

Publication Fetishism at Higher Education: Academicians' Views

¹Aydın Balyer

²Erkan Tabancalı

Abstract

The main objective of this qualitative research is to determine how academicians perceive publication fetishism at universities in Turkey. The data were collected with interview technique, and analyzed with content analysis technique. The study group consisted of 16 academicians from 5 different universities in Turkey. Research results revealed that most academicians of this sample try to make more publications in order to get promoted without looking at the quality of their publications. A further result shows that quantity-based evaluations and promotion process affects the quality of publications negatively. As a result of fast publication thought, academicians publish their articles in predatory journals which are below international standards. Also as a result of this competitive atmosphere process, academicians experience anxiety and inner disturbances in their professional and personal lives. It is recommended that quantity-based evaluations at universities should be replaced with quality-based ones.

Keywords: *Academicians, higher education, academicians, higher education management, publication fetishism, universities*

¹**Aydın Balyer**, Prof.Dr. Department of Educational Department, Yıldız Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey

Email: balyer@yildiz.edu.tr

²**Erkan Tabancalı**, Assoc.Prof. Department of Educational Department, Yıldız Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey

Email: tabanca@yildiz.edu.tr

Recommended Citation: *Balyer, A., & Tabancalı, E. (2023). Publication Fetishism at Higher Education: Academicians' Views, Journal of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, 7(1)*

Introduction

Universities have increasingly started to measure the quality of teaching staff, their academic promotions and academic incentives by using publication activities recently. In this regard, academicians are supposed to publish certain number of articles or publications especially indexed in high ranking journals in order get promoted. This may mean that scientific publication production is an important condition of promotion in academia.

According to Gaston, Lantz and Snyder (1975) and Kennedy (1997) promotion in rank is important to all faculty members. It carries many incentives such as symbolic rewards, recognition, salary increases, priorities for office space, and increased influence in the affairs of the department and university.

In the recent years, for academic jobs competition has intensified significantly (Teichler et al., 2013). As opportunities are scarce in the academic environment especially in some fields, a fierce competition becomes inevitable for academic jobs. The academic career system is highly pyramidal in shape, with few positions at the top and many at the bottom (Waaijer, 2015). In this competitive world, academicians are obliged to surpass their colleagues by publishing more papers than their peers. On the other hand, academicians are supposed to publish high quality papers in order to surpass their colleagues (Waaijer, Teelken, Wouters & van der Weijden, 2018).

According to Fellman (1995) the academy recognizes two kinds of expressions: the written word and the spoken word. The first one is declared in the article, the book and the paper delivered at the professional conferences or congresses. The second one ripens in the classroom. However, it is considered that neither teaching nor publishing can be ignored. Hence, in such a competitive atmosphere in academia, excellent teaching may receive far less recognition than mediocre research facilities. In such a system, publication productivity in number becomes more important than teaching. In a research conducted by Fox (1992) reveals that there are different dimensions of academic investment such as conducting research, teaching, making publication and disseminating it. When only publication production is prioritized, the other dimensions are ignored. The idea is here being that making publication is a complementary role and research and teaching activities are unnecessary. In this process, while academicians are inclined to reach the required number of publications, they may sometimes neglect their teaching and related core responsibilities. In fact, a balance should be established.

As measuring the quality of staff, their promotions and other incentives has become a sole method at universities even to obtain their professional rights and benefits from the academic incentives, an increase in the demand for publishing articles in international high ranking journals gets more attention. This leads academicians to publish more articles every year. In the literature, linking academic promotions and incentive practices to publishing activities is considered as publication fetishism.

Fetishism is a concept originated from a spiritual discourse about objects. In this regard, fetishism is considered to have special powers to make desires come true, protect individuals and communities from harm and secure insights into the future (Pietz, 1985; Pietz & Apter, 1993). Fellman (1995) claims that fetishism is a form of whistling in the dark, to dodge the turmoil both in the social order and in the self, that might erupt and threaten to overwhelm, were one to pay attention to it. Regarding academic environment, fetishism of publications is not unlike that of rocks, trees, cars, shoes, jewelry, leather, or anything else in religious and sexual fetish. In Marx's sense, it helps convert writings from things of use-value to commodities, of exchange-value. Thus, the fetishism of publications is a very powerful way of diverting academics', students', and the public's attention away from real issues of suffering and possibility of overcoming them.

