Faculty Perspectives on the Importance and Challenges of Conducting Educational Research in Higher Education Institutions

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ABSTRACT

Aim. This study explores faculty perceptions of the importance of educational research and the challenges they face in conducting it at Kuwait University's College of Education. While educational research is widely regarded as a critical tool for ad-

vancing teaching practices, curriculum development, and policymaking, significant barriers limit its effective implementation.

Methods. A descriptive survey design was employed to collect data from 82 faculty members across various academic ranks and departments. The questionnaire included items measuring the perceived importance of educational research and the obstacles to its conduct.

Results. The findings revealed that faculty members highly value educational research, with 98% agreeing that it contributes to reconstructing educational curricula and 93.9% recognising its role in developing educational processes. The study also identified several critical barriers to faculty engagement in research, including a lack of supporting research personnel (78%), weak institutional incentives (67%), and heavy teaching loads (69.5%). These findings are consistent with previous studies that highlight the need for better institutional support, adequate research infrastructure, and balanced workload management to enhance faculty research productivity. Additionally, nearly 60% of faculty members perceived educational research as being too theoretical and disconnected from practical application, suggesting a need for more practice-oriented and collaborative research models.

Conclusions. The study concludes that while faculty members are aware of the importance of educational research, significant systemic challenges must be addressed to foster a more conducive research environment. Recommendations for practice include strengthening research support structures, revising incentive policies, promoting collaborative research efforts, and investing in faculty development programs.

Keywords: educational research, higher education, faculty perceptions, research engagement, barriers to research, research support systems, curriculum development – evidence-based practices, institutional incentives

Introduction

Educational research serves as a cornerstone for the advancement and development of education systems worldwide. It provides a scientific basis for evaluating, improving, and innovating teaching practices, curricula, and policies, ensuring that education keeps pace with societal and technological changes (Ponce & Maldonado, 2022). As such, the role of educational research is not limited to theory-building; it also plays a pivotal role in shaping evidence-based practices that enhance educational outcomes across different levels and contexts (Joram et al., 2020). However, while its importance is universally acknowledged, the effective implementation and application of educational research faces several challenges, particularly from the perspective of faculty members in higher education institutions (Hammad & Al-Ani, 2021). Research in education is crucial in identifying gaps, proposing solutions, and guiding de-

cision-making processes that foster the continuous improvement of educational quality (Boukhari, 2019). It allows educators, policymakers, and stakeholders to make informed choices that align with both local and global educational goals. Yet, the translation of educational research into practice is often hindered by a range of barriers. These include a lack of institutional support, insufficient training in research methodologies, heavy teaching loads, and limited access to funding and resources (Alkandari et al., 2022). Such obstacles not only diminish the potential impact of educational research but also contribute to a growing gap between research and practice.

Understanding these challenges is essential for developing strategies to support faculty members in their research endeavours. Previous studies have highlighted that, despite recognising the value of educational research, faculty members often face practical constraints that limit their research activities (Crossley & Holmes, 2001; Hammad & Al-Ani, 2021). Addressing these challenges requires targeted interventions, including policy reforms, capacity-building programs, and the establishment of collaborative research cultures that bridge the gap between research and practice. Kuwait's scientific policy framework is pivotal for understanding the basis of research financing in its universities, particularly in the context of the country's strategic vision for economic diversification and knowledge-based development. The Kuwait Vision 2035 initiative emphasises the importance of research and development (R&D) as a cornerstone for transforming the economy and enhancing the quality of life for its citizens (Salman et al., 2020). This vision aims to establish Kuwait as a regional leader in science and technology; however, the actual funding allocated for R&D remains disproportionately low, with estimates suggesting that only about 0.1% to 2.5% of the Gross National Product (GDP) is dedicated to this sector (Badr et al., 2019). Such limited investment in research constrains the capacity of universities to conduct impactful studies and affects the overall quality of education and research output, as evidenced by the relatively low publication rates in high-impact journals compared to other countries in the region (Badr et al., 2019).

