

Factors Associated with Scholarly Productivity among Theological Faculty Members in Karnataka

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***Abstract** - The present study examined various factors affect the scholarly productivity of theological faculty members in Karnataka and barriers negatively affected their research. A structured questionnaire was distributed to 100 randomly-selected faculty members of whom 80 returned filled questionnaires. Of the respondents, 55% opined that expectation/mandate from their institution has a positive influence on their scholarly productivity while 52% of them expressed that support from their colleagues have positive impact and 46% of them strongly agree that they are motivated to address a need in the field. At the same time, 27% of them opined that adequate time would be more helpful to their productivity. This study concluded that 60% of respondents strongly agreed that support from their institutions is important. It was noted that more than 47% of respondents would prefer ejournals and ebooks access for their research work. They also expressed administrative responsibilities are hindrance for their research productivity. In order to produce more scholarship less administrative responsibilities preferred. The findings of this study raise questions related to time allocation for various tasks expected of the faculty, particularly whether faculty members' research is accorded due importance, recognition, and funds for scholarship. The results of this study will help the administrators, Principals, Presidents and Deans of theological institutions in Karnataka to revisit their institutional goals and address needs expressed by the faculty members to enable them to produce more scholarly works in order to sustain the field of theological education, be more relevant, and maintain parity with colleagues in other fields of education.*

Keywords: Scholarly Productivity, Theological Education, Theological Faculty Members, Theological Research

Introduction:

Research publications of the faculty members in educational institutions is one of the key factors in assessing their success in academic career and relates to their promotion, salary increase and other benefits. Faculty members with high quantities of research and publications are regarded as effective educators. Thus the reputations of faculty members and the institutions with which they are associated depend on their scholarly publications, as Creamer observes:

“Faculty publishing productivity is often used as an index of departmental and institutional prestige and is strongly associated with an individual faculty member's reputation, visibility, and advancement in the academic reward structure, particularly at research institutions”(Creamer, 1998, p. 2).

Scholarly productivity includes journal articles, books and chapters in books, conference papers and supervised theses. While the focus of higher educational institutions includes both research and teaching, as two sides of the same coin, the role of faculty members' research and publications are the backbone of higher education. One of the key factors affecting institutions' credibility and growth is the size of the faculty and their scholarly contribution to research. Institutions' budget allocations and grants from central and state governments support faculty in order that they might produce scholarly works and sustain their existence in the society. Although numerous studies have been carried out to assess the research works of faculty members of higher education, and while theological education in India started with arrival of Serampore Trio, William Carey, Marshman and William Ward, during 1800s, whose primary aim was to raise native 'missionaries' in the country(Ranson, 1945, p. 45). No study has been carried out to assess theological faculty members' research trends and the associated factors that influence them, particularly the effects of having scholarly works available for consultation and use on the quality of theological education. The present study has been conducted to examine how various factors influence scholarly productivity among theological faculty members and identify the expectations of faculty members in order to produce more scholarly works and use of Information communication technology by them.

Objectives of the study:

The purpose of this study was to identify factors that affect scholarly productivity of theological faculty members. For this study, scholarly productivity refers to journal articles, conference papers, books and chapters in books and supervised theses. This study addressed the following objectives:

- a. To describe demographic variables among theological faculty members in Karnataka
- b. To assess scholarly productivity of faculty members in terms of different variables
- c. To highlight various factors that have positively influenced the faculty members' scholarly productivity
- d. To identify the role of Information communication technology in the scholarly productivity

- e. To determine which factors have negatively impacted the scholarly productivity of theological faculty members

Review of Literature:

A variety of studies have been carried out to analyze faculty research activities, including theological faculty members.

Carol Ann Hughes conducted research using a survey instrument “*Faculty at Work*” developed by Robert T. Blackburn and Janet H. Lawrence, faculty members of University of Iowa to assess faculty members’ information environment. The results of this study indicate that several social contingencies may have a positive effect of publishing productivity (Hughes, 2012, p. 19). Green notes that in 1990s scholarly publication was a central criterion for faculty recruitment, promotion and tenure among graduate faculty (Green, 1998, p. 424).

