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Comprehensive Exploration of Research and Publication Endeavours among Universiti Teknologi MARA Academicians

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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to investigate the research and publication activities of lecturers at various UiTM branches. The study aimed to evaluate the accomplishments of lecturers in research and publication activities and to identify any challenges they encountered. A total of 247 respondents participated in this study. Descriptive statistics were utilised to explore the data for each variable, which included the use of pie and bar charts. The findings indicated that 57% of respondents are currently involved in active grants, either as principal investigators or team members. However, the majority of respondents (60%) are not engaged in collaborations with external higher education institutions, whether public or private. Additionally, a majority of respondents do not have access to international and industry grants, with 95% and 79% lacking these, respectively. Moreover, 56% of respondents have never supervised postgraduate students. Furthermore, 66% and 51% of respondents have publications indexed in Scopus/WoS and MyCite/ERA, respectively. Finally, 74% of respondents agreed that the main obstacle to becoming a lead author is being preoccupied with teaching and learning responsibilities. However, the majority of respondents, 77% and 55% respectively, are satisfied with their teaching and learning achievements and the support provided by UiTM to enhance research and publication activities. Thus, it is suggested that UiTM consider implementing workload adjustments, research leave, or time management support to assist lecturers in balancing their teaching, research, publication activities, and administrative responsibilities.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the field of higher education, research and publication play a crucial role in shaping institutional reputation, global visibility, and individual career advancement. Universities are evaluated not only based on their teaching excellence but also on their research output and dissemination of scholarly work. The

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Malaysian higher education system is placing greater importance on research productivity, international collaborations, and the significance of publications. Cultivating a strong research culture is a key strategic focus for Malaysian universities, such as Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), in line with national higher education goals and global benchmarks. As one of the largest public universities in the country, UiTM plays a critical role in achieving the country's research goals. However, a significant number of its academic workforce are located in branch campuses, which have varying levels of resources, research networks, and institutional support.

Despite efforts by UiTM to promote a research-intensive culture, a significant number of lecturers at branch campuses are not actively involved in research and publication activities (Bakar et al., 2024). Preliminary observations suggested low levels of external collaboration, limited success in securing international and industry grants, and minimal participation in postgraduate supervision. Moreover, lecturers frequently mention the heavy teaching and administrative workload as a critical barrier to taking on lead author roles in academic publications. While some lecturers excel in research and publishing, others encounter systemic barriers that hinder their academic productivity.

The lack of research and publication output is negatively impacting the university's strategic goals and hindering individual career advancement and academic growth. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate the underlying factors behind lecturers' limited involvement in research, identify existing gaps, and suggest strategies to create a more research-friendly environment across all UiTM campuses. This study aims to analyse the current research and publication activities of lecturers at UiTM branch campuses, investigate the existing landscape, evaluate their performance, identify obstacles, and recommend practical solutions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research universities are commonly acknowledged as institutions that are centred on knowledge with a primary focus on learning, knowledge transmission, and knowledge development (Trifonova & Ronchetti, 2006), as well as professional development in the current dynamic academic environment (Tan & Noor, 2013). The implementation of knowledge management strategies within universities, particularly when combined with effective information sharing can offer significant advantages for institutional growth and advancement (Tan & Noor, 2013).

Research collaboration has become a fundamental aspect of knowledge sharing, playing a crucial role in the creation of new knowledge (Wai Ling et al., 2009). Collaborative group work and networked partnerships are now commonplace in academia, driven by various factors such as the need for a critical mass of individuals with diverse expertise, advancements in travel and internet accessibility, the increasing demand for interdisciplinary research (Lee & Bozeman, 2005), political initiatives promoting collaboration and cost-sharing, and researchers' personal aspirations for resources, recognition, and academic advancement (Wagner & Leydesdorff, 2005; Van Rijnsoever et al., 2008).

The productivity of research groups is greatly impacted by various factors, including leadership, research experience, communication and collaboration among team members, and group size (Kyvik & Reymert, 2017). Scholars in different disciplines engage in extensive research projects to create new ideas, validate existing theories, and enrich the growing body of knowledge. These endeavours are crucial for personal career progression and also have wider implications, shaping policy decisions, guiding curriculum development, and advancing societal progress.

