

**Investigating the Reasons for Lack of Interest to Research Activities among Faculty Members in Area 5 of Islamic Azad University**

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**Abstract**

The main purpose of this study was investigating the reasons for lack of interest to research activities among faculty members of Islamic Azad University. Research method was descriptive - survey and field research. Population in this research was faculty members of Islamic Azad University. Sample size was 63. In this study questionnaire has been used to collect data. The results showed that lack of communication with research centers and other universities (domestic and foreign), lack of knowledge about research priorities and needs, not using of the network and databases, continuous and proactive communication with authorities and members of the Research Unit lead to lake of attention to research. Therefore, this hypothesis can be accepted that absence or weakness of a communication and information system, lead to lake of attention to research. Also, results showed that lack of adequate financial administrative support leads to lake of attention to research.

**Key words:** Research projects, Research Database, Scientific and research community.

**Introduction**

Research and knowledge production in the country guarantee social mobility and social dynamics. The reason for adopting teaching staff in research is creating a spirit of research in society. Research spirit can be transferred by students and graduates of university out of its<sup>1</sup>. Teaching and research are pillars of Comprehensive Development. Knowledge production is completely dependent upon research.

Research will further enrich science and technology<sup>2</sup>. Preliminary investigations showed that faculty is not inclined to accept and carry out research projects. This is a major problem and has invited researcher to investigate this issue.

**Research Situation in Iran**

Comparison of number of researchers with international indexes shows a wide gap between Iran and other countries especially in terms of allocation of resources. It should be noted that the number of researchers per million people in developed countries in 1990 is about 11 times more than Iran in 1996<sup>3</sup>.

This is not surprising that the number of full time researchers in 1996 was only 20, 400 people and research funding for each researcher at 1. 5 million students have been about one million Rials (100\$).

Gender structure of employees in research section shows that 18. 1 percent of total researchers are women and 81. 9 percent are men<sup>4</sup>. Rules play an important role in enhancing the capabilities. Various problems in

manufacturing sectors of society, and significant reliance of country on oil revenue, not dynamically manufacturing and export, poor participation of private, with particular weakness of approaches to research as the core of development and absence of protective laws cause problems in research section<sup>5</sup>. The legal problems of country are as follows<sup>6</sup>

- Inconsistency of rules to encourage using of research results.
- Absence of clear rules to prevent using of research resources and funds in non-research activities.
- Existence of red tape in adoption, implementation and spending of research funds.
- Absence of balance between financial, education and research regulation
- Absence of appropriate rules and necessary facilities.
- Lack of necessary rules to support researchers and inventors.

### **Importance of Research Database**

Without detailed, comprehensive and updated information, technology development is impossible. Political, economic and technical dependency to rich countries will be continued<sup>7</sup>. In advanced societies, 20% of time is spent referring to information resources<sup>8</sup>. Whenever information systems give information more quickly and at a lower cost, then, reducing the time of information search reduces the costs of research. Otherwise, Experts, researchers and decision-makers will be confounded and costs will increase. A review of research Situation in Iran shows that there is no comprehensive research policy<sup>9</sup>. In such situations, potential and actual research facilities have not been used

properly. Research institutions are not able to fulfill purposes which they have been created for them. Research projects are not done correctly. Research results are not used in order to solve the nation's economic dependencies. Our country potential in the field of research and development is relatively well but we did not use them properly, due to lack of detailed information about them. Planning and policy-making in research, awareness of potential and actual facilities for research need access to information of research database<sup>10</sup>.

### **Faculty position in higher education research and development of country**

One of requirements for economic and social development of any country is providing required human resources. The role of skilled and educated manpower in economic development is important. One of the experts in economic development says that skilled and educated manpower is main asset of a society and will determine ability of society in solving economic and social problems<sup>11</sup>. Supporting of higher education needs increasing experts and efficient manpower. Thus, we can develop by employing elite and efficient faculty because development is dependent on research activities of experts<sup>12</sup>. Thus, the main task of a university professor is research. She/he should be a researcher before a teacher.