The change initiatives in higher education are heavily driven by economic incentives. This situation drives higher education field into an economic interest field. Therefore, academicians tend to evaluate and explain studies with economical values (Jessop, Fairclough, & Wodak, 2008). When education is concerned, education reform becomes a competitive arena of publication fetish (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000; Mowery, Nelson, Sampat, & Ziedonis, 2004). In this regard, faculty members are expected to produce and disseminate economically productive knowledge. This transformation of higher education becomes a global industry for revenue generation (Naidoo, 2011). According to Naidoo (2018), it is believed that this kind of competition and publication may solve problems of universities. By doing so, it is expected to increase and enhance quality and lead to efficiency and productivity. As the academic positions are released as a result of publication activities, academic work becomes standardized. It is also considered that this work can be priced and sold (Naidoo, 2018).

On the other hand, competition is not always negative. Traditional academic competition based on collaboration may result in some intellectual advances (Naidoo, 2018). By publishing articles, academicians may have an experience of publication methods, develop a vision by following the international literature. To conclude, it is highly important not to leave higher education field to a fetish of competition based on solely publication production.

Instead of publishing articles for the sake of science, making publications for both promotion and for some other incentives with a quantitative understanding may cause academicians feel under pressure from time to time. It causes a problem and according to Smith (1961) in the last ten years the cry "publish or perish" has rung with increasing stridency throughout academic halls. In a society enamored of numbers and supposed objectivity, and in a business culture that takes numbers more seriously than anything else at all, the pressure for quantitative measurements like numbers of publications is immense. Academic deference to norms of productivity thus reflects the quantitative obsessions of the larger society which both accepts and mocks the pressure to achieve (Fellman, 1995; Gaston, Lantz & Snyder, 1975).

Moreover, Buell (1989) puts that making publication for promotion causes pressures. In this context, Waaijer, Teelken, Wouters and van der Weijden (2018) found that scientists especially early career researchers experience pressure of making more publication. In a study, van Dalen and Henkens (2012) discovered that 50–75% believe publication pressure in their organization to be high.

Adomi and Mordi (2003) stated that academic institutions assess academicians for employment or promotion by their publication number. Martins (1998) also noted that in this case research is much more highly valued than teaching. In this academic atmosphere, the idea of “publish or perish” point of view is settled. In addition, Shukla and Dixit (2016) underlines that as a result of this pressure, predatory journals became a phenomenon mostly from India, Pakistan and China. On the other hand, according to Tien (2016) the promotion system based on publication is at least potentially effective. By doing this, scientists may be the first to make a discovery and publish it, get recognition from peers, obtain research funding and secure a faculty position (Stephan, 2012, pp.16–34).

Regarding Turkish higher education field, this phenomenon has become one of the main problems in recent years. In Turkey, academic staff are expected to meet some certain criteria in order to get promoted. These main areas of measurement are publishing articles and books, participation in conferences, teaching facilities, supervising thesis, conducting scientific projects and having citations to their scientific works. At first sight it seems fair to measure an academic staff in all areas in a balanced way. However, among them, publication facilities take a bigger place, and academic promotions are heavily based on quantitative measurement. This measurement starts at the very beginning of the career, namely from PhD level. For example, in order for a PhD student to be able to defend their thesis, they have to publish at least an article at a high rank indexed-journal usually SCI-SSCI-AHCI. Later, it accelerates, and academicians are expected to collect more points to get a higher promotion. If an academic publishes articles in an indexed journal, it is considered enough to get a certain point no matter what it consists. While some articles are cited hundreds or thousands of times, some others are not cited even once. For example, in the 2010-2014 period in Turkey, which ranked 18th in the World Scientific Publication Production, 204,216 articles were published in total and the rate of cited publications was 51,34 % (Acar & Bektaş, 2021). This prove that a very large proportion of the studies have never been cited and cause the quality of publications to be questioned. Therefore, the publish and perish culture threatens academic progress and undermines the contribution of academics as knowledge producers who serve their communities (Amutuhaire, 2022). However, during promotions both articles are graded with a same point. As academic promotions heavily depend on collecting required maximum points by publication articles in Turkey, there are a great number of young academicians who get promoted at a very young age without having enough teaching experience. This leads to a harsh competition among academicians in academia in the long term.

In addition to general criteria, individually universities have their own promotion criteria, and these criteria increase day by day. The higher a university's rank is, the heavier their promotion criteria is. For example, while a young academic can have a position at a low-ranked university with a few published article, the number may increase at a high-ranked university. In both cases it is a problem to promote academic staff with only journal articles. This process may lead to flourish predator journals, which become a main problem for the academia. For this reason, some SCI-indexed journals in Turkey dropped ISI Web just because they publish unqualified articles.