The results of a study by Skip Bell among seminary faculty members of accredited schools of the Association of Theological Schools in the US noted considerable variation in three areas, (teaching, service and scholarly activity) that was greatest among nonaffiliated schools, and among faculty of missions or ministry departments of non-affiliated seminaries (Bell, 2005, p. 143). Bell further found that faculty of affiliated schools see their institutions place more value on scholarly (32.8%) than their colleagues in nonaffiliated seminaries (24.3%), and a greater emphasis than their own (25.8%) (Bell, 2005, p. 145).

Morgan’s research among 112 protestant theological seminaries affiliated with the Association of Theological Schools in the US, identifies seminary faculty involvement in research and publication as an indicator in assessing the quality of institutions (Morgan, 1992, p. 58).

The results of Bailey’s study indicates that full professors were highly productive compared to Associate professors and others (Bailey, 1992, p. 77). A Study by Ming to assess the impact of Institutional and peer support on faculty members research productivity notes that majority of both non-research institutions and research institutions tend to use the number of publications as the prioritized requirement for tenure-track employment or promotion (Ju, 2010, p. 90).

Roger Allen Nicholson’s research on Current and Preferred Scholarly Practice of the Faculties of Ten Theological Schools Affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (USA) reveals that Faculty members in affiliated seminaries prefer to spend 33% of their time engaged in scholarship while deans prefer that they spend 26% of their time in scholarship related activities (Nicholson, 1997, p. 127). His study further confirms that faculty members feel they spend too much of their time on governance related activities which compromises their scholarship first and foremost.

Gustavo’s study shows that: (a) human resources, such as good students and colleagues from the same fields, (b) lower teaching loads, (c) supportive and mentoring environments, and (d) clear expectations built into departmental mission statements were most helpful for creating research productivity (Gregorutti, 2008, p. 10).

Research Methodology:

The population for this study included faculty members in all academic ranks (Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor and others). As part of this study, a structured questionnaire was designed and distributed to theological faculty members who are teaching in graduate and doctoral programmes in Karnataka state. One hundred faculty members were randomly selected for this study and 80 faculty members completed and returned the questionnaire. A response rate of 80% was attained through personal visits to the institutions.

Data Analysis and Findings:

Below, Table 1 shows the gender of the respondents, a majority of whom were men with only 6 women respondents participating in this study. It is regrettable to know that there is lack of women faculty members in theological institutions in Karnataka, which is currently dominated by men. Table 2 shows participants age, of whom nearly 1/3 were above 51 years of age. Table 3 shows the respondents' academic rank and 50% of participants were full professors.

Table 1: Gender

Gender	Percentage (%)	Count(N)
Male	92.59%	74
Female	7.41%	6
Total	100.00%	80

Table 2: Age group

Answer	Percentage (%)	Count(N)
Below 30	5.00%	4
31-35 Years	13.75%	11
36-40 Years	7.50%	6
41-45 Years	25.00%	20
46-50 Years	16.25%	13
51 and above	32.50%	26
Total	100.00%	80

Table 3: Academic Rank

Academic Rank	Percentage (%)	Count(N)
Professor	50.00%	40
Associate Professor	18.75%	15
Assistant Professor	15.00%	12
Others (lecturer,	16.25%	13
Total	100.00%	80

Regarding the question of whether or not faculty members are involved in administrative responsibilities, table 4 shows that nearly 60% of them are involved, while Table 5 shows the involvement of faculty in academic roles such as editor, peer reviewer and etc. It is noticeable

that 30% were not involved in any academic roles. While it was not possible to ascertain the reason for this, it could be due to administrative responsibilities or lack of opportunities.

Table 4: Administrative Responsibilities

Involved	Percentage (%)	Count(N)
Yes	59.26%	48
No	40.74%	32
Total	100.00%	80

Table 5: Academic Roles of the faculty (multiple answers were given)

Answer	Percentage (%)	Count(N)
Editor of a book	15.93%	18
Editorial board of a journal	10.62%	12
Research Advisor for students of other institutions	15.04%	17
Institutional Research Committee	9.73%	11
Academic Committee of Other institutions	8.85%	10
Peer Reviewer	8.85%	10
Not involved	30.97%	35
Total	100.00%	113