A professor, who does not have research knowledge and has not experienced research, Cannot train researcher.

### **University-industry relations**

Universities are critical elements of development process. Industry also plays an important role in development of any country. Then, university and industry are the two pillars of development in any society. And cooperation between them is

conditions necessary for success, and accelerating development process, especially sustainable development. Historical studies show that in developed countries (industrialized), industrial development has been started initially from universities and scientific centers<sup>13</sup>.

### **The relationship between university and industry in Iran**

Private sector participation in the research activities is not significant. On the other hand, public research centers do not have important role in the research activities. Thus, universities traditionally have leading role in research organizing. Now the question is that do universities have been successful in responding to research needs of industry or not ?

### **Barriers to relationship between university and industry**

These barriers can be divided into two categories: barriers due to poor academic performance and barriers caused by the weakness of industry<sup>14</sup>.

#### **A) Barriers due to poor academic performance**

**1-Barriers to learning:** learning in university has not relation with industry. Therefore, students do not have knowledge of the industry and the most talented college graduates teach in universities with no industry experience. Finally, they will not attend to industrial applications in teaching students.

**2-Barriers to research:** Bureaucracy, Shortages of equipment and materials, Low levels of research funding, Strict rules for academics to prevent contracts with industry, absence or weakness of information resources, etc are some barriers to research. The goal of most academic

researchers mainly is attainment scientific degrees. Thus research is very theoretical and without application in industry. Furthermore, most of the research activities of universities have been a means to exaggerate the academic achievements.

#### **B) Barriers caused by the weakness of industry**

-The lack of industrial productivity in Iran

-Industry does not have trust to university (because industry does not recognize the research possibilities and capabilities of universities and universities tend to fundamental research instead of applied Research)

-Lack of industry consultation

-Inadequate attention to education in industry

#### **Barriers research at universities**

The main barriers to research in universities are<sup>15</sup>

- **Lack of research funding:** greater investment in research not only enhances the scientific and practical capacity of researchers, but also it is a key factor in doing research.

-**Research resources and Tools:** In this regard it should be noted that the lack of books and journals, libraries weakness in responding to the needs of researchers, lack of modern informing equipment, inability of library staff in working with these equipments, lack of computers and other devices and laboratory instruments, inability to publish results of research, support systems weakness in reliable and inexpensive service for research, lack of adequate space, no attention to repair certain equipment for research, the absence of a national scientific databases, lack of facilities for using internet.

**-University Structure:** Effective key factors in university structure on Scientific Research are

-University Structure is not appropriate for research

-Research is not in priority.

- Research requirements of country is not clear

- Continuously complaints due to lack of research facilities and hiding weakness in research.

-Doing only theoretical and fundamental research

-The lack of dynamism in research and educational programs and services

-Faculty members do not have enough time to do research or develop their research skills

-Confusion and disillusionment of students due to failure to meet their scientific and empirical expectations.

-Unfair and unscientific assessment of research activities.

**- Research forces:** Lack of efficient researcher and Lack of a comprehensive plan for training such a force are the most important factors in preventing

Research and are big barriers to achieve the goals of national development plans.

**-National and international relationship:** Lack of communication between universities and research institutions and other sectors of society, Lack of research relationship between universities and manufacturing centers are the reasons for lack of support from universities and research duties.

On the other hand unfamiliarity of universities and academic staff of country with other

universities and ignorance of progress and achievements of modern universities in other countries are big research barriers.

**-Society attitudes:** Public trust in university research largely depends on the performance of university, solving social problems and the importance of universities and research institutions of the country for government.

**-Policy:** Lack of policy coordination, lack of coordination between policy and implementation, not understanding the importance of giving priority to national research, lack of support research in solving Industrial economic and cultural problems and projects cause to reduce motivation and innovation and providing constructive comments.

**-Management :** The absence of a strong central organization for synchronizing research activities of universities, ministries research institutes, and various government agencies and private sector, in order to achieve objectives of national development plans is the most important barrier in research. In fact, such an organization is the designer of research policies.