Regarding academic promotions in some country's higher education contexts, it may vary. For example, UK, Cashmore, Cane, and Cane (2013) reported that promotion based on teaching-related activities, student feedback or peer review; high-quality examination results; honors, prizes or awards, both at institutional and national levels; innovation in relation to teaching methods; involvement in, or the development of, new modules and teaching materials; active participation, or a leading role, in teaching-related administrative activities; participation in courses, training and professional development programs; a national profile through, for example, contributions to national debates orating as an external examiner; the impact of successful pedagogic research; and income generation.

Devlin and Samarawickrema (2020) reports that in Australia academic promotions are made with regard to the recognition of teaching in academic promotions such as: approaches to teaching that motivate students to learn, curriculum development that reflects a command of the field, approaches to assessment that foster independent learning, respect and support for the development of students as individuals and scholarly activities that influence learning and teaching

Chen and Yeager (2011) found that in several top-performing US universities teaching evaluation criteria is used for promotion purposes. American institutions use two major forms of teaching evaluation, student evaluation and peer evaluation, and, to a lesser extent, course evaluation questionnaires. Student evaluations had the largest correlation with successful promotion outcomes. In China, the promotion and merit system at most universities requires academics to conform to uniform performance criteria. Teaching evaluations of academic staff are usually based on self-evaluation, undergraduate student evaluations (postgraduate student evaluations are not mandatory), and publications about teaching, grants to improve teaching and teaching awards. Some institutions also require a certain teaching load and a pre-determined amount of teaching for promotion to take place (Chen & Yeager, 2011).

The promotion system can vary but none of them is totally based on publication facility at higher education systems in some countries. Promotion based on publication leads to publication fetishism at universities. As this becomes a worldwide phenomenon, main objective of this qualitative research is to determine how academicians perceive about publication fetishism at

universities. The results of the current study may shed a light on higher education management system in academic environments.

Research Method and Design

The current study was conducted with a qualitative research method. To this end, a phenomenological research design was implemented. Qualitative studies are carried out to find out how a concept or a phenomenon is experienced by participants (Creswell, 2007). Also, these kinds of studies are used to collect in-depth knowledge in a research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Phenomenological research design proposes that participants should be considered as subjects to create their own meanings in the environment in which they live. In this process, as the creators of their social relations, they establish their social worlds with their own subjectivities (Punch, 2005). For this purpose, a group of academicians were interviewed in order to discover their experiences and views on an increasing problem of publication fetishism at higher education in Turkey.

Study Group

The research participants were 16 academicians who are still working at five different universities in Turkey. The participants were determined with a criterion sampling which is one of the purposive sampling techniques. The purposive sampling technique allows researchers to choose appropriate participants regarding research purpose (Creswell, 2007; Marvasti, 2004). Researchers who conduct qualitative researches implement this technique in order to work smaller groups. Because their purpose is not to generalize research results to larger groups but limited to study group. This technique gives researchers a chance to choose rich situations for getting knowledge around extensive studies and important issues (Creswell, 2007). In this regard, it was purposed to determine academicians from different genders, age groups, position and experience in balance. Also, the participants were chosen from different disciplines such as natural sciences, social sciences, health science and art. In this regard, in each discipline four participants were chosen. The participants' demographics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

The participants' demographics

Gender (n=20)	Male	10
	Female	6
Age (n=20)	25-30	-
	31-35	4
	36-40	4

	41-45	3
	46-50	2
	51 and over	3
<hr/>		
Academic Title (n=16)	Professor	5
	Associate Professor	7
	Assistant Professor	2
	Teaching Assistants (Dr.)	2
<hr/>		
Experience (n=20)	1-5 yrs	-
	6-10 yrs	4
	11-15 yrs	3
	16-20 yrs	4
	21-25 yrs	2
	26 yrs and over	3
<hr/>		

As presented in Table 1 above, as for gender, while 10 of them are male, 6 were female. Regarding their age, 4 participants are between 31-35 years old, 4 are between 36-40 years old, 3 are between 41-45 years old, 2 are between 46-50 years old and 3 are 51 years and over. When their academic titles are concerned, 5 are professors, 7 are associate professors, 2 are assistant professors and 2 are teaching assistants. As far as the participants' experience is considered, 4 academicians are between 6-10 years' experience, 3 are between 11-15 years, 4 are between 16-20 years, 2 are between 21-25 years and 3 are between 26 years and over.

