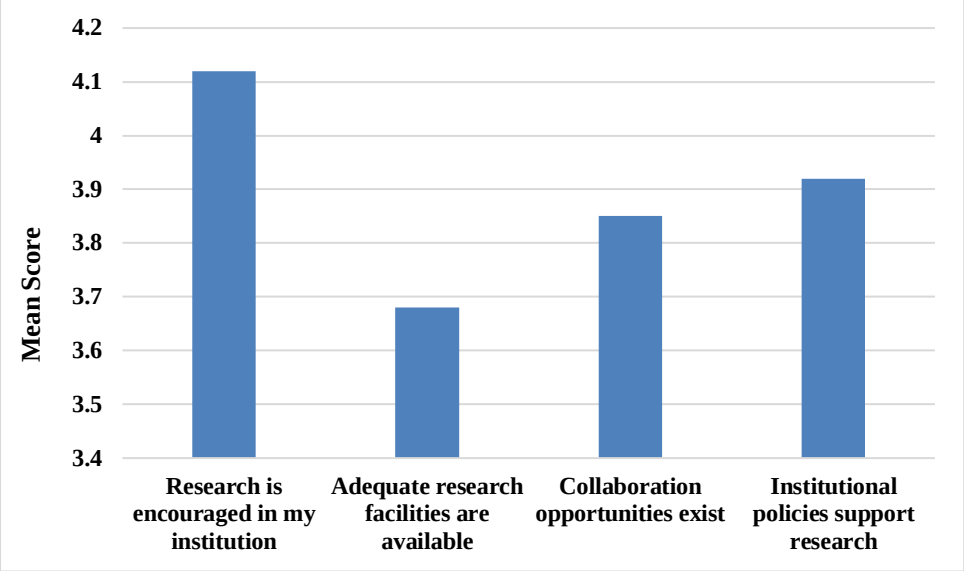


**Figure 2.** Perception of Research Culture

### 3.3 Institutional Support for Research

It can be said that the level of institutional support is quite average, and the gaps between means in terms of various criteria are considerable. The lowest level of means in relation to all the criteria mentioned above can be observed in regard to funding availability (3.45), which indicates that funding is a crucial barrier for research activities. Despite the high level of access to resources (3.88), it is not enough without proper financial and administrative support. On the one hand, training programs and administrative support have quite average average ratings, which show that certain actions to stimulate research are already undertaken by institutions.

**Table 3.** Institutional Support for Research

| Factor | Mean | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| Funding availability | 3.45 | Moderate |
| Research training programs | 3.72 | Moderate |
| Administrative support | 3.60 | Moderate |
| Access to research resources | 3.88 | High |

### 3.4 Research Trends and Participation

The statistics reveal that there is an upward trend among the number of faculties participating in research. The participants are very active in disseminating knowledge and networking, and many of them (72) have attended conferences. In addition, most of the respondents have published 3-5 research articles which is an average measure of research productivity. Nevertheless, the fact that 28% of the respondents had limited publications indicates that not all and every faculty member is equally engaged in research. This disparity can be attributed to the variation in institutional support, workload or personal motivation. Generally, the findings show that there is a positive movement but also that there should be inclusive strategies to improve the participation of all members of the faculty. The statistics show an increasing trend of faculty members taking part in research. Respondents are actively involved in academic dissemination and networking, and a considerable percentage of them (72) have attended conferences. In addition, most of the respondents have published 3-5 research articles which is an average measure of research productivity. Nevertheless, the fact that 28% of the respondents had limited publications indicates that not all and every faculty member is equally engaged in research. This disparity can be attributed to the variation in institutional support, workload or personal motivation. Generally, the findings show that there is a positive movement but also that there should be inclusive strategies to improve the participation of all members of the faculty.

**Table 3.** Research Participation of Faculty

| **Variable** | **Category** | **Frequency** | **Percentage (%)** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Published research papers (last 3 years) | 0–2 | 28 | 28% |
| | 3–5 | 42 | 42% |
| | >5 | 30 | 30% |
| Participation in conferences | Yes | 72 | 72% |
| | No | 28 | 28% |

### 3.5 Impact of Research Culture on Teaching and Academic Development

The results are very consistent with the existence of a positive correlation between research culture and educational outcomes. The mean score of academic development (4.30) is the largest meaning that research activities play an important role in the growth and development of faculty and professionals. Likewise, the scores of teaching quality and student learning are high, that is, the research involvement improves teaching effectiveness and deepens the student learning. The capacity of research in enhancing innovation in teaching further underlines how research can be used to better practices in education. Such findings support the notion that research culture is not just positive in terms of its contribution to knowledge production, but it is also critical in enhancing the general academic climate.