Publishing research in reputable journals involves a series of crucial steps, beginning with the identification of a research hypothesis, followed by a thorough literature review, selection of appropriate methodologies, data collection and analysis, and manuscript preparation. Research engagement, as defined by Heng et al. (2020), encompasses a wide range of academic activities, including originating research ideas, conducting studies, writing papers, and publishing findings.

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Researchers also encounter challenges such as the peer-review process, ethical dilemmas, and the changing landscape of academic publishing. A common challenge faced by researchers is "writer's block," which is not necessarily a reflection of writing skills but rather psychological and strategic barriers that hinder writing progress (Rose, 2009). Rose suggests that this obstacle often arises from inadequate and inflexible writing strategies and a lack of understanding about the dynamic nature of writing and publishing processes.

Recent Western and international evidence further supports the challenges faced by UiTM lecturers. A U.S. study of health professions faculty (2024) identified heavy teaching or clinical duties as the primary barrier to scholarly productivity, limiting time for writing, collaboration, or applying for external grants (Persaud, 2024). Similarly, The Strain on Scientific Publishing (2023) documents that faculty members globally are facing increased pressure to publish more due to rising expectations and a surge in the number of papers being produced resulting in heightened time constraints (Hanson et al., 2024). In a separate multisite U.S. qualitative study of internal medicine faculty conducted in 2022, faculty members reported that maintaining a balance between teaching and clinical responsibilities with adequate support and protected time is crucial for sustaining professional engagement and research productivity (Smith et al., 2022).

Several studies have explored this research area. Yulianti et al. (2020) conducted a study on the effects of organisational climate, punishment and reward systems, and competence on scientific work productivity. The study revealed a positive correlation between these factors and lecturers' performance, indicating that higher levels of these factors led to increased ability to produce scientific publications.

Gunawan (2020) conducted a study on the demographic factors that impact the publication output of lecturers in Indonesia. The study concluded that academic ranking, highest level of education, and the university where a lecturer graduated from had a significant influence on their scientific publication performance. In a similar vein, Santoso et al. (2020) investigated the influence of information technology (IT) applications on lecturers' publication performance. The findings of the study indicated that while the use of IT had no significant direct effect, lecturers who were adept at utilising technology effectively demonstrated enhanced publishing capabilities. This suggests that technological implementation positively impacts lecturers who are already proficient in its use.

Bungai and Perdana (2018) evaluated lecturers' performance based on the Tridharma Perguruan Tinggi principles, which include teaching, research, and community service. The findings indicated that lecturers demonstrated strong teaching skills by utilising diverse instructional approaches, achieved satisfactory results in research publication, and were active in community service activities, although formal documentation of these activities was limited.

In their study, Fajrizal (2022) investigated the impact of motivation, self-efficacy, leadership, organisational climate, and technological competence on lecturer performance. Using path analysis, they found that work motivation had the most significant impact, while self-efficacy and organisational climate had minimal direct influence. Elfindri et al. (2015) observed lecturers' teaching and research performance both before and after the implementation of certification and compensation schemes in 2008. Their findings indicated improvements in performance and publication indices, although these metrics still fell short compared to other Southeast Asian countries.

Mahpud et al. (2024) conducted a study with the goal of formulating strategies to enhance lecturer performance at Muhammadiyah University of Tangerang. Their findings suggested that strengthening servant leadership, empowering academic freedom, and encouraging competitive environment could lead to significant performance improvements. In a separate study, Noor et al. (2020) examined the influence of research motivation, research culture, and research satisfaction on lecturers' performance in East Java. Their study found that motivation had the greatest impact, followed by research culture and satisfaction.

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Lastly, Lesmana and Nasution (2020) conducted a study on the impact of competence, organisational commitment, leadership, and motivation on lecturers at private universities in Medan. Through their analysis using multiple linear regression, they discovered that competence, leadership, and motivation had a significant and positive impact on research performance.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Procedures and Sample

This cross-sectional study was designed to survey all lecturers across four UiTM branch campuses. Due to time constraints, limited accessibility, and varying response rates, a total of 247 completed questionnaires were collected. While this sample does not cover the entire population it is sufficient for exploratory and descriptive analysis. A purposive sampling approach was applied, targeting lecturers who met the study criteria and were available during the data collection period. Previous higher education surveys have reported valid results with sample sizes ranging from 200 to 300 respondents (Israel, 1992; Saunders et al., 2019), supporting the adequacy of this sample for the present study objectives.