Data Collection

The research data were gathered with semi-structured interview technique. By using such a technique, the research participants are confronted with some elements. Then, they are asked to indicate some important ways in which these elements are alike and, thereby, different from each other (Bailey, 1994; DeMarrais, 2004; Kerkhof, 2006). In this technique, the participants can explain their opinions without feeling a hesitation on a certain subject. For this purpose, in this research process, in order to gather data, the research participants were e-mailed and informed about the purpose of the research. They were checked if they are volunteered to participate in this

study or not. As a result, a group of academician volunteered to take part in the research. Then, they were consented that the data which are collected from them will be used just for the research and cannot be shared anyone or any other institution. Their identities were promised to keep in secret. Later, the interviews were planned on agreed-upon days, and they were visited on the determined days. The researchers both recorded the interviews and also took notes with their permission. Each interview took approximately 30-40 minutes.

Data Analysis

The research data were analyzed with the content analysis technique. This technique is usually purposed to analyze similar data on a certain topic and comment on it (Mayring, 2000). In this regard, first of all, the data were organized. In this process, the researchers revisited each interviewer's interview form and listened to each participant's recorded audiotape. While reviewing the transcripts to ensure the accuracy of the data, each participant's interview transcript was analyzed according to the data analysis procedures described by Bogdan and Biklen (2007). It was call for development of coding categories, mechanical sorting of the data, and analysis of the data within each coding category. Then, each participant's interview was coded separately regarding to their views on publication fetishism at universities. Through this research, emerging themes and repeated themes were grouped into coding categories in three steps as category definition, exemplification, and codification regulation. While doing it, first, the answers to each question were separated into meaningful categories, named, and coded. Secondly, the conceptualized statements were gathered. Thirdly, it was aimed to abstain from repetition. Finally, the defined results were explained and related to each other. It was also aimed to build a cause-effect relationship among the existing parts. The participants were coded as Academician 1 (A1), Academician 2 (A2), Academician 3 (A3), and Academician 4 (A4) ...

The constant comparative approach was implemented in the data organization and analysis process. It results in the saturation of categories and the emergence of theory. In this process, theory may emerge through continual analysis and doubling back for more data collection and coding (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Glaser, 1992). By implementing this method, each set of obtained data were re-examined concerning key issues, recurrent events, or activities. Each academician's data were re-analyzed several times in order to confirm and contradict statements until the data were organized into satisfactory categories and sub-codes to address the research question.

Trustworthiness and rigor

In the current research, for providing trustworthiness and rigor, some precautions were taken. In the first place, the interviewers played the role of facilitators and listeners by just asking questions and recording the answers without leading the participant academicians. In addition, the questions were reviewed by four field experts who are experienced in qualitative researches in order to provide content validity. After taking the experts' opinions, the final forms of the questions were

developed. Moreover, the academicians were guaranteed with the confidentiality of the research data in order not to feel any hesitation. Furthermore, the interview places were determined especially out of the universities or institutions to avoid being affected by some power relations. The following precautions were taken in order to ensure the validity and reliability:

- While preparing the interview form, the related literature was re-examined to establish a contextual framework to enhance the internal validity. Also, member checking was taken. Moreover, as the participant academicians were promised to keep their identities secret, they are considered to explain their opinions freely.
- Not to mention that, in order to increase external validity, the research process was described in detail. In this process, the research method, design, participants, data collection process, and data analysis procedures were described in detail.
- Also, the raw data, coded data records and transcripts were preserved by the researchers for the other researchers' research demand.
- In order to provide internal reliability, the data were all transcribed as they were without any interpretation.
- The coded data were compared with that of the researcher and the consistency was calculated as 88% with the data consistency method developed by Miles and Huberman, 1994.

Findings

In this part, the participants' views on how academicians perceive about publication fetishism in Turkish Universities are evaluated. Their responses were presented below:

Promotions Depend on Publication Facilities

Table 2

Promotions Depend On Publication Facilities

Theme	Sub-themes
Promotions depend on publication facilities	Quantitative evaluation
	Forcing SSCI type publications to get promoted
	Becomes an invisible barrier in promotions
	Patent and publication performance
	Score pressure
	Leads to unethical ways
	Qualitative evaluation is ignored