Educational research is fundamental to the continuous improvement of teaching practices, curriculum development, and policy formulation. It serves as a critical tool for generating new knowledge, validating educational theories, and providing evidence-based solutions to the challenges faced by educators and policymakers. Research in education not only enhances our understanding of pedagogical approaches but also guides the effective implementation of innovative practices that respond to the evolving needs of students and society (Basu, 2020; Boukhari, 2019). As such, educational research is instrumental in driving progress in the field, ensuring that education systems are both responsive and adaptive to global changes.

The significance of educational research is underscored by its role in informing evidence-based decision-making. It provides a foundation for developing policies

and strategies that are rooted in empirical data rather than intuition or tradition. For instance, research-driven insights can help identify the most effective teaching methods, assess the impact of curriculum changes, and evaluate the outcomes of new educational technologies. This approach aligns with the view of Elizabeth Farley-Ripple et al. (2018), who asserted that research use in education is crucial for aligning classroom practices with the best available evidence, thereby enhancing the overall quality of education. Moreover, educational research contributes to professional development by equipping educators with the skills and knowledge to critically analyse and reflect on their practices. It encourages a culture of inquiry and continuous learning among educators, which is essential for adapting to the rapidly changing educational landscape (Joram et al., 2020). By engaging in research, educators can develop a deeper understanding of their discipline, refine their pedagogical strategies, and ultimately improve student outcomes. This is particularly important in the context of 21st-century education, where the ability to think critically and solve complex problems is highly valued (Alrasheedi & Alasmi, 2019).

For Example, one of the central themes in Aleksander Kobylarek's (2017) analysis is the "feudal" nature of Polish academia, where hierarchical structures and traditional practices hinder the development of a more dynamic and supportive environment for young researchers. He notes that despite the introduction of certain mechanisms aimed at fostering academic growth, the remnants of past practices continue to dominate, leading to a culture that can stifle innovation and discourage competition among scholars (Dymitrow, 2022). This observation aligns with the findings of Mirek Dymitrow, who highlights the generational shift in academic supervision and the need for a more collaborative approach to mentorship (Dymitrow, 2022).

Kobylarek (2017) also addresses the gap between theory and practice in research, emphasising that while the Humboldtian ideal promotes a close relationship between teaching and research, the reality often falls short. This disconnect can lead to a lack of practical application of theoretical knowledge, which is detrimental to both students and the broader academic community. Lastly, Kobylarek's work touches upon the resistance to change within the Polish higher education system. He notes that significant reforms have been met with strong opposition from the academic community, resulting in a governance structure that remains largely unchanged (Antonowicz et al., 2020). This resistance to reform can perpetuate outdated practices and hinder the evolution of academic institutions in response to contemporary challenges.

On the other hand, Agnieszka Świtalska's (2010) work sheds light on the detrimental effects of abusive supervisory relationships on young researchers, highlighting the need for a shift towards a more ethical and supportive academic culture that fosters the growth and development of emerging scholars. Świtalska identifies

several forms of abuse that can occur within these supervisory relationships, including emotional manipulation, neglect, and exploitation. These abuses often stem from power imbalances inherent in the academic hierarchy, where supervisors hold significant authority over their students' academic progress and career trajectories (Ramírez & Gutiérrez-Fonseca, 2020). The author argues that such negative experiences can lead to a toxic academic environment, discouraging young researchers from pursuing their scholarly ambitions and contributing to a culture of fear and mistrust within academic institutions.

Importance of Research

Despite its recognised importance, the effective implementation of educational research faces several challenges. These include limited institutional support, inadequate funding, heavy teaching loads, and a lack of research skills among faculty members. Addressing these challenges is essential for fostering a research-friendly environment that maximises the benefits of research for educational development.

This research employs a quantitative approach, using a structured questionnaire to gather data on faculty members' perceptions of the importance of educational research and the barriers they encounter. The study is guided by the following research questions:

- How do faculty members perceive the importance of educational research in their professional practice?
- What challenges prevent faculty members from actively engaging in educational research?
- Are there differences in these perceptions based on demographic factors such as gender, academic rank, and years of experience?

By addressing these questions, this study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the factors that influence faculty engagement in research and to identify strategies for enhancing research productivity in higher education institutions.