3.2 Measures

The questionnaire comprised four sections:

i. Demographic characteristics including gender, job grade, field of specialisation (social sciences or sciences and technology), and years of service at UiTM.
ii. Research activities with 12 items covering experience as a grant leader or team member, collaborations with external higher-education institutions, number of university, national, international, and industry grants secured, postgraduate-supervision experience, and counts of supervised Master's and PhD students, perceived difficulty in securing grants, and challenges encountered.
iii. Publication activities consisting of six items on the presence and number of publications indexed in Scopus/WOS and MyCite/ERA, challenges in attaining lead-author status, and suggestions for improving publication output.
iv. Additional factors including three items on recognition of research and publication for professional advancement, time investment needed to build a research culture, and a self-rated "happiness index" towards research and publication.

The instrument demonstrated acceptable reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.71.

3.3 Data Analysis

All data will be analysed using descriptive statistics and presented with appropriate graphical techniques to highlight key patterns and distributions.

4. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

The descriptive results of the study are presented in this section using pie charts, bar charts, and a cross-tabulation table. Figure 1 illustrates the results from the first section, which focuses on the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The data shows that most respondents are female, accounting for 69.6% (172), while the remaining 30.4% (75) are male. In terms of academic discipline, 32.8% of respondents are from Science and Technology, with the remaining 67.2% from the Social Sciences. This indicates that a higher percentage of respondents are from the Social Sciences field compared to Science and Technology.

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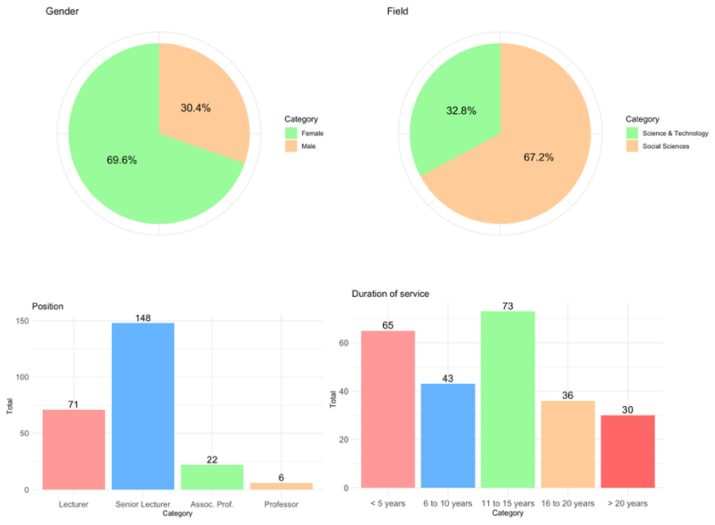

Fig. 1. Demographic characteristics

In terms of academic rank, the majority of respondents are Senior Lecturers (148), followed by Lecturers (71). A smaller number hold the positions of Associate Professors (22) and Professors (6), indicating that most respondents are in mid-level academic positions. In relation to academic experience, the largest group of respondents have 11 to 15 years of experience (73), followed by those with less than 5 years (65) and 6 to 10 years (43). Fewer respondents have 16 to 20 years (36) or more than 20 years (30) of experience suggesting that the majority are in the mid-career stage of academia. Overall, the demographic data indicates that most respondents are female, from the Social Sciences field, hold the position of Senior Lecturer, and have between 11 to 15 years of experience in academia.

Table 1 shows the distribution of participants in two different disciplines: 105 in Science and Technology and 142 in Social Sciences. Out of the total respondents, 55.1% (136) have managed a research grant, while 44.9% (111) have not. This indicates that slightly over half of the respondents have experience as principal investigators (PIs) on research grants. The most significant contributions come from Senior Lecturers in both fields, with 44 respondents in Science and Technology and 43 in Social Sciences having led research grants. This suggests that mid-level academics in both fields are actively engaged in grant leadership.