As compared in the findings obtained here, in general, in Turkish higher education system quantitative evaluation becomes first. In Turkey academicians are forced to make SSCI type publication in order to get academically promoted. Therefore, most academicians try to make more publications without looking at the quality of their publications. By doing so, they try to get higher scores with high publication numbers. This kind of evaluation can also lead to unethical ways, and it can also become an invisible barrier while getting promoted. An associate professor states, *“In this system, quantity comes first rather than quality. The ask me to publish Q1, Q2, Q3 or Q4 type scientific journals. It is not bad to publish at these journals but when you are obliged to do it, it becomes a torture. We get far away from quality and focus on topics that will be published faster. I do not study more important and meaningful topics. I want publications to be published faster. But in fact, they do not solve any problems in the society. I'm giving the system what it wants. I think the system is forcing it.”*

In fact, the basic mission of university is to generate knowledge and disseminate it. Hence, in this evaluation case, the academy gets away from the quality and it becomes a trash of publication when quality is ignored. For example, two publications are published in the same journal but while one of them gets hundreds or thousands of citation, the other may get no citation. This shows the quality of the publication. In fact, qualitative evaluation is ignored. A quantity-based promotion system, academics and institutions to behave unethically. In this case, it may be necessary to look again at the policies of training and appointment of academic staff. This situation creates a problem in favoritism culture. Sometimes four or five sometimes more people write their names on articles without contributing to it. Sometimes they exchange names and publish new articles. New journals are founded for this purpose; they publish articles of their friends. On the other hand, there are some other academicians who find it positive. They consider that this kind of evaluation criteria has positive effects on publication production. Academicians feel obliged to do more publications in order to meet expected criteria. A professor stressed, *“I find the necessity of publication in promotions positive. Fear of not being promoted or being kicked out leads to unqualified publication. There is no standard for the publications, the publications should be evaluated for quality instead of scoring.”*

Increase in Journal and Publication and its Effects on Publication Quality

Table 3

Increase in Journal and Publication and its Effects on Publication Quality

Theme	Sub-themes
	Publications below international standards.
	Citation and patent number

Increase in Journal and Publication and its Effects on Publication Quality

Quantitative promotion standards

Suspicion to the quality due to predator journals, nepotism

Number of fabrication publications

Increase in publication experience and publication knowledge

It affected the quality of publications. These days there is a decrease in quality. Publications are below international standards. There is a visible increase in the number of publications, but it does not reflect in an international arena. In a research, it was found that new publications are not cited adequately in the west (TÜBA, 2021). Similar negative picture can be seen in number and value of the publications produced in Turkey's Scientific Publication Production. In other words, a significant part of the publications addressed to Turkey either are not cited or cited less. (Al, 2008; Al, 2009). According to the data of the Journal Citation Report, the highest impact among the journals in which the publications were published and although there are some that have value, these are remained in the minority. Journals in which publications are published effect value of nearly half is between 1-2, 75% of them are below 2 (Acar & Bektaş, 2021). An associate professor said, *"I have been abroad a lot, but the schools in Turkey are unknown, so publications that are produced in Turkey have no equivalent to the ones published abroad."*

It has a negative impact on the identity of the academician and its value in front of the society. Namely, it affects both academicians and universities status. As known, status is the value that is given to the role. It means that both academicians and universities do not play their roles well (Bursalioglu, 2013: 23). Moreover, as the quality of publications are concerned, it is also approached with suspicion. As a result, there is a distrust and worthlessness towards academia and science here. The deteriorations that spread throughout the system can be handled from a system point of view. A professor mentions, *"It leads to emerge a large number of journals in the field. They publish unqualified publications. There are publications that are far from originality and full of scientific errors. The number of journals should decrease, but this does not mean that the publications will be of high quality. I think the perspective should change."*

It can be said that international publications are increasing, but their quality is questionable, fabricated articles are increasing. There are unscientific processes as a result of it. The reviewers are manipulated. On the hand a positive side, the international broadcasting process is a process that requires knowledge and experience. However, it is considered that this kind of experience may sometimes harm on young academicians' scientific points of views.