Literature Review

Educational research serves as educational research serves as a basis for advancing educational practices, policies, and frameworks. The importance of research in education is widely acknowledged, yet the challenges of conducting such research are well-documented in the literature. This section reviews key themes related to the importance of educational research, the barriers faced by faculty members, and the support structures required to enhance research engagement.

The Role of Collaborative Research in Education

Collaborative research has emerged as a critical approach in education, offering a way to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Collaborative research involves partnerships between various stakeholders, including educators, researchers, policy-makers, and community members, to co-create knowledge that is directly applicable to real-world educational settings (Anderson & Herr, 2015). This type of research is particularly valuable in addressing complex educational issues that require diverse perspectives and expertise. For example, Andy Hargreaves and Michael O'Connor (2018) highlighted how collaborative research efforts can foster a culture of shared learning and innovation among educators, leading to more effective and sustainable educational reforms. Next, studies have shown that collaborative research can significantly enhance the relevance and impact of research findings by ensuring that they are grounded in the realities of classroom practice (Levin et al., 2023). By involving practitioners in the research process, collaborative research helps to ensure that the outcomes are not only theoretically sound but also practically viable. This approach aligns with the findings of this study, where faculty members expressed a need for more practice-oriented research that is directly applicable to their work. The literature suggests that higher education institutions should promote collaborative research models to foster stronger connections between research, policy, and practice.

Integration of Digital Tools in Educational Research

The integration of digital tools in educational research has revolutionised how research is conducted, shared, and utilised in higher education. Digital platforms and technologies provide innovative ways for researchers to collaborate, access resources, and disseminate findings more broadly and efficiently (Molla, 2021). Online collaboration tools, digital data collection methods, and virtual research communities have expanded the possibilities for conducting research beyond traditional boundaries. As Jack Lee and Aliya Kuzhabekova (2019) noted, digital tools enable researchers to overcome geographical and logistical constraints, facilitating global research partnerships and enhancing the diversity and richness of educational research. Moreover, the use of digital tools can increase the visibility and impact of research by making it more accessible to a broader audience. For example, open-access journals, digital repositories, and social media platforms allow researchers to share their findings quickly and widely, promoting greater knowledge exchange and engagement within the educational community (Suber, 2012). This digital shift is particularly relevant given the concerns raised by faculty members in this study about the lack of support for disseminating research findings. The literature suggests that institutions should invest in digital infrastructure and training to support faculty in leveraging these tools to enhance their research productivity and impact.

Impact of Research Culture on Faculty Engagement

The culture of research within an institution significantly influences faculty members' engagement in research activities. A positive research culture is characterised by strong leadership support, a clear research agenda, collaborative networks, and recognition of research efforts (Brew & Boud, 2009). The absence of these elements can create an environment where faculty members feel undervalued and unsupported, leading to decreased motivation to conduct research. Research by Vicki Trowler (2014) indicated that a supportive research culture is critical for fostering academic identity and promoting sustained research engagement among faculty. Institutions that prioritise research and provide adequate resources, incentives, and mentorship programmes tend to have higher research output and faculty satisfaction (Macfarlane, 2011). This aligns with the findings of this study, where weak institutional incentives and lack of research support were identified as significant barriers. Developing a strong research culture requires deliberate efforts from institutional leaders to create policies and structures that value and support research endeavours. According to Rosemary Deem and Lisa Lucas (2007), fostering a research culture involves not only providing resources but also nurturing an environment of trust, collaboration, and intellectual curiosity. Future research should explore how specific elements of research culture impact faculty engagement and what strategies can be implemented to build a more supportive research environment.

Educational research is foundational in guiding and transforming educational practices, policies, and frameworks across different contexts. It serves as a vital resource for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders, providing evidence-based insights to inform decision-making and drive educational reform (Joram et al., 2020). The literature on educational research emphasises its critical role in addressing the challenges facing contemporary education systems, especially considering rapid technological advancements and shifting societal needs (Boukhari, 2019). However, despite its acknowledged importance, the effective implementation and utilisation of educational research face numerous barriers, particularly within higher education settings (Hammad & Al-Ani, 2021).