Table 1. Cross-tabulation of research grant roles based on field and position

Field	Position	Research Grant Roles					
		Leader		Member		Active	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Science & Technology	Professor	3	0	3	0	3	0
	Assoc. Prof	7	0	7	0	4	3
	Senior Lecturer	44	15	51	8	40	19
	Lecturer	15	21	26	10	21	16
Social Sciences	Professor	3	0	3	0	2	1
	Assoc. Prof	9	6	5	10	8	7
	Senior Lecturer	43	46	72	17	48	41
	Lecturer	12	23	23	12	16	19

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Institutional support is essential for enabling academics to pursue and lead research grants. Institutions with dedicated grant offices, mentorship programmes, and administrative assistance tend to have higher rates of faculty members leading grants. A study by Sehlaoui et al. (2021) highlighted that motivational factors like institutional recognition and support significantly influence faculty engagement in grant-related activities.

Out of the total respondents, 190 (76.9%) have been part of a research grant team, while 57 respondents (23.1%) have not. This suggests that the majority of respondents have experience with research grants, with Senior Lecturers in Science and Technology (51) and Social Sciences (72) indicating the highest participation rates among mid-level academics in both fields.

The demanding teaching and administrative responsibilities can restrict the amount of time and effort faculty members can allocate to research activities. These constraints often discourage academics from taking on the additional responsibilities associated with leading research grants. The research conducted by Sehlaoui et al. (2021) identified workload as a significant barrier to faculty participation in grant-related tasks.

In addition, 141 respondents (57.1%) currently hold active research grants, while 106 (42.9%) do not. Among those with active grants, the highest numbers are Senior Lecturers (40) in Science and Technology (40), and Social Sciences (48). This indicates that more than half of the respondents are engaged in ongoing research projects. However, 111 respondents have never led a grant, highlighting a substantial portion lacking leadership experience in securing research funding. The competitiveness of research funding can have a significant impact on academics' decisions to seek grants, with high competition and low success rates potentially deterring potential applicants.

The first objective, represented by Figures 2, 3, and 4 present the descriptive results from the second section, which focuses on research components. A pie chart illustrates the extent of collaboration with other universities. The data shows that a majority of respondents (59.9%) do not engage in collaborations with other universities, suggesting a tendency towards working independently or having limited external partnerships. In contrast, 40.1% of respondents have established collaborations, indicating active initiatives to develop academic networks and foster cooperation. These results may be influenced by factors such as financial resources, academic needs, and institutional strategic priorities.

Most respondents (142) have secured between 1 to 5 grants, indicating that a significant number have access to funding for their research or academic projects. Among these, 108 lecturers have received 1 to 5 national grants, with only 4 having secured between 6 to 10 national grants. Out of all the lecturers, only 10 have received 1 to 5 international grants, and just 2 have been awarded 6 to 10 international grants. Meanwhile, 93 respondents reported that they have not received any grants at all, suggesting that a considerable number may encounter financial or administrative barriers in obtaining research funding.

These findings may be attributed to factors such as limited funding, challenges in the application process, and varying levels of research capacity. Nevertheless, university research teams are consistently urged to seek grants, with assistance provided through training sessions and workshops to improve their proposal writing skills.

In addition, lecturers are encouraged to collaborate with industry partners to enhance the market value and employability of students. A total of 53 lecturers has obtained between 1 to 5 industrial grants, indicating successful industry-academic collaborations. However, most lecturers have not yet received research funding from private companies or industry partners.

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Fig. 2. Research grant status

In assessing the grant application process, 94 lecturers rated it as "Very Difficult," while 81 considered it "Difficult," highlighting the significant challenge of securing research funding. Additionally, 65 lecturers perceived the process as "Moderate," suggesting that some are successful in obtaining grants with considerable effort. Only 6 lecturers rated the process as "Easy," and just 1 found it "Very Easy," indicating that only a small minority find the process to be straightforward.

In general, most lecturers find it challenging to obtain research grants, particularly from international and industrial sources. Although national grants are more frequently acquired, a significant number of lecturers still lack any form of funding. The overall challenge in securing grants, coupled with limited industry collaboration, suggests the importance of universities promoting and facilitating stronger partnerships between academia and the private sector.