Effects of This Process On Academicians' Personal Lives

Table 4

Effects On Academicians’ Personal Lives

Theme	Sub-themes
<i>Effects On Academicians’ Personal Lives</i>	Competition in publication quantity rather than quality among academicians Anxiety and inner disturbance due to publication pressure

In general, academicians put some anxiety and inner disturbances about the effects of this process on academicians’ personal lives. First of all, they state that this causes competition in publication quantity rather than quality among academicians, which is not demanded in an academic environment. It is also contrary to the science production and disseminate function of the university it to the public good. Here, as there is a scarcity of academic positions at university. The government releases 6000 academic positions for all public universities in Turkey each academic year and academicians may wait sometimes more than 2 years in order to get their promotions. academicians need to make more publications than their colleagues in order to get a position and promotion. For this reason, universities increase criteria for these positions. These criteria mostly depend on quantity. Because the current academic criteria at most universities are heavily based on quantic evaluation. In this regard, the more publication an academician makes, the earlier he/she promotes. An associate professor underlined, *“During the application process for associate professorship, I was concerned about making quick and many publications just to achieve the desired score, without looking at the quality, and I made these publications. That's why I don't find the young people who do this strange and I don't condemn them in any way. However, the quality is sometimes so low that many publications that would not be accepted as coursework appear as publications.”*

When young academicians enter academia, they see experienced ones making fast publications without looking at its quality, they follow the same path. In fact, as can be seen, although it is widely known that this process is not good, it becomes normal in academic environment to make low quality publications. Nobody questions the quality. This leads to a paradigmatic change regarding publication quality. This also leads to academic silence in academia. People know this situation, makes unqualified publications but they do not make a voice because they also benefit from this situation. Bursalioglu (2013) defines these kinds of situations as organizational illness. According to him, everybody knows these situations but nobody interferes these bad implementations. Organizational goals and academic goals are ignored at this

stage because academicians try to guaranty their individual benefits rather than organizational quality. Here academicians primarily want to get promoted and quality becomes the second priority. This breaks organizational and personal goals balance in organizations. At this point organizations become individual-oriented organization. In such organizations some features become inevitable like classification, conforming group, nepotism, tendency of personal interests and lack of secrecy or privacy. In the current system, experience and educational facilities are not valued, and they are not scored in order to get promotions. This may weaken organizational commitment in the long term. Here, an inexperienced academician can get promoted earlier than an experienced academician just because of publication number is high. Studies found that inexperienced, young researchers from developing countries are major contributors to predatory publications (Kearney, 2015; Xia et al., 2014).

It also leads to competition among academicians but in quantity rather than quality. A professor underlined, *“Publication is required for promotions. In fact, the quality is more important than the quantity. I think academicians care about quality. But from time to time it negatively affected the quality of publications. The idea of getting ahead in terms of academic competition occurs. but it causes a departure from scientific foundations.”*

Another problem is anxiety and inner disturbance problem. Academicians feel nervous as a result of meeting promotion expectations regarding publication. This situation hinders academicians individual and academic development. They experience dilemma of making more publication or quality publication. As quality publication process requires more time and effort, they tend to make fast low quality publications. This leads to inner conflict among academicians and as a result of it affects their personal and family relations. An associate professor noted, *“During this period, we minimize our relations with both our students and colleagues. We also neglect our family and children.”* An assistant professor underlined, *“I am waiting for my publications to be published. As I see unqualified studies, I tend to make similar publications with similar topics, similar statistical methods. It doesn't force me because I tend to carry out easy researches. It causes anxiety, and I have to deal with it. I cannot concentrate on my studies. I am adapting to this trend so that I can get an associate professorship. My sole goal is to become an associate professor.”*

A professor said, *“New publications which are made just for quantity have no contribution to the science are published. It does not contribute to scientific development. In fact, academicians continue their studies as a ritual. This does not affect their educational activities because they do not have any concerns about quality. They do not worry much about the quality, difficulty, and ethical principles of academic life. It seems ordinary. The academy has lost its meaning. Generally, there is no concern about this quality. No one speaks. If you pay attention, the subject*

is constantly brought up because of the unqualified publications, but this does not reflect much on the academy.”

On the other hand, there are those who find it motivating. They consider that *“It is positive because it encourages publication, I can't devote more time to education. It had a positive impact on me. Contrary to many of my colleagues, when my 5-year waiting period for associate professor expired, I immediately became a professor. I do not think that there is a university with very high criteria and criteria that will force individuals.”* An assistant professor stated, *“As long as the personal satisfaction, it's fine. It does not affect my career and does not have negative effects on my educational activities. It leads to cooperation rather than conflict”* An associate professor stated, *“It affected me positively. It completely turned into a system where individual concerns come first and social and scientific concerns are ignored. “*

In order for the publications to be of high quality, it is necessary to reduce the educational activities. There should be few courses to conduct more quality research. In fact, academicians have excessive workload and they try to make publications at the same time. There should be a balance of teaching hours and scientific publications. According to human resources management approach, work life and family life is unique. When you have a problem at workplace it reflects family life or vice versa.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