Importance of Educational Research in Developing Education

Educational research contributes significantly to the development and modernisation of education by providing a systematic approach to exploring, evaluating, and improving educational practices. It serves as a foundation for curriculum development, teaching methodologies, and policymaking, offering empirical evidence that supports innovation and quality enhancement in education (Basu, 2020). According to Omar A. Ponce and Nellie Pagán-Maldonado (2022), educational research is essential for building a robust knowledge base that helps educators understand and respond

to the diverse and evolving needs of students. It fosters a culture of continuous improvement, enabling educational institutions to adapt to changing environments and meet the demands of a globalised world (Alrasheedi & Alasmi, 2019).

Furthermore, research has demonstrated that effective educational research can lead to significant improvements in student learning outcomes and teacher performance. For instance, Farley-Ripple et al. (2018) highlighted that integrating research into classroom practices can enhance student engagement, motivation, and achievement by aligning instructional strategies with evidence-based practices. Similarly, Matthew Lynch (2017) emphasised the role of research in promoting innovative teaching techniques, such as technology-enhanced learning, which have been shown to improve students' conceptual understanding and critical thinking skills. These findings underscore the transformative potential of educational research in fostering a dynamic and responsive educational system.

Challenges in Conducting Educational Research

Despite its importance, conducting educational research is fraught with challenges that can hinder its effectiveness and impact. One of the primary challenges is the gap between research and practice, often resulting from a lack of communication and collaboration between researchers and practitioners (Crossley & Holmes, 2001). Many educators perceive educational research as disconnected from the realities of classroom practice, limiting its relevance and applicability in real-world settings (Hordern, 2023). This disconnect is further exacerbated by the lack of a supportive research culture within educational institutions, where heavy teaching loads, limited funding, and insufficient time for research activities are prevalent (Hammad & Al-Ani, 2021).

Moreover, the absence of a clear institutional research agenda and the lack of research training among faculty members present significant barriers to conducting effective educational research. Fahad Albalawi (2022) argued that without adequate training and support, faculty members are often ill-prepared to engage in rigorous research activities, which affects the quality and impact of their research outputs. The limited availability of research personnel and resources also poses a critical challenge, as highlighted by Eissa Alkandari and others (2022), who found that many educational institutions lack the necessary infrastructure and support systems to facilitate meaningful research endeavour.

Research by Inbal Nahum-Shani and Daniel Almirall (2019) further identified methodological difficulties and administrative barriers as key factors that discourage faculty members from engaging in research. These include issues such as bureaucratic hurdles, inadequate research incentives, and a lack of clarity regarding research priorities. Additionally, the political nature of education and the absence of cohesive policies for research dissemination and utilisation further complicate efforts to bridge the gap between research and practice (Marin & Proteasa, 2020).

Bridging the Gap Between Research and Practice

To address these challenges, there is a growing need for strategies that promote a closer alignment between educational research and practice. Developing collaborative research cultures that involve both researchers and practitioners in the co-creation of knowledge is essential for enhancing the relevance and impact of educational research (Mosrafa, 2016). This approach not only fosters a more integrated understanding of educational challenges but also ensures that research findings are directly applicable to classroom settings and policy development.

Educational institutions must also invest in building the research capacity of their faculty members through targeted professional development programmes and support mechanisms. As Waheed Hammad and Wajeha Al-Ani (2021) suggest, creating a conducive environment for research requires not only financial investment but also the establishment of clear research agendas that align with institutional goals and priorities. Furthermore, fostering partnerships with external stakeholders, such as governmental agencies, non-governmental organisations, and international bodies, can provide additional resources and support for educational research (Lee & Kuzhabekova, 2019).

Recent studies have also emphasised the importance of leveraging technology to facilitate research collaboration and dissemination. Digital platforms and virtual research communities offer innovative ways for educators to share findings, engage in collaborative research projects, and access a broader range of resources and expertise (Mulla et al., 2023). By integrating these digital tools into their research strategies, educational institutions can enhance the visibility and impact of their research outputs, contributing to the global discourse on educational development and reform.

Methodology

This study utilises a descriptive research design to explore the perceptions of faculty members regarding the importance of educational research and the challenges they face in conducting it.