This study also examines the reasons for the challenges in obtaining grants, with the following findings: (i) lack of experience and the challenge of grading numerous assessments, (ii) being a novice in the field and needing to learn more, (iii) time constraints, (iv) lack of enthusiasm, (v) not having had the opportunity yet, (vi) unfamiliarity with the correct method for creating a research proposal, (vii) difficulty in finding team members who are truly dedicated to writing, (viii) limited and challenging collaboration with the industry, (ix) engaged in service work that includes supervising students, (x) an overly rigid evaluation process, (xi) occupied with administrative duties, (xii) limited exposure, (xiii) competition with experienced researchers, (xiv) still being new to research.

Early-career lecturers do not have the necessary experience to craft competitive grant proposals. Additionally, teaching-heavy roles, especially those involving large classes and frequent assessments, can restrict the time and effort available for research activities (Brew, 2002; Van der Weijden et al., 2015). In addition, new academics face steep learning curves in mastering disciplinary knowledge, research

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methodologies, and meeting institutional expectations, which can hinder their research involvement and funding acquisition (Robertson, 2010).

Time constraints are consistently cited as a major obstacle to academic research. Juggling teaching, administrative duties, and personal responsibilities leaves little room for writing proposals or conducting research (Fox, 1992; McGrail et al., 2006). Moreover, some lecturers may not give research a high priority, particularly if their passion lies in teaching or professional practice. A lack of intrinsic motivation has been linked to lower research productivity (Bland et al., 2005).

Many early-career lecturers also face limited opportunities to participate in funded projects, often being overlooked in favour of more senior colleagues (Bentley & Kyvik, 2013). Without initial exposure or mentorship, it becomes more difficult to break into the grant system. Insufficient training in research proposal writing is another notable obstacle; junior faculty members may not grasp funding agency requirements without access to mentorship or proposal development workshops (Thomas, 2018).

Effective collaboration can be challenging as it necessitates shared goals and equitable participation from all team members. Many academics report difficulties in forming writing teams where all participants are genuinely committed (Bozeman & Corley, 2004). Collaboration with industry also faces obstacles due to conflicting objectives, communication barriers, and a lack of structured networking opportunities (Perkmann et al., 2013).

Engaging in academic service roles, such as committee participation, event organisation, and community outreach can be time-consuming and may not always be directly linked to research, leaving little room for activities such as postgraduate supervision (Griffin et al., 2013). Furthermore, the complex and bureaucratic nature of grant evaluation processes may discourage new applicants. Rigid criteria that favour experienced researchers can result in the systematic exclusion of emerging scholars (Langfeldt, 2006).

Engaging in administrative duties, such as serving as programme coordinators or department heads, significantly reduces the time available for research (Teichler et al., 2013). Lecturers at branch campuses or smaller institutions may have limited access to research networks, conferences, or seminars that are essential for academic collaboration and growth (Ylijoki & Ursin, 2013).

Lastly, the competitive nature of grant funding creates additional challenges for early-career researchers, who must compete with seasoned academics with extensive publication records and prior grant success (Nicholson et al., 2018). Being in the early stages of one's research career also means having less familiarity with research design, publication standards, and the broader funding landscape, making it more challenging to navigate the academic research world (Durning et al., 2013).

Figure 3 illustrates the supervision status of the respondents. The pie chart shows the percentage of respondents involved in supervising postgraduate students, with 43.7% actively involved in supervision and 56.3% not involved. This indicates that the majority of respondents are not currently supervising postgraduate students. The bar chart further details the number of Master's students supervised (either as primary or co-supervisors). Specifically, 51 respondents supervise 1 to 2 students, 14 supervise 3 to 4 students, and 6 supervise 5 or more students. In contrast, 176 respondents do not supervise any Master's students, suggesting limited involvement in Master's-level supervision.

Another bar chart shows PhD supervision status of the respondents, with 135 respondents not supervising any PhD students and 112 respondents who are currently supervising PhD students. Interestingly, this indicates that more respondents are involved in supervising PhD students than Master's students. The final chart displays respondents' perceptions of the difficulty in ensuring smooth research operations. Most respondents find maintaining research efficiency to be moderately difficult to difficult, highlighting the common challenges in research management. The low overall participation, particularly in Master's supervision could affect postgraduate enrollment and the development of early-stage researchers.