The main objective of this qualitative study is to determine how academicians perceive about publication fetishism in Turkish Universities. To that end, a number of results were obtained. According to one of the results most academicians try to make more publications in order to get promoted without looking at the quality of their publications. As universities ask academicians to meet the criteria they developed which is heavily based on quantity, academicians feel obliged to publish more studies in order to meet these expected criteria. By doing so, they hope to get higher scores with high number of publications. However, this may sometimes lead academicians to unethical ways. For example, in order to accelerate the publication process, some academicians tend to search informal relations with reviewers or journal editors, which sounds a favoritism culture. Also, a quantity-based promotion system may lead to flourishing a new journal sector. Recently, the number of predator journals increased significantly. Thousands of predatory journals were established to make fast publication with a great amount of publication fees. In these predatory journals, the quality of publication is ignored. They even do not hesitate to publish hundreds of articles in one volume. Particularly, the rapid and massive development of predatory journals, those that lack peer review but charge for article processing fees, has resulted in a decline

in publication quality (Xia, 2019). Beall's first blacklist contained 20 of what he called "predatory" journals; while the list grew to as many as 1250 journals by the end of 2016 (Beall, 2012). These so-called "trash journals," or "deceptive journals," or the mostly known "predatory journals," have gone too far across ethical and professional boundaries and become a threat to scholarly conduct [Shen & Björk, 2015; Suber, 2009]. Moreover, a kind of so-called collaborations emerged. Sometimes four or five people co-author in one article. Some authors never see the published article as they do not contribute to it. In fact, in Turkey as well as in some other countries, in order to prevent this situation, higher education council had to release a blacklist of these predatory journals. When the basic mission of university of generating knowledge and disseminating it is concerned, in this kind of quantity-based evaluation creates a hazardous academic culture at higher education. However, few academicians find it positive. They consider that this kind of evaluation criteria has positive effects on publication production and publication experience.

A further result shows that this process affected the quality of publications negatively. Most publications are considered as below international standards. As a result of this fast publication, the quality of publications weakens. For instance, there are thousands of publications around the world, but limited ones get cited internationally. Although the number of publication increases, citation stays low. This indicates that some articles are below quality standards. In a research, it was found that new publications are not cited adequately in the west (TÜBA, 2021). Similar negative picture can be seen in number and value of the publications produced in Turkey's Scientific Publication Production. A significant part of the publications addressed to Turkey either are not cited or cited less (Al, 2008; 2009). According to the data of the Journal Citation Report, the highest impact among the journals in which the publications were published and although there are some that have value, these are remained in the minority. Journals in which publications are published effect value of nearly half is between 1-2, 75% of them are below 2 (Acar & Bektaş, 2021). In such a system, quantity is provided but quality becomes doubtful. At this point, university administration should decide if the quality of publication or quantity is more important. This process may affect university and academicians' status negatively in the society. As probably known, status is the value that is given to the role. It means that both academicians and universities do not play their roles well (Bursalıoğlu, 2013: 23). Moreover, as the quality of publications are concerned, it is also approached with doubt. As a result, there is a distrust and worthlessness towards academia and science in such an academic culture. The deteriorations that spread throughout the system can be handled from a system point of view. On the hand, it is considered to have a positive side of this process. The international publication experience and knowledge increase. However, it is thought that this kind of experience may sometimes harm on young academicians' scientific points of views. Young academicians tend to follow the same path. They adopt to this process, and it becomes normal in an academic environment. Everybody knows it but nobody questions the quality. Furthermore, this leads to a paradigmatic change regarding

publication quality. This also leads to academic silence in academia. People know this situation, makes unqualified publications but they do not make a voice because they also benefit from this situation. Bursalioğlu (2013) defines these kinds of situations as organizational illness. According to him, everybody knows this situation but nobody interferes these bad implementations. Organizational goals and academic goals are ignored at this stage, because academicians try to guaranty their individual benefits rather than organizational quality. Here academicians primarily want to get promoted and quality becomes the second priority. This breaks organizational and personal goals balance in organizations. At this point organizations become individual-oriented organization. In such organizations some features become inevitable like classification, conforming group, nepotism, tendency of personal interests and lack of secrecy or privacy. In the current system in Turkish higher education, experience and educational facilities are not valued and scored when academic promotion is concerned. This may weaken organizational commitment in the long term. Sometimes, inexperienced academicians can get promoted earlier than experienced ones just because of the number of publication. Studies found that inexperienced, young researchers from developing countries are major contributors to predatory publications (Kearney, 2015; Xia et al., 2014).

