Article

Research under Constraints: Exploring Confidence, Workload, and Collaboration in Higher Education

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Abstract: As Southeast Asian higher education institutions are increasingly prioritizing research productivity, lecturers at regional private universities are facing unique systemic pressures. Using a convergent mixed-methods design grounded in Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT), data were collected from a purposive sample of 29 full-time lecturers at a medium-sized university in Thailand exploring their beliefs about research, publishing, and collaboration. Quantitative data from a theoretically mapped Likert-scale survey were analysed descriptively, while qualitative data from open-ended responses underwent deductive coding to provide interpretive insights into the tensions between professional motivation and structural constraints. Findings reveal a significant "conviction-capability" gap: while lecturers hold highly positive attitudes toward research (M=4.47) and recognize its necessity for academic identity, their engagement is severely hindered by low research self-efficacy (M=3.46) and a perceived inability to balance teaching and research duties (M=3.41). Collaboration was widely valued for enhancing research quality and innovation, but hindered by methodological differences, unequal task allocation, and inadequate institutional support. Although the small, single-institution sample limits the generalizability of the results, the study provides a critical lens into the emotional and psychological toll of academic productivity demands in under-resourced contexts. Key recommendations include implementing protected research time policies, establishing structured mentorship programs pairing senior and novice scholars, and institutionalizing interdisciplinary research hubs to democratize collaborative opportunities

Keywords: Research Engagement; higher education; research barriers; academic development; Thailand

Introduction

Research is a fundamental pillar of academic excellence, enabling the generation of new knowledge, driving innovation, and supporting professional development in higher education. For university lecturers, particularly in Thailand, engaging in research enhances academic expertise, informs teaching practices, and contributes to institutional prestige and global rankings (Antonio et al., 2023; Panchenko et al., 2022; Roxå, 2018). A strong research culture benefits not only individual lecturers but also universities by increasing publication output, attracting research funding, and fostering interdisciplinary and international collaboration (Anuyahong & Pucharoen, 2023; Laaziz et al., 2024). Integrating research into teaching further enriches classroom practices and strengthens student engagement, better preparing graduates for the demands of a rapidly evolving job market (Krouglov, 2017; Violita & Budiraharjo, 2022). Despite these benefits, many lecturers encounter substantial barriers to conducting research. Common obstacles include overwhelming teaching loads, limited institutional support, bureaucratic hurdles, and inadequate funding opportunities (Khoshnevisan & Rashtchi,

2021; Tadesse & Edo, 2020; Gamboa, 2022). These structural and resource-based challenges often hinder the translation of research interest into tangible scholarly output.

In light of Thailand's national efforts to elevate its global academic standing, understanding lecturers' beliefs and lived experiences is essential. Strengthening the research culture in Thai higher education requires targeted strategies that promote inclusivity, reduce workload burdens, expand international collaboration, and build sustained mentorship systems (Silva, 2021; Villiers & Dumay, 2013). Accordingly, this study aims to explore university lecturers' beliefs about research, publication, and collaboration within a Thai higher education context. Specifically, it seeks to (1) identify the perceived benefits and challenges of engaging in research, (2) examine lecturers' attitudes toward academic publishing, and (3) investigate opportunities and barriers to collaborative research. The findings are expected to inform institutional policies and practices that foster a more research-oriented academic environment, ultimately contributing to a stronger, more inclusive, and sustainable research culture in higher education.

Perceived benefits and challenges in research and publication
Lecturers' beliefs about research, publication, and collaboration play a critical role in shaping their motivation and engagement. Some perceive research as integral to their academic identity, while others regard it as burdensome due to time constraints and institutional pressures (Mofreh & Ghafar, 2019; Amoako et al., 2021). In addition, external factors such as promotion criteria, funding accessibility, and administrative expectations influence lecturers' attitudes toward research participation. As previous studies suggest, these beliefs can either encourage or discourage academic staff from pursuing meaningful scholarly endeavors (Nguyen, 2021; Dickinson et al., 2018).

Publishing in peer-reviewed journals remains one of the most visible measures of academic success. Successful publication enhances professional recognition and career advancement. However, it also exposes lecturers to multiple challenges, including pressure to publish in high-impact outlets, linguistic barriers, and the complexities of peer review and rejection (Buckingham, 2013; Umbach, 2024). Silva (2021) acknowledges that academic publishing is central to the construction and dissemination of scholarly reputation, despite the inherent difficulties of the process. These pressures are particularly pronounced in non-native English contexts, where the linguistic and cultural expectations of international journals can be discouraging.