Table 6: Scholarly productivity of faculty member – entire career

Category	Books – authored	Books –co-authored and edited	Articles in Academic Journals	Chapters in books	National conference papers	International conference papers	Total
Professor (n=39)	27	12	205	49	61	16	370
Mean	0.6923	0.3076	5.2564	1.2564	1.5641	0.4102	9.4871
Associate Professor (n=15)	15	8	122	20	9	10	184
Mean	1	0.5333	8.1333	1.3333	0.6	0.6666	4.7179
Assistant Professor (n=12)	9	11	58	35	13	9	135
Mean	0.75	0.9166	4.8333	2.9166	1.0833	0.75	3.4615
Others (n=14)	1	1	10	1	3	4	20
Mean	0.0125	0.0125	0.125	0.0125	0.0375	0.05	0.5128
Grand Total	52	32	395	105	86	39	709
Overall Mean	0.65	0.4	4.9375	1.3125	1.075	0.4875	18.1792

The above table 6 shows that professors are more productive than their colleagues in other ranks. Faculty members produce more articles in academic journals and chapters in books compared to the forms of publications.

Table 7: Publications of faculty members last 5 years

Category	Books – authored	Books –co-authored and edited	Articles in Academic Journals	Chapters in books	National conference papers	International conference papers	Overall
Professor (n=39)	19	9	78	31	31	38	206
Mean	0.4871	0.2307	2	0.7948	0.7948	0.9743	5.282
Associate Professor (n=15)	13	8	79	13	11	0	124
Mean	0.8666	0.5333	5.2666	0.8666	0.7333	0	3.1794
Assistant Professor (n=12)	1	6	25	21	7	5	65
Mean	0.08333	0.5	2.0833	1.75	0.5833	0.4166	1.6666
Others (n=14)	1	1	7	1	1	4	15
Mean	0.07142	0.0714	0.5	0.0714	0.0714	0.2857	0.3846
Total	34	24	189	66	50	47	410
Overall Mean	0.425	0.3	2.3625	0.825	0.625	0.5875	10.5128

Above Table 7 shows the publications of faculty members in last 5 yrs. It is noted that academic journal articles and chapters in books high across all ranks of faculty members while professors are highly productive compare to their colleagues in other ranks.

Table 8: Conferences and Seminars attended by faculty members last 5 years

Type	Conferences and academic seminars attended in the last 5 years		Conferences and academic seminars attended and presented papers in the last 5 years		Conferences and academic seminars attended in the last 5 years Papers published / presented in absentia)	
	International	National	International	National	International	National
Professor (n=39)	61	160	30	67	9	14
Mean	1.5641	4.1025	0.7692	1.7179	0.2307	0.3589
Associate Professor (n=15)	15	44	8	18	0	0
Mean	1	2.9333	0.5333	1.2	0	0
Assistant Professor (n=12)	13	22	9	20	0	2
Mean	1.0833	1.8333	0.75	1.6666	0	0.1666
Others (n=14)	6	21	4	7	2	1
Mean	0.075	0.2625	0.05	0.0875	0.025	0.0125
Total	95	247	51	112	11	17
Mean	1.1875	3.0875	0.6375	1.4	0.1375	0.2125

Above table 8 clearly indicates that Professors have attended more number of conferences compared to their colleagues and have produced more publications (as mentioned in Table 6)

Table 9: Respondents representing different departments

Department	Percentage (%)	Count (N)
Biblical Studies Old Testament	13.58%	11
Biblical Studies New Testament	14.81%	12
Theology and Ethics	23.46%	18
History of Christianity	7.41%	6
Pastoral theology	11.11%	9
Religions	6.17%	5
Missions	17.28%	14
Other (canon law, Christian education and etc)	6.17%	5
Total	100.00%	80

Table 9 shows demography of respondents from various departments in theological institutions. It is noted that 23% of respondents are from theology and Ethics department and 6% from Religions department.

Table 10: Current research work in progress (more than one answer was allowed)

Type of research	Percentage(%)	Count(N)
Article for a journal	25.74%	26
chapter/ article for book	9.90%	10
Paper for a conference/seminar	15.84%	16
Editing a book	12.87%	13
writing a book	24.75%	25
Other	10.89%	11
Total	100.00%	101

Above, Table 10 indicates that 50% of the faculty members' current research work includes writing articles and/or writing books and 15% of research work involved in preparing conference papers.

