

lead to demotivation and disorientation of academic staff. Therefore the focus has to shift from the outcomes to the whole process of research management and understanding the “bottlenecks” of institutional capacity to deliver the desired results.

Debates circle around the issue of whether such requirements are to be set at institutional or national level, especially keeping in mind that university professors who do not hold positions in research institutes don't receive any special funding to conduct research. Some universities are registered as research institutes and use the public resources originally targeted for supporting faculty-led research to co-finance different projects. Since the resources are limited, not all of the members of academic staff receive their fair share of research funding. There is also a number of fields where leading academic journals are not cited in Scopus, e.g. the study of Baltic languages. Discussions continue as there is no common understanding of how the new requirements will affect academic dynamics. All the parties involved agree, however, that a transition period will be necessary for everyone to adjust to new rules. Another issue on the political agenda these days is that professors can only be elected for a maximum period of 6 years without an opportunity to get a tenured position.

### Financing Research at Universities

Universities' research funds are rather low in Latvia. They witnessed huge budget cuts (up to 60%) during the global economic crisis of 2008-2009. Due to budget constraints, not all universities (private or public) have access to Scopus and Thomson Reuter's data bases. The remuneration for publications can only be received after an article has been published, the pressure to attract research funds has shifted towards faculty members themselves, etc. The size of such remuneration is determined at institutional level, so it varies greatly from one university to another. It depends on the availability of finances, the amount of publications per academic staff, the level of journal, etc. For example, author(s) can receive up to 700 euros (gross) for an article in the field of social sciences published in Scopus journals.

A reform of higher education finance system has begun recently. It provides for additional research funding based on previous research performance (including publication results).

This leads to the conclusion that in the coming years, the pressure to publish in internationally recognized journals will only increase as university performance measures are heavily oriented towards quantitative indicators, such as grants or publication and citation count, rather than qualitative ones. So, despite the fact that different universities have different profiles, missions, and aims, there is no choice given: publish or perish!



## Introduction of Impact-Factor Publication Requirement for Faculty Promotion: Case of Kazakhstan

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One of the many challenges facing the educational system of contemporary Kazakhstan is the low level of research capacity among university faculty. Prior studies (Kuzhabekova, in press a) clearly show that Kazakhstani researchers produce a negligible number of articles in internationally recognized journals, and the articles that they do produce are not cited. In addition to that, most of the scholarly works by Kazakhstani authors which are included in international databases appear in predominantly Russian-language journals or in journals published in the countries of the former Soviet Union, which do not have a high impact compared with their counterparts from far abroad.

Viewing research and innovation as key ingredients of economic growth, the government of Kazakhstan has implemented a number of focused initiatives aimed at strengthening the country's research capacity, including the development of university faculty's individual capacity. In order to stimulate greater scholarly research and publication activity by faculty members and to encourage university research, the government of Kazakhstan has recently introduced an impact-factor publication requirement for promotion to higher academic ranks.

In a recent study (Kuzhabekova, in press b) carried out in order to inform policymakers about the effectiveness of introduction of the impact factor requirement we conducted a survey of university faculty. The online survey was conducted among 170 faculty members from six universities in Kazakhstan, including two national level public universities (Eurasian National University, located in the north, and Kazakh National University named after Al-Farabi, located in the south); two regional level public universities (East-Kazakhstan State University, located in the east, and Kostanay State University, located in the north); as well as two private universities (Karagandy University of Business, Management, and Law, located in the center, and Atyrau Engineering and Humanities Institute, located in the west).

Our research aims were: (1) to determine the extent to which the new requirement has been incorporated into university promotion and reimbursement policies; (2) to identify the difficulties that faculty face in producing

impact-factor publications; (3) to find out what strategies faculty use in order to increase the likelihood of publishing in impact-factor journals; and (4) to reveal the perceptions of faculty members about the effectiveness of the impact-factor publication requirement in raising the research capacity of individual university faculty.

With respect to the first research question, half of the respondents reported that in their universities the impact-factor publication requirement had been incorporated into salary schedules. Specifically, publishing articles in impact-factor journals was said to be directly related to salary increases. About 18% of the respondents mentioned that impact-factor publications are directly linked to promotion in their universities. About 7% of the participants mentioned that inability to produce impact-factor publications can lead to having one's contract terminated.

Speaking of the second research question, we found that one of the main barriers preventing faculty from publishing in journals with an impact factor is lack of access to research funding. This barrier was acknowledged more often by researchers in social sciences and humanities, which are not considered to be areas of strategic importance by the government. Other barriers include lack of access to research facilities and equipment, lack of sufficient methodological training and skills to be able to contribute to international scholarship, as well as lack of access to research software and library databases, lack of time to conduct research due to high teaching and administrative load, insufficient command of the English language or lack of resources to purchase access to editing and translation services.

Regarding the third research question, we found that faculty use a variety of strategies to succeed in publishing in journals with an impact factor. The most important one focuses on improving one's proficiency in English. Many faculty also try to familiarize themselves with the most significant theories and frameworks, as well as with methodological approaches and tools used in the international research community by conducting extensive literature reviews or attending specialized methodological trainings and workshops, including online courses. In addition to that, faculty members try to learn more about the process of preparing publications by attending seminars on publishing in Western journals or by seeking advice from their colleagues from the West during international conferences. Others try to establish long term collaboration with internationally recognized researchers. Over 50% of the researchers used specialized editing and translation services to improve the quality of English in their articles.

While the majority of the respondents indicated that they never plagiarize, and it seems evident that most of them take true and honest efforts to publish abroad, a small number of faculty do resort to questionable practices, such as paying for publication or paying other people to produce publishable articles, as well as using junior researchers as co-authors to increase the likelihood of publication.

Positive effects of the policy indicated by the respondents include: (1) increase in the extent of collaboration and in-

ternational partnership among university faculty; (2) creation of incentives for research and development; (3) improvement in research training at graduate level. However, the policy also has produced some secondary negative effects. The respondents claimed that the new requirement had stimulated brain drain from universities and made academic career less attractive for university graduates. The policy also stimulated interest in the development of English language skills among researchers.

Our study concludes that the introduction of the impact-factor publication requirement has produced some positive effects on the development of individual research capacity in Kazakhstani universities. However, this measure alone is not sufficient in terms of increasing research output and quality. Faculty need to have access to proper research facilities, equipment, libraries, and financial resources. Most importantly, they need to have at least some time free from teaching and administrative responsibilities to be able to conduct serious scholarly inquiry.

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# Can Efforts to Raise Publication Productivity in Russia Cause a Decline of International Academic Periodicals?

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My argument in this piece is simple. The attempts to use publication indicators as a measure of academic performance are to a considerable degree to blame for the miserable state of Russian scholarly periodicals. The recent turn to international publications as an alternative measure was largely a gesture of despair on the part of academic