### Literature review

Sadeghi (1996) in an investigation, entitled "Research problems in humanities, from the viewpoints of faculty of Humanities of Isfahan University" identified research barriers and problems, in the fields of humanities, and offered solutions for them. In this project, methodology was descriptive-survey and population was faculty of Humanities of Isfahan University. Collecting data tool was questionnaire and applied Statistical Method was Chi-squared test. In this study, following fundamental problems of human research have been confirmed by faculty<sup>16</sup>:

- Complexities of human
- Lack of job security, economic welfare
- Lack of research funding
- Lack of active research centers
- The low position of human research
- Heavy teaching load
- Lack of research facilities
- Lack of coordination between research centers.

Mojtaba- Zadeh (1994) in an investigation, entitled “Improving research centers, efficient method for development of industry and technology” studied about 20 research institute in Mashhad and Tehran by using interviews and questionnaires. Results of this study showed that a unified research system to determine research priority increases efficiency of research centers<sup>17</sup>.

## Discussion and Results

### Descriptive results

Based on Figure 1 can be said that most respondents had little experience in teaching.

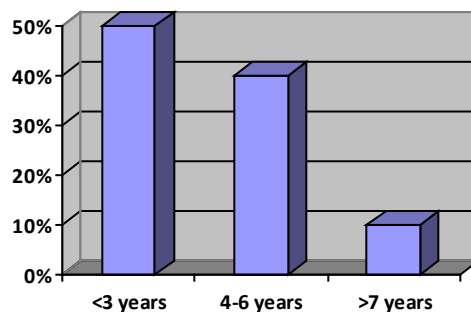


Figure-1 Experience of respondents

## Methodology

Methodology of this study is descriptive-survey and field research. Population in this research was 1196 faculty members of Islamic Azad University. The sample size was 63. This study has been used questionnaire to collect data. In theoretical part of study, literature has been used and, to examine hypotheses and analysis them, field method has been used. In this study questionnaire has been used to collect data. Validity of research has been confirmed by advice of experts and professors and any needed corrections have been made. Reliability has been obtained by means of Cronbach's alpha. Data has been analyzed in two ways: descriptive and inferential procedures. Test methods in this study were as follows: chi-square, t-test, Pearson correlation, Friedman and SPSS software has been used.

Based on Figure 2 can be said that most respondents have done research projects.

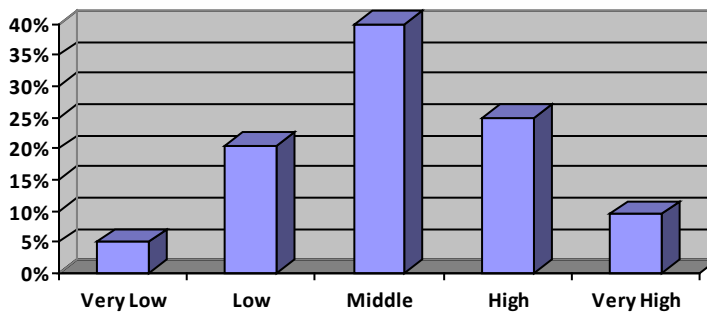
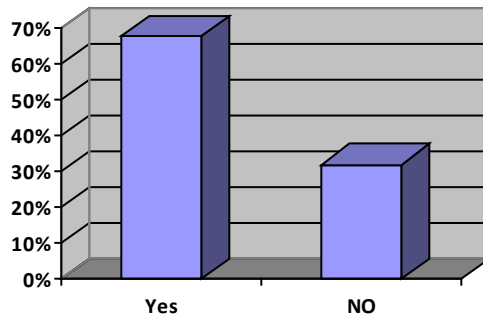


Figure-2 Research experience

Figure-3 Importance of research

Based on Figure 3 can be said that about 40% of respondents believed that importance of research is medium, 25% high and 9.5% very high.

**Analysis of results of the research hypotheses**

Hypothesis 1:

Absence or weakness of research information systems causes reluctance to undertake research projects.

Table1- Analysis of results of Part B of questionnaire.