Table 11: Level of teaching (ticked more than one)

UG Level (BD)	27	22.69%
Graduate Level (MA/MDiv/MTh)	71	59.66%
PG Level (MPhil/Doctoral)	21	17.65%
Total	119	100%

Table 11 shows that a majority (71%) of the participants are involved in teaching graduate level while 18% of them involved in teaching MPhil and doctoral level courses.

Table 12 shows the mean value of level of agreement of faculty on various factors positively affected their research productivity.

Table 12: Level of agreement, factors positively affecting the research productivity

#	Question	Mean
1	Expectation –mandate (from Institution)	2.325
2	Support from the colleagues	2.300
3	Motivation to address a need in the field	1.763
4	Library resources in the institution	2.200
5	Adequate time available	2.525
6	Incentives/ Rewards/ Promotion	3.287
7	Available Funds from / through institution	3.037
8	Sense of satisfaction / Recognition / Stewardship	2.125
9	Support from the family/community	2.190

Below, Table 13 indicates that 56% of respondents agree that expectations from their institutions have a positive impact on faculty publications while 46% of them agree that library resources in the institution and 45% of them agree that motivation to address a need in the field, contribute to the scholarly publications. 37% of them dis-agree that Incentives and rewards have contributed to their scholarly publications.

Table 13: Level Agreement, factors positively affecting the research

Factors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Standard Dev.	Variance
Expectation – mandate (from Institution)	13	45	10	7	5	2.33	1.05	1.11
	16.25%	56.25%	12.50%	8.75%	6.25%			
Support from the colleagues	13	42	14	10	1	2.30	0.93	0.87
	16.25%	52.50%	17.50%	12.50%	1.25%			
Motivation to address a need in the field	36	31	9	4	0	1.76	0.85	0.72
	45.00%	38.75%	11.25%	5.00%	0.00%			
Library resources in the institution	21	37	10	9	3	2.20	1.07	1.15
	26.25%	46.25%	12.50%	11.25%	3.75%			
Adequate time available	21	23	15	15	6	2.53	1.27	1.62
	26.25%	28.75%	18.75%	18.75%	7.50%			
Incentives/ Rewards/ Promotion	6	13	22	30	9	3.29	1.10	1.22
	7.50%	16.25%	27.50%	37.50%	11.25%			
Available Funds from / through institution	8	20	20	25	7	3.04	1.15	1.33
	10.00%	25.00%	25.00%	31.25%	8.75%			
Sense of satisfaction / Recognition / Stewardship	22	34	16	8	0	2.13	0.93	0.87
	27.50%	42.50%	20.00%	10.00%	0.00%			
Support from the family/community	24	30	15	10	1	2.19	1.04	1.08
	29.11%	37.97%	18.99%	12.66%	1.27%			

1 Strongly Agree, 2 Agree, 3 Neutral, 4 Disagree, 5 Strongly Disagree

Below, table 14 indicates the relative importance of various factors that contributed to the scholarly productivity of the faculty members. It is noted that Open Access resources (48%), access to e-journals (46%), ebooks (35%) and an internet connection (44%) are extremely important, while table of contents alerts from publishers, and email alerts from colleagues and librarians, are moderately important in producing scholarly publications. Nonetheless, because email alerts keep the users informed of current developments, librarians should alert faculty members about various developments in their fields of interest. Colleagues likewise play important roles in disseminating information to their contacts, suggesting that by reaching out to faculty members, libraries also help in reaching other faculty members indirectly.

Table 14: Level of importance on factors which helps scholarly productivity

Factors	Extremely important	Moderately Important	Neutral	Less important	Not at all important	Mean	Standard Dev.	Variance
Email alerts from Librarian	13	24	17	18	8	2.80	1.25	1.55
	16.25%	30.00%	21.25%	22.50%	10.00%			
Email alerts from colleagues	15	26	18	16	5	2.63	1.18	1.40
	18.75%	32.50%	22.50%	20.00%	6.25%			
Table of contents alerts from publishers	20	27	17	11	5	2.43	1.19	1.41
	25.00%	33.75%	21.25%	13.75%	6.25%			
Internet connection (speed and quality)	35	24	17	2	2	1.90	0.99	0.98
	43.75%	30.00%	21.25%	2.50%	2.50%			
Open Access resources on Internet	39	22	15	2	2	1.83	0.99	0.98
	48.75%	27.50%	18.75%	2.50%	2.50%			
Access to E-books	35	20	17	4	4	2.03	1.15	1.32
	43.75%	25.00%	21.25%	5.00%	5.00%			
Access to E-Journals	37	22	17	2	2	1.88	1.00	1.00
	46.25%	27.50%	21.25%	2.50%	2.50%			