Research Design

The research employs a quantitative, descriptive design using a survey-based approach. This design is appropriate for the study's objectives, which aim to describe and quantify faculty members' perceptions and challenges related to educational research. Descriptive research allows for the collection of data that can provide insights into trends, attitudes, and behaviour within a specific population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). By focusing on a large sample size of faculty members from Kuwait University's

College of Education, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing educational research engagement among faculty members.

Participants

The study targeted faculty members from Kuwait University's College of Education. The total number of faculty members in the college is 117, and 82 of them participated in this study, representing more than 70% of the population. The sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique to ensure that the participants were representative of the diverse academic ranks, departments, and years of teaching experience within the college. This approach allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the perspectives across different subgroups of faculty members, including gender, academic rank (e.g., assistant professor, associate professor, professor), department affiliation, and years of teaching experience.

Instruments

The primary instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire specifically designed to assess the perceptions of faculty members regarding the importance of educational research and the challenges they face in conducting it. The questionnaire was developed based on a thorough review of relevant literature (Albalawi, 2022; Hammad & Al-Ani, 2021) and expert consultations to ensure content validity. It comprised 22 items divided into two main sections:

- Importance of educational research: This section consisted of 11 items that measured faculty members' perceptions of the value of educational research in enhancing teaching and learning, curriculum development, and policymaking. Items included statements such as "Educational research helps in developing the educational process" and "Educational research contributes to solving educational problems," to which participants responded using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).
- Challenges in conducting educational research: The second section included 11 items that addressed the various barriers faculty members face when engaging in educational research. These barriers included lack of institutional support, insufficient research training, heavy teaching loads, and inadequate financial resources. Sample items included "The shortage of necessary research support staff discourages faculty members from conducting educational research" and "Weak university incentives discourage faculty members from engaging in educational research."

The questionnaire was reviewed by a panel of seven experts in educational research for fact and content validity. The final version was refined based on their feedback, ensuring

that the items were clear, relevant, and comprehensive. Internal consistency was measured using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a value of 0.676, which is considered acceptable for exploratory research (Felea et al., 2018).

Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected over a two-month period during the 2023 academic year. The questionnaire was distributed electronically to all 117 faculty members from Kuwait University's College of Education using a secure online survey platform. Participants were provided with an information sheet explaining the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and assurances of confidentiality and anonymity. To increase response rates, follow-up reminders were sent two weeks after the initial invitation, resulting in 82 completed questionnaires.

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of Kuwait University, and all participants provided informed consent before taking part in the survey. The ethical considerations included ensuring the anonymity of the participants, the confidentiality of the data collected, and the voluntary nature of participation.

Data Analysis

Data was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 27 (SPSS). The analysis was conducted in two phases:

- Descriptive statistics: Descriptive statistics were used to summarise the demographic characteristics of the participants and their responses to the questionnaire items. Measures of central tendency (mean) and variability (standard deviation) were calculated for each item to provide a clear overview of the general trends and patterns in the data. Frequency distributions were also generated to illustrate the proportion of participants who agreed or disagreed with each statement.
- Inferential statistics: To address the research questions regarding differences in perceptions based on demographic variables (e.g., gender, academic rank, years of experience), a series of inferential statistical tests were conducted. Independent samples t-tests were used to compare the mean scores between male and female faculty members, while one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to examine differences among faculty members based on academic rank, department affiliation, and years of teaching experience. The significance level was set at $p < .05$ for all statistical tests to determine whether there were statistically significant differences among the groups.

To further explore the relationships between the importance of educational research and the challenges faced by faculty members, Pearson's correlation coefficients were

calculated. This analysis provided insights into how perceived barriers might influence faculty members' attitudes towards engaging in educational research.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research instruments, several steps were undertaken:

- Content validity: The questionnaire was reviewed by a panel of experts who provided feedback on the relevance and clarity of the items. Their suggestions were incorporated into the final instrument.
- Construct validity: Factor analysis was conducted to determine whether the items grouped as expected into the two constructs: a) the importance of educational research and b) the challenges in conducting it. The results confirmed that the items loaded significantly onto their respective factors.
- Reliability: The internal consistency of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha for each section. The reliability coefficients were 0.76 for the importance of educational research and 0.71 for the challenges, indicating acceptable reliability for research purposes (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into the perceptions of faculty members regarding educational research, several limitations should be noted. First, the study is limited to a single institution, which may affect the generalisability of the findings to other contexts. Second, the use of self-reported data may introduce biases related to social desirability and self-perception. Future research should consider a mixed-methods approach, incorporating qualitative data to provide a more nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by faculty members in conducting educational research.