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The higher involvement in PhD supervision might require tailored support such as mentorship training and workload adjustment, to ensure quality guidance.

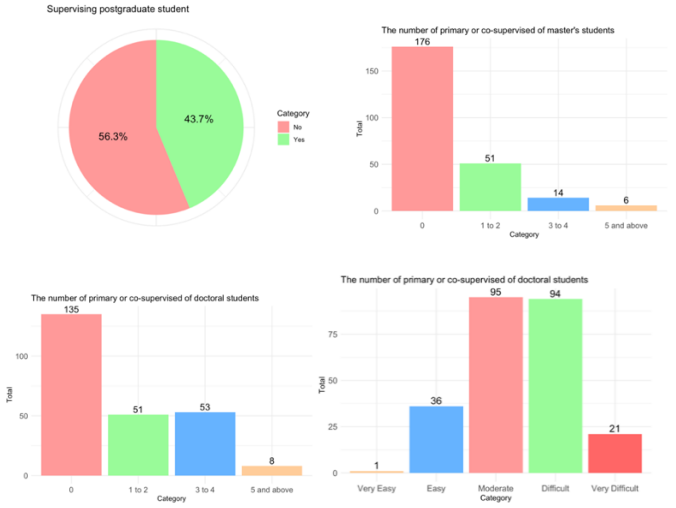

Fig. 3. Supervision Status

The third section, which represents the second objective and focuses on the publication aspect, is detailed in Figures 4 and 5 as well as Tables 2 and 3. Figure 4 illustrates the number of lecturers who have published articles in indexed journals. Out of the 249 lecturers who participated in the survey, 171 have published in Scopus/WoS journals, and 148 have published in MyCite/ERA journals. However, a significant number of lecturers have yet to publish in any indexed journal.

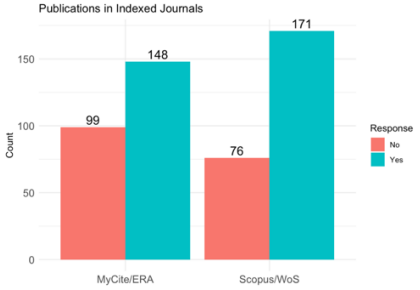

Fig. 4. Number of Respondents Published in Indexed Journals

Table 2 shows that the majority of lecturers in Science & Technology disciplines published their work in Scopus/WoS journals, whereas those in Social Sciences disciplines tended to publish in MyCite/ERA journals. This indicates that lecturers in Science & Technology are more engaged in producing high-impact publications, particularly in Scopus/WoS, compared to those in the Social Sciences.

This trend is consistent with previous research that suggests academics in 'hard' disciplines (e.g., natural sciences, engineering, and medical sciences) tend to publish more frequently than those in 'soft' disciplines (e.g., humanities, social sciences, and business) (Heng et al., 2020; Jung, 2012; Kyvik, 2003; Shin & Cummings, 2010). Kyvik's (2003) surveys of academic staff at four Norwegian universities revealed that staff in 'hard' disciplines published more frequently than those in 'soft' disciplines.

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Table 2. Number of Publications Based on Field and Position

Field	Position	Scopus/WoS	MyCite/ERA
Science & Technology	Professor	4	4
	Assoc. Prof	10	4
	Senior Lecturer	55	34
	Lecturer	18	17
Social Sciences	Professor	2	2
	Assoc. Prof	12	4
	Senior Lecturer	54	59
	Lecturer	16	24
Total		171	148

Table 2 also shows that Professors and Associate Professors had higher publication rates in both Scopus/WoS and MyCite/ERA journals compared to Senior Lecturers and Lecturers. Notably, all Professors and Associate Professors who participated in the survey had published their work, primarily in Scopus/WoS journals. Meanwhile, among the 219 Senior Lecturers and Lecturers, 134 had publications in MyCite/ERA, and 143 had publications in Scopus/WoS.

This finding is supported by previous studies, indicating that higher-ranking academics tend to produce more research than their lower-ranking peers (Alhija & Majdob, 2017; Hassan et al., 2008). Senior academics may have access to better research networks, more experience and expertise, increased opportunities, and accumulated advantages, all of which can lead to greater research productivity (Heng et al., 2020). Therefore, it is likely that academics with higher ranks are more engaged and productive in their research endeavours.