Alongside publication, collaborative research is increasingly recognised for its potential to enhance research quality, broaden scholarly perspectives, and increase publication impact. Working across institutional and national boundaries promotes knowledge sharing and resource optimisation (Hadad, 2024; Silva, 2021). However, effective collaboration requires overcoming communication barriers, conflicting priorities, and uncertainties regarding authorship and intellectual property (Buckingham, 2013). In this regard, institutional mechanisms such as mentorship programs, collaborative funding schemes, and partnership incentives are vital for fostering sustained cooperation among scholars.

Universities, therefore, play a pivotal role in shaping academic staff's research engagement. Institutions that invest in research training, infrastructure, funding mechanisms, and reduced teaching loads tend to achieve stronger research performance and greater international visibility (Deiniatur & Cahyono, 2024; Hosoi, 2022; Arenas-Castro et al., 2024). Nonetheless, many Thai lecturers continue to face systemic limitations, including insufficient recognition from institutional leadership and inadequate time to pursue research (Makeleni et al., 2023; Villiers & Dumay, 2013). These challenges are compounded by linguistic and cultural factors that further constrain scholarly output.

Moreover, several studies have highlighted the emotional and psychological strain lecturers experience from balancing research, teaching, and administrative expectations (Marongwe et al., 2020; Yusoff et al., 2022). Feelings of stress, isolation, and underappreciation often diminish motivation—particularly when research efforts go unrecognised or unrewarded (Mahoko & Omodan, 2023; Tsotetsi & Onaolapo, 2014). The increased emphasis on teacher leadership has meant an increased workload on teachers in areas like curriculum development, which used to be done more by administrators (Bessong, 2024). Increased pressure on teachers to prove their readiness to implement new policies also means teachers need to spend more time proving their ability (Talib et al., 2024). The absence of mentorship and structured collaborative networks to make all of

this possible, along with guiding the research process, exacerbates these issues, especially in under-resourced or rural universities (Behforouz et al., 2023).

Methodology
This study employed a mixed-methods survey design to investigate university lecturers' beliefs regarding research engagement, publishing practices, and collaborative dynamics. By combining a 6-point Likert scale for quantitative measurement of lecturers' perceptions with open-ended questions for qualitative insights, the design allowed for a comprehensive understanding of both general trends and specific contextual motivations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The paper-based survey was distributed during a professional workshop on research and publishing, while the digital version was disseminated through the university's online system. Fourteen lecturers completed and submitted the paper-based survey after the workshop, and fifteen responded to the digital version. This dual-mode approach was used for maximum reach within the faculty

Participants
The survey was conducted at a medium-sized private university in central Thailand. 29 full-time lecturers, from a range of academic disciplines and research backgrounds, completed the survey in paper and digital formats. Of these, 14 participants completed the survey in paper format, while 15 responded via a digital platform.

Survey instrument and validation
The survey questionnaire was developed to assess university lecturers' beliefs about research engagement, publishing practices, and collaborative research dynamics. The instrument comprised two components: (1) a 6-point Likert-scale section (1 = Strongly Disagree to 6 = Strongly Agree) measuring quantitative attitudes and (2) open-ended questions eliciting qualitative insights into participants' motivations, challenges, and contextual factors influencing their research practices (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A 6-point Likert scale was employed to reduce central-tendency bias and encourage respondents to indicate a directional stance rather than defaulting to a neutral midpoint.

Several items were developed based on Eccles and Wigfield's (2020) Expectancy-Value Theory of achievement motivation. This theory posits that individuals' engagement in academic tasks is shaped by two key factors: their expectancy for success (i.e., beliefs about their competence) and the value they assign to the task (including importance, usefulness, interest, and cost). In this study, the theory was applied to guide the formulation of items that reflect both perceived capability and perceived value of research-related activities. For example, the item "*I feel confident in my ability to conduct high-quality research*" represents expectancy beliefs, while "*Publishing research in reputable journals is important for academic success*" and "*Conducting research enhances my teaching effectiveness*" capture attainment and utility value, respectively. Additionally, items such as "*I am motivated to engage in research*" reflect intrinsic value, and "*I face significant challenges in conducting research due to workload constraints*" address perceived cost. The inclusion of "*I believe that research should be shared beyond academic circles to benefit society*" extends the framework to social utility value, emphasising broader societal motivations. These theoretically grounded items enabled an assessment of the motivational beliefs underlying lecturers' research engagement and behaviours. (see Table 1).