Results

This section presents the findings of the study based on the data collected from 82 faculty members from Kuwait University's College of Education. The results are organised into three main subsections: (a) inter-rater reliability analysis of the questionnaire, (b) perceived importance of educational research, and (c) challenges and obstacles in conducting educational research. Each subsection includes a detailed explanation of the results, supported by descriptive and inferential statistics and tables.

Inter-Rater Reliability Analysis of the Questionnaire

Before analysing the survey responses, an inter-rater reliability analysis was conducted using Fleiss' Kappa to assess the level of agreement among the seven experts who reviewed the questionnaire items. This step was essential to ensure that the instrument used to measure faculty perceptions was both reliable and valid.

The results shown in Table 1 indicate that the agreement percentage among the seven raters was 75%, which suggests a moderate level of agreement regarding the clarity and relevance of the questionnaire items. However, the Fleiss' Kappa value (Kappa = 8.87e-4) is very close to zero, indicating that the observed agreement is nearly equivalent to what would be expected by chance alone. Additionally, the z-value (0.0215) and p-value (0.983) indicate that the agreement among raters is not statistically significant ($p > .05$). These findings suggest that while there was some level of agreement among the raters, the consistency of their assessments was not sufficient to establish strong inter-rater reliability. This highlights the need for further refinement and validation of the questionnaire items to enhance clarity and consistency.

Table 1

Inter-Rater Reliability of the Questionnaire Using Fleiss' Kappa

Method	Fleiss' Kappa Form Raters
Subjects	28
Raters	7
Agreement %	75
Kappa	8.87e-4
z	0.0215
p-value	0.983

Source. Own research.

The second part of the analysis focuses on understanding faculty members' perceptions of the importance of educational research in enhancing teaching and learning, curriculum development, and policymaking. Table 2 provides a summary of the descriptive statistics for each statement related to this dimension.

Table 2

Perceptions of the Importance of Educational Research

Number	Statement	Agree %	Not sure %	Disagree %
1	Educational research helps in developing the educational process.	93.9	3.7	2.4
2	Educational research opens up new horizons in teaching skills.	91.5	6.1	2.4

Number	Statement	Agree %	Not sure %	Disagree %
3	Educational research contributes to solving educational problems.	91.5	6.1	2.4
4	Educational research helps in keeping up with updates to develop the educational process.	90.2	7.3	2.4
5	Educational research contributes to raising the teaching efficiency of faculty members.	85.4	7.3	7.3
6	Educational research addresses many problems in education and curriculum.	89	9.8	1.2
7	Educational research forms an important source in improving educational institutions.	92.7	4.9	2.4
8	Educational research contributes to reconstructing educational curricula better.	98	9.8	1.2
9	Educational research contributes to improving the quality of education.	91.5	4.9	3.7
10	Educational research helps in keeping up with technological advancements in education.	86.6	12.2	1.2
11	Educational research plays a role in setting new policies and laws in the field of education.	85.4	11	3.7

Source. Own research.

The data in Table 2 shows that most faculty members highly value educational research, with 98% agreeing that "Educational research contributes to reconstructing educational curricula better," making it the highest-rated statement. This reflects a strong belief in the transformative role of research in curriculum development. Similarly, 93.9% of respondents agreed that "Educational research helps in developing the educational process," suggesting a widespread perception of research as a critical driver of educational improvement.

Other statements, such as "Educational research forms an important source in improving educational institutions" (92.7% agree) and "Educational research contributes to solving educational problems" (91.5% agree), further reinforce the perceived importance of research in enhancing educational quality. These findings are consistent with previous literature that emphasises the crucial role of educational research in guiding effective decision-making and educational reforms (Farley-Ripple et al., 2018; Boukhari, 2019).