Table 3 presents the total number of publications authored by lecturers over their entire service period in Scopus/WoS and MyCite/ERA journals. Most lecturers have between one and five publications in both MyCite/ERA and Scopus/WoS. However, a significant number of them have not been able to publish at MyCite/ERA and Scopus/WoS levels.

Table 3. The number of publications in Scopus/WoS and MyCite/ERA journals

Number of publications	Scopus/WoS	MyCite/ERA
0	76	99
1 - 5	110	122
6 - 10	28	13
11 - 15	16	10
More than 15	17	3

The last objective, represented by Figure 5, illustrates the obstacles faced by lecturers when taking on the role of the main author for their research papers. Ten key barriers were identified. According to Figure 5, the majority of lecturers strongly agreed that their main challenges include engagement with teaching and learning activities (74%), insufficient publication funding (54%), and administrative responsibilities (51%).

These findings are consistent with previous research. For instance, Yalçin and Altun Yalçin (2017) found that most academics reported difficulties conducting research due to their heavy workloads, professional obligations, teaching commitments, lack of institutional support, and time-consuming class consultations. This suggests that lecturers' inability to complete research and take on primary authorship roles are largely due to conflicting responsibilities. Similarly, Aydin et al. (2023) reported that interviewees cited juggling multiple tasks, such as teaching courses, fulfilling academic duties, and handling administrative work in a single day, as a major barrier to focusing on writing.

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Additionally, 39%, 37%, and 35% of lecturers identified the lack of content or ideas, inadequate writing skills, and difficulty in finding appropriate journals respectively, as obstacles to becoming the main author. Aydin et al. (2023) also found that academics often face difficulties with specific methodological and statistical knowledge, composing introductory sections, synthesising literature, and drafting discussions. To address these issues, they recommended improving academic writing skills and subject-matter expertise through graduate courses and seminars.

Only 25%, 22%, and 21% of lecturers cited lack of institutional support, personal or family issues, and health problems, respectively, as barriers. In contrast, only 10% of lecturers indicated a lack of interest in writing as a hindrance. This suggests that despite facing challenges, a significant number of lecturers remain motivated to write and take on the role of the main author in their research papers.

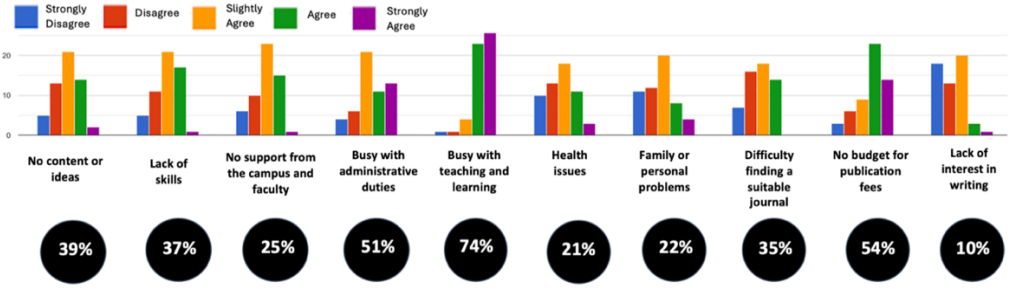

Fig. 5. Percentage of Agreement on Each Obstacle to Becoming the Main Author

Figures 6 and 7 provide a summary of the findings drawn in the final section, highlighting other contributing factors that play a role. Figure 6 presents the responses related to the recognition of the importance of research and publication for career development, as well as the time needed to build a research and publication culture. The results indicate that lecturers exhibit a strong awareness level, with 222 out of 247 respondents indicating a high level of awareness regarding the importance of research and publications in their professional development.

Additionally, the data suggests that a number of lecturers need additional time to cultivate a robust research and publication culture. Twelve lecturers indicated that it would take them more than five years to develop such a culture. Most respondents, however, stated that it would require them between three to five years. Meanwhile, 111 lecturers reported that they could develop their research and publication practices within zero to two years.