Table 1. Mapping of survey items to Expectancy-Value Theory

Expectancy–Value Theory	Sample Statements
Expectancy	• I feel confident in my ability to conduct high-quality research.
Attainment Value	• Research is an essential part of my role as a university lecturer.
Utility Value	• Conducting research enhances my teaching effectiveness.
Intrinsic Value	• I am motivated to engage in research.

Cost	• I face significant challenges in conducting research due to workload constraints.

To ensure clarity, relevance, and reliability, the survey instrument was reviewed by two subject-matter experts, both of whom hold doctoral degrees in linguistics and have extensive experience in language assessment and research methodology. While a larger panel is often desirable, the use of two experts is consistent with practices in preliminary instrument validation, particularly when experts possess high domain specificity. The experts independently evaluated the items for clarity, relevance, and theoretical alignment, and the level of inter-expert agreement reached 90%, indicating strong content consensus. To establish internal consistency reliability, Cronbach's alpha was computed for the Likert-scale items, yielding a coefficient of $\alpha = .87$, which exceeds the commonly accepted threshold for good reliability. This result indicates a high level of internal consistency among the items.

Data analysis
Data analysis was conducted in two stages to address the quantitative and qualitative components of the study. For the quantitative data, participants' responses to Likert-scale items were coded numerically, and descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were computed to examine overall trends and variations in beliefs about research, publishing, and collaboration. These results provided a general overview of the lecturers' attitudes and served as a basis for further interpretation.

For the qualitative data, an open coding approach was employed for qualitative data analysis, guided deductively by expectancy-value theory. Initial codes were generated through iterative reading of the data and subsequently grouped into conceptually meaningful categories aligned with the theoretical constructs. To enhance trustworthiness, two experts independently reviewed the coding scheme and validated the alignment between codes and theoretical categories. Discrepancies were discussed until consensus was reached, strengthening the credibility of the analytic process. These qualitative insights were integrated into the discussion to highlight key factors influencing lecturers' engagement with research, such as motivation, confidence, collaboration, and institutional barriers. This approach allowed the findings to reflect the participants' authentic voices and to provide practical implications for improving research culture in higher education.

Ethical considerations
Ethical standards were observed throughout the process, and participation was entirely voluntary. The study protocol was reviewed and approved by the Asia-Pacific International University (APIU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) on May 28, 2025, action no. RRDC 2025-79.

The Findings
This study provides insight into lecturers' views of research engagement and academic publishing as an outcome. The discussion of the findings is arranged by three main topics, including beliefs about research, beliefs about academic publishing, and beliefs about collaborative research.

Beliefs about research
Overall, the results (Table 1) indicate that university lecturers generally hold positive but differentiated beliefs about research. Scores ranged from slight to moderate agreement, suggesting both enthusiasm and constraint. The most strongly endorsed item was *"A good researcher must be open-minded"* (M = 5.12, SD = .51), reflecting widespread agreement that intellectual flexibility is central to scholarly work. High mean scores were also observed for *"I am motivated to engage in research"* (M = 4.47, SD = .75) and *"Research is an essential part of my role"* (M = 4.24, SD = .88), confirming that most respondents regard research as a professional responsibility and personal pursuit.

Moderate endorsement was given to statements related to skill development and challenge recognition, such as *"I seek opportunities to advance my research skills"* (M = 4.29, SD = .56) and *"I face significant challenges in conducting research due to workload constraints"* (M = 4.15, SD = .90). In contrast,

comparatively lower agreement was noted for *"I feel confident in my ability to conduct high-quality research"* (M = 3.46, SD = .78) and *"I balance research, teaching, and administrative duties"* (M = 3.41, SD = .58), suggesting that issues of confidence and workload persist.