Factors	Average	Standard deviation	Amount of t-statistics	Amount of Chi-squared-statistics
Lake of communication with foreign centers (1)	3.7	0.98	5.52	26.13
Lake of communication with internal centers (2)	3.4	1.44	2.2	8.161
Not using databases (3)	3.6	1.12	4.3	18.35
	3.7	1.06	5.25	24.2
	3.4	0.94	3.34	8.94

Lack of proper identification of priorities (4)	3.55	0.87	4.93	-
Lack of regular contact with authorities (5)				

Analysis of results of Part B of questionnaire showed weakness of information system. According to table-1 and amount of Chi-squared-statistics, 5 factors did not have equal effect. Amount of t-statistics for 5 factor are great and this means that all of 5 factors were more important than middle. Thus this hypothesis has been accepted. However, according to Friedman statistic, value is equal to 7.94 and 0.94 for probability value. Thus, in significant level of 0.05 and confidence level of 95%, it can be stated that all of 5 factors in table-1 were effective on not attending research. Spearman correlation coefficient showed that these 5 factors have a significant positive correlation to each other in confidence level of 95%. This means that weakening and strengthening a factor causes weakening and strengthening other factors.

	First factor	second factor	Third factor	Fourth factor	Fifth factor
First factor	1	0.787	0.598	0.523	0.312
second factor	0.787	1	0.629	0.450	0.406
Third factor	0.598	0.629	1	0.425	0.421
Fourth factor	0.523	0.450	0.425	1	0.531
Fifth factor	0.312	0.406	0.421	0.531	1

Table 2 Pearson correlation coefficients between five factors

Factors	Average	Standard deviation	Amount of t-statistics	Amount of Chi-squared-statistics
Lack of research facilities (1)	3.97	1	7.7	33.6
Rigid and inflexible rules (2)	3.62	1.2	4.06	19.04
Lack of proper research planning (3)	3.70	0.93	5.86	10
Inappropriate fees (4)	3.87	1.2	5.64	25.64
They have not sabbatical (5)	4.05	0.96	8.68	17.6
Total	3.85	0.87	7.7	

Hypothesis 2:

Lack of appropriate financial – administrative support causes reluctance to undertake research projects.

Table 3 - Results analysis of Part C of questionnaire

	First factor	second factor	Third factor	Fourth factor	Fifth factor
First factor	1	0. 572	0. 581	0. 514	0. 422
second factor	0. 572	1	0. 535	0. 529	0. 523
Third factor	0. 581	0. 535	1	0. 507	0. 520
Fourth factor	0. 514	0. 529	0. 507	1	0. 624
Fifth factor	0. 422	0. 523	0. 520	0. 624	1

According to table-3 and amount of Chi-squared-statistics, Respondents did not answer choices randomly and without purpose. According to t-statistics for these 5 factors and amount of 1. 65 in t-student table we found that all values of t-statistics are large enough. Thus all of 5 factors were more important than middle. However, according to Friedman statistic, value is equal to 16. 61 and 0. 002 for probability value. Thus, in significant level of 0. 05 and confidence level of 95%, it can be stated that all of 5 factors in table-2 were effective on not attending research and in order of importance are:

- They have not sabbatical
- Lack of research facilities
- Inappropriate fees
- Lack of proper research planning
- Rigid and inflexible rules

Spearman correlation coefficient showed that these 5 factors have a significant positive correlation to each other in confidence level of 95%. This means that weakening and strengthening a factor causes weakening and strengthening other factors.

Table 4 - Spearman coefficient for effective factors more that middle

**Conclusion**

Results of this study showed that most of faculty believed that weakness of information systems, inappropriate financial – administrative support, Inattention to results, not using research results, tendency to teach and train, lack of skills to carry out research projects cause Inattention to research. Therefore, we concluded that lack of strong communication and information system,

lack of proper administrative and Financial Planning causes Inattention to research.

**Suggestions**

- It is suggested that access to databases and Internet networks be increased in order to



identify issues and research priorities by teachers

- It is suggested that special libraries be equipped with essential tools and books and articles for each department.
- It is suggested that proper financial funds be allocated to universities and faculty in order to encourage researchers.

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