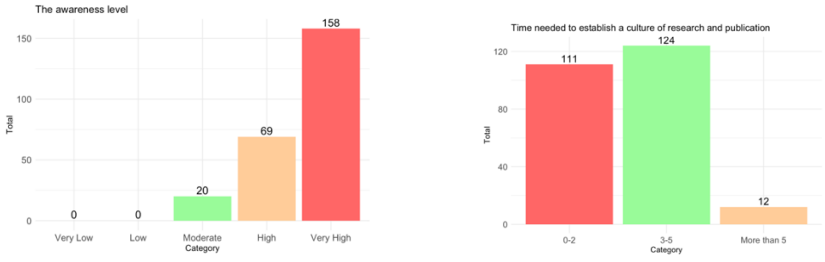

Fig. 6. Awareness of the Importance of Research and Publication in Career Development and Time Needed to Build a Research and Publication Culture

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Figure 7 displays the percentage of agreement on the happiness index components related to publication among lecturers. The chart shows that there are seven components that impact lecturers' satisfaction with their publication-related activities. A majority of 77% of lecturers expressed high satisfaction with their teaching and learning achievements. In contrast, approximately half of the lecturers reported satisfaction for UiTM's support (55%), publication goals (42%), rewards (40%), and performance evaluation (40%). Moreover, only 37% and 34% of lecturers expressed satisfaction with their overall research and publication achievements respectively. This indicates that a considerable number of lecturers are dissatisfied with their performance in these areas.

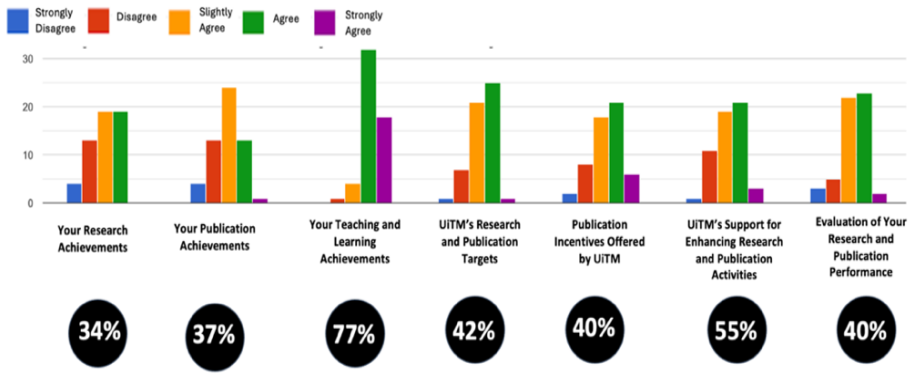

Fig. 7. The percentage of agreement on the happiness index component related to publication

5. CONCLUSION

Research and publication are essential requirements for lecturers at Malaysian universities, including UiTM, and play a crucial role in enhancing institutional reputation and evaluating lecturer performance. This study highlights the multifaceted nature of scholarly work, examining trends, collaborative practices, institutional influences, and the role of technology in shaping productivity.

The findings reveal that while many UiTM branch-campus lecturers have research grants and maintain active publication records, they face challenges such as limited external collaboration, insufficient international or industry funding, and minimal postgraduate supervision. Nonetheless, most respondents expressed satisfaction with the available research support and their teaching achievements.

To further strengthen UiTM's research profile, the university could consider implementing measures such as strategic workload adjustments, dedicated research leave, and enhanced time-management support. Implementing these initiatives will help cultivate a more balanced academic environment and position UiTM as a leading research institution regionally and globally. This will enable UiTM to produce impactful scholarship that shapes national policy and contributes to international academic discourse.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors agree that this research was conducted in the absence of any self-benefits, commercial or financial conflicts and declare the absence of conflicting interests with the funders.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Nor Habibah Tarmuji contributed to the conceptualization and overall supervision of the study. Noor Izyan Mohamad Adnan led the manuscript writing, data analysis, and coordination of the research process. Nurul Nadiya Abu Hassan and Norhuda Mohamed assisted in literature review and data validation. Fadila Amira Razali contributed to statistical analysis and interpretation of findings. Norshahidatul Akmar Mohd Shohaimi supported data entry and preliminary analysis. Wan Mohd Nazri Wan Abd Rahman was responsible for the design of research instruments and data collection. All authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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