1 Extremely important, 2 Moderately Important, 3 Neutral, 4 Less important, 5 Not at all important

Table 15 shows the faculty members 'expectations in order to produce more scholarly works. It is very obvious from the table that a majority (61 %) of respondents strongly agree that support from their institutions is needed to produce scholarly publications. The availability of adequate funding for scholarly writing, incentives, rewards/recognition and support from their family and community are also much appreciated by faculty members and contributes to their better performance. Appointment and recruitment Faculty members should be carefully done as per norms of the accreditation agencies. Allocation of funds for library resources and acquiring more digital resources further enhances the scholarly productivity.

Table 15: Faculty members' expectations in order to produce more scholarly works

Factors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Standard Dev.	Variance
Support from my institution	49	21	9	1	0	1.53	0.75	0.56
	61.25%	26.25%	11.25%	1.25%	0.00%			
Support from my colleagues	31	38	11	0	0	1.75	0.68	0.47
	38.75%	47.50%	13.75%	0.00%	0.00%			
Scholarship/Grants for writing	33	28	14	4	1	1.90	0.95	0.90
	41.25%	35.00%	17.50%	5.00%	1.25%			
Less administrative responsibilities	36	24	13	7	0	1.89	0.98	0.96
	45.00%	30.00%	16.25%	8.75%	0.00%			
More Library resources – Print books	46	21	9	2	2	1.67	0.95	0.90
	56.79%	25.93%	11.11%	2.47%	2.47%			
More Library resources – Print Journals	46	21	9	2	2	1.69	0.98	0.97
	56.79%	25.93%	11.11%	2.47%	2.47%			
More Library resources – ebooks	36	28	12	2	2	1.83	0.95	0.91
	45.00%	35.00%	15.00%	2.50%	2.50%			
More Library resources – ejournals	36	28	12	2	2	1.80	0.95	0.91
	45.00%	35.00%	15.00%	2.50%	2.50%			
Adequate Internet connection	46	22	9	1	2	1.61	0.88	0.78
	58.23%	27.85%	11.39%	1.25%	2.50%			
Allocation of funds by my institution	30	23	18	6	3	2.10	1.12	1.25
	37.97%	29.11%	21.52%	7.59%	3.80%			
Support from my family / community	32	32	9	4	3	1.87	0.99	0.97
	41.03%	41.03%	11.39%	5.00%	3.80%			
Incentives / Recognition / Rewards	25	21	18	12	4	2.32	1.17	1.38
	31.17%	25.93%	21.52%	15.00%	3.90%			

Conclusion, suggestions and Implications:

This study has demonstrated that scholarly productivity among theology faculty members is affected by various factors. Professional expectations, mandates from their institutions, and motivation to address needs in the field are highly important factors which positively influenced

faculty members in producing scholarly works. This study has further noted that there is a growing awareness on the use of open access resources available on the internet. Finally, this study has indicated that faculty members need fewer administrative responsibilities and more library resources, both books and journals, to produce scholarly works.

Suggestions:

The findings of this study should help the administrators, Principals, and managing boards of seminaries and theological colleges to emphasize research and publication as part of their institutional goals by allocating adequate funding for research activities and recognizing that giving the faculty adequate time for research is much appreciated. Librarians of theological institutions in Karnataka should further enhance their user services by introducing innovative ways to reach out faculty through regular email alerts and frequent interaction and collaboration will enrich faculty performance.

For future research, a national study among theological faculty members in India will unfold the conditions of theological educators and identify both internal and external factors that affect research productivity.

Limitations:

This study was limited only to theological faculty members who are teaching in graduate and doctoral programmes in Karnataka state.

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