Challenges and Obstacles in Conducting Educational Research

The third part of the analysis examines the challenges and obstacles faced by faculty members when engaging in educational research. Table 3 provides a summary of the descriptive statistics for each statement related to this dimension.

Table 3

Challenges and Obstacles in Conducting Educational Research

Number	Statement	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
12	Faculty members lack awareness of the role of scientific research in teaching	32.9	26.8	40.2
13	The absence of necessary university regulations to hold faculty members accountable for their failure to conduct educational research has allowed them to continue for years.	61	32.2	15.9
14	The lack of necessary research skills among faculty members is a reason for their reluctance to conduct educational research.	52.4	23.2	24.4
15	Faculty members hold incorrect information and ideas about the importance of educational research in developing their scientific specialisation	25.6	32.9	41.5
16	Weak university incentives discourage faculty members from engaging in educational research.	67	11	22
17	Educational research suffers from a theoretical nature disconnected from reality.	59.8	20.7	19.5
18	Faculty members are not serious about activating the role of educational research.	45.1	30.5	24.4
19	The lack of necessary supporting research personnel further discourages faculty members from conducting educational research.	78	14.6	7.3
20	The lack of financial returns associated with educational research leads to faculty members refraining from participating in educational research.	61	9.8	29.3
21	Faculty members' preoccupation with heavy teaching loads prevents them from dedicating time to educational research	69.5	14.6	15.9
22	Weak scientific research plans at the university level have created a sense of indifference among faculty members towards conducting their educational research.	65.9	19.5	14.6

Source. Own research.

As shown in Table 3, the most significant barrier identified by faculty members is the "lack of necessary supporting research personnel," with 78% agreeing that this factor discourages research engagement. This highlights a critical shortage of human resources needed to support research activities. Additionally, 67% of respondents agree that "Weak university incentives discourage faculty members from engaging in educational research," which aligns with existing literature on the need for stronger institutional support for research activities (Hammad & Al-Ani, 2021).

Heavy teaching loads also emerged as a significant barrier, with 69.5% of faculty members indicating that their preoccupation with teaching responsibilities prevents them

from dedicating time to research. This finding underscores the need for better workload management and institutional support to balance teaching and research responsibilities.

Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistical analyses were conducted to examine whether there were differences in perceptions based on demographic variables such as gender, academic rank, years of experience, and department affiliation. The results of independent samples t-tests and one-way ANOVA are summarised as follows:

- Gender: No significant differences were found between male ($M = 56.80$) and female ($M = 57.96$) faculty members regarding their perceptions of educational research and its challenges ($p > .05$).
- Academic rank, years of experience, and department affiliation: The ANOVA results showed no significant differences across groups for academic rank ($F = 0.372$, $p = 0.690$), years of experience ($F = 0.851$, $p = 0.470$), or department affiliation ($F = 2.016$, $p = 0.118$).

These findings suggest that perceptions regarding the importance of educational research and the challenges faced are consistent across different demographic subgroups of faculty members.

The results of this study highlight the significant perceived importance of educational research among faculty members and the critical challenges that impede their engagement in research activities. While there is strong agreement on the value of research, addressing the identified barriers, such as lack of support and heavy workloads, is essential to fostering a more research-active academic environment.

Conclusions

This study examined the perceptions of faculty members from Kuwait University's College of Education regarding the importance of educational research and the challenges they face in conducting it. The results reveal a paradox within the academic environment: while there is widespread acknowledgment of the critical role that educational research plays in improving educational practices, curriculum development, and policy formulation, significant barriers prevent many faculty members from fully engaging in research activities. This duality highlights the gap between the recognition of research's value and the practical constraints that impede its realisation. The study's findings are consistent with the broader literature on educational research. Faculty members generally agree that educational research is vital for advancing knowledge, fostering innovation, and responding to contemporary educational challenges (Basu, 2020; Farley-Ripple et al., 2018). Most notably, nearly all participants (98%) agreed that research contributes to reconstructing educational cur-

ricula better, and over 90% saw research as essential for solving educational problems and improving teaching skills. These findings support the argument that research-driven educational practices are crucial for effective teaching and learning (Joram et al., 2020; Lynch, 2017).