Table 2. Beliefs about research

Statement	M	SD
Research is an essential part of my role as a university lecturer.	4.24	.88
I am motivated to engage in research.	4.47	.75
Conducting research enhances my teaching effectiveness.	3.89	.90
A good researcher must be open-minded.	5.12	.51
I balance research, teaching, and administrative duties.	3.41	.58
I feel confident in my ability to conduct high-quality research.	3.46	.78
I face significant challenges in conducting research due to workload constraints.	4.15	.90
I seek opportunities to advance my research skills.	4.29	.56

The qualitative findings reinforce these trends but reveal deeper tensions between motivation and constraint. Many lecturers described a strong intrinsic interest in research yet felt limited by structural and personal barriers:

"The negative factor(s) that affect my beliefs on research, publishing, and collaboration are due to the inability to make the time… because of workload… This is probably unique to my situation as a mother/wife who is working full-time." (Participant 1)

Another summarised succinctly:

"The BIGGEST challenge is time… the workload is busy enough and that doesn't include personal responsibilities like family or health." (Participant 2)

Several lecturers also discussed how institutional expectations shape their research orientation, with one noting:

"The Thai Ministry of Education is willing to give funding to research that is trending and high-tech." (Participant 3)

Others voiced concern about the quality of the research that is being due to modern research practices, arguing that:

"a lot of research nowadays has little impact… or it just reaffirms something we once knew to be true." (Participant 4)

Confidence appeared developmental and contingent upon support. Participant 3 articulated his familiarity with the system that gave him confidence that he could navigate research:

"I have completed a master's thesis and a thesis for my PhD, so I feel reasonably confident; however, there is always something to learn." (Participant 3)

Others who were less experienced admitted their lack of experience in the research process:

"I'm confident if there is given time and budget… but I need advice from other people as my knowledge is limited in some methods." (Participant 5)

Collectively, these findings portray lecturers as motivated yet burdened, with growth constrained by workload and limited mentorship.

Beliefs about publishing

As shown in Table 2, lecturers strongly agreed with the institutional and social value of publishing. The highest-rated statement, *"Publishing research in reputable journals is important for academic success"* (M = 5.36, SD = .72), underscores the perceived link between publication and career advancement. Similarly, high endorsement of *"The peer-review process helps improve the quality of my research"* (M = 5.29, SD = .65) and *"Receiving critical feedback from reviewers helps me improve my work"* (M = 5.07, SD = .75) demonstrates recognition of peer review as a developmental process.

Lecturers also acknowledged the societal dimension of publishing, agreeing that research should be shared beyond academic circles (M = 4.86, SD = .76) and that open-access platforms enhance accessibility (M = 4.86, SD = .76). Yet, moderate agreement on *"I find it difficult to get my research published in top-tier journals"* (M = 4.18, SD = .66) and the notably low mean for *"I use strategies to increase the visibility and impact of my research"* (M = 3.18, SD = .85) suggest barriers in publication literacy and dissemination practices.

Table 3. *Beliefs about publishing*

Statement	M	SD
Publishing research in reputable journals is important for academic success.	5.36	.72
The peer-review process helps improve the quality of my research.	5.29	.65
I find it difficult to get my research published in top-tier journals.	4.18	.66
I use strategies to increase the visibility and impact of my research.	3.18	.85
Receiving critical feedback from reviewers helps me improve my work.	5.07	.75
Open-access publishing increases the accessibility and impact of research.	4.86	.76
Research should be shared beyond academic circles to benefit society.	4.86	.76

The qualitative data enrich these quantitative trends. Many lecturers described publishing as rewarding yet exhausting, particularly for early-career scholars and their limited experience:

> *"I always thought discovering research is wonderful… however, in that extra step of forming an actual paper there were a million things to figure out, and rejections can really make it feel like there's no end in sight."* (Participant 1)

> *"I am still gaining experience and haven't really tried to publish in top-tier journals yet."* (Participant 6)

Institutional and resource limitations further compounded these challenges, as even though the university pays for much database access, it is impossible to cover every field.

> *"Most of the lecturers at [the university] are so busy with teaching… and cannot access databases of high-quality journals because [the university] did not subscribe."* (Participant 7)

Conversely, a few participants demonstrated agency in promoting their work:

> *"Yes, I posted my research papers to ResearchGate and shared the results in my professional LinkedIn."* (Participant 8)

Others emphasized the moral obligation to disseminate knowledge:

> *"The best research must benefit societies and have value in business."* (Participant 9)

Overall, these findings reveal a contrast between conviction and capability: lecturers believe in the ethical and institutional necessity of publishing but require mentorship, training, and infrastructural access to translate belief into consistent scholarly output.

Beliefs about collaboration

Results presented in Table 3 highlight collaboration as a strongly valued dimension of research culture. The top-rated item, *"Effective collaboration requires mutual trust"* (M = 5.31, SD = .48), affirms the interpersonal foundation of teamwork. Lecturers also reported high agreement with *"Interdisciplinary research collaborations contribute positively to my work"* (M = 5.00, SD = .70) and *"Collaborating with colleagues within my university strengthens my research"* (M = 4.92, SD = .88).