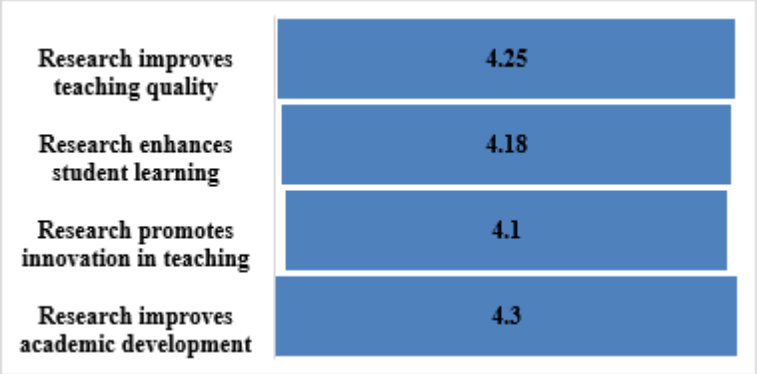


**Figure 2**. Impact on Teaching and Academic Development

### 3.6 Challenges in Research Culture

The findings show that some important issues challenge the culture of research in institutions of higher learning. The highest average (4.20) of lack of funding indicates that lack of funds is the greatest hindrance to research productivity. Moreover, faculty members cannot actively participate in the research activities due to the heavy teaching load and time restrictions as well. The results indicate that the faculty members find it difficult to manage teaching and research activities and this affects the research output adversely. Although lack of training is perceived as a moderate challenge, it still indicates a need for capacity-building initiatives. In general, the findings highlight the need to have institutional changes to lessen the workload burden and enhance resource distribution in research operations.

**Table 4.** Challenges Faced by Faculty

| Challenge | Mean | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| Lack of time | 4.05 | High |
| Lack of funding | 4.20 | Very High |
| Heavy teaching workload | 4.10 | High |
| Lack of research training | 3.65 | Moderate |

## 4. Discussion

The findings of this study highlight a clear progression in the development of research culture within higher education institutions, reflecting increased academic engagement, although certain challenges still require attention to achieve its full potential. This is coupled with prior evidence that faculty motivation is a factor that boosts research output, with intrinsically motivated faculty being more likely to exhibit greater research involvement and output (Stupnisky et al., 2023).

Another result of the study is the unequal participation of the faculty in conducting research, which is reflected through some inconsistencies regarding publishing and conference attendance. The above-discussed phenomenon is consistent with the findings of Palmiano et al. (2024), who have reported that researchers do not engage equally in scientific work depending on institutional support and personal inclination. Such differences indicate that even when the culture of science is growing, it does not necessarily grow equally for all faculty members.

One of the research findings is that there are strong obstacles to research especially lack of funding, time, and overwhelming teaching workload. These are the issues that have a direct impact on the faculty members to do research. Cerbo et al. (2023) have identified similar issues and stated that the most important barriers to research productivity are institutional limitations and workload pressures. This implies that institutional frameworks are critical in influencing research culture.

It was also discovered that institutional support also played a critical role in terms of research engagement. The results indicate that the institutions with superior resources and support systems are more likely to have a high percentage of research participation. Orfan et al. (2024) support this, as they discovered that the institutional environment and support have a significant influence on the productivity of faculty research. Recent efforts should therefore be made to strengthen the institutional frameworks to enhance the culture of research.

Moreover, the contribution of institutional best practices towards the culture of research is also present. Well-organized programs like research training, and teamwork opportunities and policy support are other programs that help in better

research outcomes. As Quitoras and Abuso (2021) emphasized, effective research development practices in institutions increase the chances of establishing sustainable research environments.

Moreover, the research productivity variation among the faculty members can be guided by both personal and institutional factors, such as academic background and availability of research opportunities. Baloch et al. (2021) discovered that the differences in faculty attributes can cause different production of research results, which suggests that both individual and organizational aspects should be taken into consideration when fostering research culture.

Altogether, the study supports the idea that research culture is an important aspect of developing academic and teaching. Nonetheless, in order to create a better research setting within academic institutions, it is important to address some of the key concerns, such as financial problems, high workloads, and disparities in participation.

## 5. Conclusion

The observations of the present study clearly demonstrate that the evolving research culture within universities significantly contributes to improving teaching quality and fostering the professional development of faculty members. From the analysis, it is evident that even though there has been an increase in research activities among the instructors, there are still some problems, including lack of adequate funding, too much workload, and time constraints that hinder research productivity. The availability of resources, training, and supportive policies were also considered another form of institutional support that was found to be extremely essential in ensuring that there is active involvement in research. From the results presented above, it may therefore be inferred that the research culture plays a positive role in enhancing the teaching process in terms of innovation, critical thinking skills, and successful outcomes in the learning process. Consequently, this implies that there is a need for education institutions to formulate policies geared towards the development of research culture.

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