However, the study also uncovered several significant barriers that undermine the potential for research engagement among faculty. The lack of supporting research personnel (78% agreement), weak university incentives (67% agreement), and heavy teaching loads (69.5% agreement) were identified as the most pressing obstacles. These challenges resonate with previous studies that point to insufficient institutional support, inadequate research infrastructure, and conflicting demands on faculty time as key factors limiting research productivity (Albalawi, 2022; Crossley & Holmes, 2001; Hammad & Al-Ani, 2021). The perception that educational research is often too theoretical and disconnected from real-world applications further complicates efforts to encourage faculty engagement (Hordern, 2023). This study's findings suggest a need for systemic reforms that address these structural barriers to create a more conducive environment for research in higher education.

The comprehensive analysis provided in this study offers several key insights. First, it is evident that while faculty members value educational research, there are institutional and personal barriers that significantly limit their ability to contribute to scholarly activities. This underscores a broader issue within higher education institutions where the rhetoric of research importance is not matched by adequate support systems. The alignment of this study's results with the existing literature indicates that these challenges are not unique to Kuwait University's College of Education but are part of a global pattern affecting faculty research engagement. Second, the findings also highlight the need for a paradigm shift in how educational research is perceived and supported. The disconnect between theoretical research and practical application, as perceived by nearly 60% of respondents, points to a need for more applied, practice-oriented research. This is critical because the relevance of research to real-world educational challenges determines its impact and utility. Collaborative research models that involve educators, policymakers, and practitioners could bridge this gap, ensuring that research outputs are both scientifically robust and practically relevant (Crossley & Holmes, 2001; Mosrafa, 2016). Third, this study contributes to the ongoing discourse on the professional development of faculty members, particularly in enhancing their research skills and capacity. The lack of necessary research skills and methodological training among faculty members is a recurring theme that must be addressed through targeted development programmes. The study suggests that enhancing research competencies and providing a clear, supportive pathway for research activities could lead to more substantial engagement and productivity among faculty.

In summary, the study highlights the critical importance of addressing both the value and the barriers of educational research to enhance its impact on educational practice and policy. By understanding the challenges faculty members face and implement-

ing targeted strategies to support research engagement, higher education institutions can play a pivotal role in advancing the field of education. A committed effort to foster a supportive, collaborative, and innovative research environment will ultimately contribute to the continuous improvement of education globally.

Implications and Recommendations for Practice

The implications of this study are multifaceted, suggesting several actionable recommendations for higher education institutions:

- Strengthening institutional support: Institutions should focus on improving the research infrastructure by hiring more research support staff, reducing administrative burdens, and providing better access to research resources. Creating dedicated research support offices could streamline research activities and provide essential assistance to faculty members.
- Revising incentive structures: There is a need to create more attractive incentives for faculty to engage in research, such as financial rewards, recognition programmes, and career advancement opportunities tied to research output. This approach could motivate more faculty members to prioritise research alongside teaching and administrative duties.
- Balancing teaching and research responsibilities: Higher education institutions must address the challenge of heavy teaching loads by offering more flexible workload policies. Providing sabbaticals, research leave, or reduced teaching loads for active researchers could help balance the competing demands on faculty time and encourage more research engagement.
- Enhancing faculty development programmes: Investing in continuous professional development programmes focused on building research skills and competencies is essential. Workshops, seminars, and mentorship programmes that cover research design, data analysis, and publication strategies can empower faculty members to become more confident and competent researchers.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should build on the findings of this study by exploring the following areas:

- Comparative studies across institutions and countries: Conducting studies across multiple institutions and countries can provide a broader understanding of how different policies, support systems, and cultural contexts impact faculty research engagement. Comparative analyses can identify the best practices and provide a more global perspective on fostering research in education.
- Mixed-method approaches to explore underlying factors: Future studies should adopt mixed-method approaches to delve deeper into the barriers identified. Qualitative in-

terviews or focus groups could uncover more nuanced insights into faculty members' experiences, motivations, and perceptions regarding educational research.

- Exploring digital tools for research collaboration: Investigating the potential of digital and technological tools to facilitate research collaboration, dissemination, and impact is another promising area for future research. Digital platforms could offer innovative solutions to overcoming traditional barriers to research engagement.

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