While internal collaborations are common, engagement in external and international partnerships appears more limited, as indicated by moderate means for *"I actively seek collaborations with colleagues from other institutions"* (M = 3.51, SD = .77) and *"I have sufficient opportunities to engage in international research partnerships"* (M = 3.31, SD = .48). Respondents expressed mild agreement that differences in research approaches may pose challenges (M = 3.44, SD = .43). The lowest score, *"I prefer conducting research independently rather than collaborating"* (M = 2.71, SD = .59), confirms that most participants favor collaboration over solitary inquiry.

Table 4. *Beliefs about collaboration*

Statement	M	SD
I prefer conducting research independently rather than collaborating.	2.71	.59
Collaborating with colleagues within my university strengthens my research.	4.92	.88
I actively seek research collaborations with colleagues from other institutions.	3.51	.77
Interdisciplinary research collaborations contribute positively to my work.	5.00	.70
I have sufficient opportunities to engage in international research partnerships.	3.31	.48
Effective collaboration requires mutual trust.	5.31	.48
It is challenging to collaborate due to differences in research approaches.	3.44	.43

Qualitative data illuminate the human dimension of collaboration. For many, partnerships offer both professional and emotional benefits:

"Collaboration is so helpful, especially as a new teacher… Having help is important when we feel we are lacking time." (Participant 6)

"It depends on who I'm collaborating with, but it also helps to have others to help in the process, which can be a lot [of work]." (Participant 10)

However, experiences were not uniformly positive. Some participants noted uneven workload distribution and mismatched expertise, and others mentioned differences of values causing friction:

"Collaborating with other external lecturers will help… but here, some did not know how to do research, so you end up doing all the work." (Participant 3)

"One researcher withdrew because what was discussed in the results did not align with her Christian values." (Participant 8)

Despite such complications, the prevailing view remains optimistic if collaborators are able to form a team. Together, the quantitative and qualitative results depict collaboration as both a practical strategy for productivity and a social process of trust, mentorship, and shared growth. The findings emphasize the importance of institutional support structures, such as cross-disciplinary research groups and international partnership programs, to sustain and expand collaborative opportunities.

Discussion

The findings of this study yield several important insights into university lecturers' beliefs about research, publishing, and collaboration, highlighting both their strong professional values and the systemic obstacles that constrain their engagement. Although lecturers consistently expressed moderate to high agreement with the importance of these academic activities, their qualitative reflections revealed that *constraints overshadowed enthusiasm*. Many participants spoke at length about time pressures, heavy teaching responsibilities, and limited institutional support, echoing the concerns raised by Al-Khasawneh et al. (2021) and Tsotetsi and Onaolapo (2024) regarding the structural barriers that impede research productivity in higher education. These findings can be understood through the lens of Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT), where the persistent 'conviction-capability gap' represents a conflict between high perceived task value and low expectancy for success due to structural costs.

While lecturers demonstrate high attainment and utility value—viewing research as central to their academic identity —their expectancy for success is significantly undermined by low research self-efficacy. Within the EVT framework, the perceived cost (time and workload) appears to outweigh the perceived rewards, creating a psychological barrier to engagement. This imbalance between teaching and research mirrors the arguments of Gamboa (2022) and Roxå (2018) that the separation of research from teaching is symptomatic of systemic misalignment in academic institutions. Participants' recurring statements, such as *"It's not easy; it's hard to find time, but I can see the importance of research,"* illustrate how commitment to scholarly inquiry persists despite institutional pressures. These findings reaffirm that fostering a culture of research requires not only individual motivation but also structural reform, including clearer workload policies, research time allocation, and accessible mentorship.

Publishing was unanimously viewed as essential to career advancement and knowledge dissemination. Yet, linguistic barriers, lengthy peer-review processes, and restricted access to databases emerged as persistent frustrations, reflecting a high cost in terms of emotional labour and time. Participants' experiences parallel those reported by Silva (2021), who observed the burden placed on early-career lecturers navigating competitive publication systems, and Buckingham (2013), who noted the linguistic disadvantage faced by non-native English-speaking academics.

Moreover, the low confidence observed in navigating the publication process underscores the need for institutional mentoring and publication literacy initiatives. As one respondent observed, *"Having guidance—a second pair of eyes on my work—ensures the research process is moving in the right direction."* This finding aligns with Deiniatur and Cahyono (2024), who advocate targeted workshops and peer-support systems to enhance resilience and writing competence. By developing structured mentorship programs and improving access to scholarly resources, universities can transform publishing from an isolating obligation into a collaborative learning experience that advances academic identity and self-efficacy.

Collaboration emerged as both highly valued and unevenly practised. Quantitatively, lecturers expressed strong belief in trust and mutual benefit as foundations for effective teamwork. Ideally, collaboration serves as a vital mechanism for increasing expectancy for success; by sharing the 'cost' of research tasks, lecturers feel more capable of producing high-quality work. Qualitative accounts, however, revealed the complexities of managing different research approaches, inconsistent contributions, and scarce international opportunities. One lecturer's remark—*"Many wanted to work outside their field, but research approaches can differ, and it's easier just to work with those who share the same methods"*—reflects the methodological fragmentation identified by Behforouz et al. (2023).

Participants further emphasised the need for institutional mechanisms to promote and sustain collaboration, in line with Hadad's (2024) recommendation for cross-disciplinary research hubs and administrative streamlining. Suggested solutions included internal mentorship schemes pairing senior and novice scholars, as well as formal departmental plans for co-authored research, which could democratize participation and strengthen research quality. As one lecturer proposed, *"Each department can work out a plan for collaborative research output so senior experts can assist new researchers, resulting in higher-quality research outputs."*

Beyond structural and methodological issues, this study highlights the emotional and psychological toll of maintaining research engagement under pressure. Lecturers described exhaustion, frustration, and demotivation when required to produce research amid teaching and administrative overloads. Such sentiments correspond with Marongwe et al. (2020), who emphasised the emotional labour associated with academic productivity demands. Comments such as *"We are told about ranking and publishing—it's what will help make us a more reliable university—but the workload is already heavy"* capture the cognitive dissonance between institutional expectations and available resources.

Participants proposed tangible reforms, reducing teaching hours, providing research incentives, and recognising mentoring contributions, to balance productivity with well-being. These recommendations underscore the necessity of a human-centred approach to academic policy, one that values empathy alongside excellence and views research engagement as a collective responsibility rather than an individual burden.

Despite the novelty of the findings, the present study is subject to several limitations. Administering the survey during a research workshop may have introduced response bias, such as elevated motivation or social desirability effects. The relatively small sample size ($n = 29$) further limits statistical power and the generalizability of the results. In addition, the exclusive reliance on self-report data may have introduced subjective bias in participants' responses. Finally, the single-institution research context restricts the extent to which the findings can be generalized to other higher education settings. Future studies should address these limitations by employing larger and more diverse, multi-institutional samples, adopting longitudinal or mixed-methods approaches, and triangulating self-report measures with behavioral or performance-based data to enhance the robustness and generalizability of the findings.

Conclusion

A "conviction-capability" gap among university lecturers in Thailand was evident in the study results. By applying Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT), this research contributes a nuanced understanding of academic motivation in under-resourced contexts. The findings suggest that the perceived costs of research, such as workload and emotional labour, frequently outweigh its attainment value, stifling the motivation to begin. Practically, this study moves beyond generic calls for lecturers to do more research by identifying specific psychological and structural barriers, such as the linguistic disadvantage faced by non-native speakers and the isolation of early-career scholars. It highlights that research productivity is not merely a matter of individual will but is a social process requiring institutional trust and shared growth.

The results of this study underscore the need for a strategic, system-wide approach to strengthening the research culture in higher education institutions. While lecturers demonstrate awareness of the importance of research, publishing, and collaboration, their ability to perform these tasks effectively depends on supportive institutional ecosystems that nurture, not merely demand, research productivity. University policies could include course-load reduction for active researchers, rotational teaching assignments, and recognition of research output in performance evaluations. Structured mentoring schemes in which senior scholars guide early-career lecturers through proposal writing, journal selection, and revision processes could be developed. Moreover, periodic workshops on research design, writing for publication, and responding to reviewers would help reduce linguistic and procedural barriers. An atmosphere of continual learning and humility where questions on research and publishing were encouraged and patiently answered, along with administrators overseeing who they thought could collaborate with each other, would streamline the difficult process of research and publishing.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Conflicts of Interest*: The authors declare no conflict of interest.*

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