A final result indicates that academicians experience some anxiety and inner disturbances about the effects of this process on academicians' personal lives. They find themselves in a competitive atmosphere, which is not demanded in an academic environment. This competition which is based on overwhelming each other rather than a collaborative working routine which damages work peace. Academicians also feel unsecure at workplace, and it causes anxiety and stress on them. It is also contrary to the science production and disseminate function of the university it to the public good. As academicians make publications to get promoted rather than meeting organizational goals, individual goals become prior. As a result of a scarcity of academic positions, the competition may sometimes become harsh. The government releases 6000 academic positions for all public universities in Turkey each academic year. This means that each university has 100-200 promotions for all staff. Sometimes there are more than 250-300 academicians expecting promotions. In order to get their basic financial rights, they may lead to unethical ways. They try to find different social relations to get their rights.

Another problem for higher education staff in Turkey is anxiety and inner disturbance among academicians. Academicians feel nervous as a result of meeting promotion expectations regarding publication, which is a source of stress. Academicians experience a dilemma of making more publications or quality publications. As quality publication process requires more time and effort, they tend to make fast publications in some predatory journals. This leads to inner conflict among academicians and as a result of it affects their personal and family relations. The recommendations reached through this study are below:

- A quantity based evaluation during releasing academic promotions should be replaced with a quality based evaluation process.
- Teaching, making publication and disseminating it should be balanced in academic environments.
- Academic promotion systems of countries and top-ranking universities can be compared in another research.

References

- Acar, V. H., & Bektaş, M. (2021). Scientific publication production of Turkey. *Ankara Eğitim Araştırma Hastanesi Tıp Dergisi*, 54(2), 331- 340. <https://doi.org/10.20492/aeahtd.946548>
- Adomi, E. E., & Mordi, C. (2003). Publication in foreign journals and promotion of academics in Nigeria. *Learned Publishing*, 6, 259–263.
- Amutuhaire, T. (2022). The reality of the ‘publish or perish’ concept, perspectives from the Global South. *Publishing Research Quarterly*, 38, 281-294.
- Al U. (2009). Türkiye'nin görece atıf etkisi üzerine bilimetrik bir çalışma. *Bilgi Dünyası*. 10, 231-44.
- Al U. (2008). *Türkiye'nin bilimsel yayın politikası: Atıf dizinlerine dayalı bibliyometrik bir yaklaşım*. [Yayımlanmamış Doktora Tezi], Hacettepe Üniversitesi.
- Bailey, K.D. (1994). *Methods of social research*. The Free Press.
- Beall J. (2012). Predatory publishers are corrupting open access. *Nature* 489, 179. <https://doi.org/10.1038/489179a>
- Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and practice*. Allyn and Bacon.
- Buell, C. (1989). *Demands for research and publication at the small College*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (San Francisco, CA,1989).
- Bursalıoğlu, Z. (2013). *Okul yönetiminde yeni yapı ve davranış*. Ankara Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Fakültesi Yayınları.
- Cashmore, A., Cane, C., & Cane, R. (2013). *Rebalancing promotion in the HE sector: Is teaching excellence being rewarded?* Higher Education Academy.
- Chen, Q., & Yeager, J. L. (2011). Comparative study of faculty evaluation of teaching practice between Chinese and U.S. institutions of higher education. *Frontiers of Education in China*, 6 (2), 200–226.
- Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry ve research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage.
- DeMarrais, K. (2004) Qualitative interview studies: Learning through experience. In K de Marrais, & SD Lapan In *Foundations for research* (pp:51-68). Lawrence Erlbaum.

- Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (2005). *The sage handbook of qualitative research*, 3rd Edition, Sage.
- Devlin, M., & Samarawickrema, G. (2010). The criteria of effective teaching in a changing higher education context. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 29 (2), 111–124.
- Etzkowitz, H., & Leydesdorff, L. (2000). The dynamics of innovation: From national systems and mode 2 to a triple helix of university–industry–government relations. *Research Policy*, 29(2), 109–123.
- Fellman, G. (1995). On the fetishism of publications and the secrets thereof. *Academe*, 81(1), 26-35.
- Fox, M. F. (1992). Research, teaching, and publication productivity: Mutuality versus competition in academia. *Sociology of Education*, 65(4), 293-305.
- Gaston, J., Lantz, H. R., & Snyder, C. R. (1975). Publication criteria for promotion in Ph.D. graduate departments. *The American Sociologist*, 10(4), 239-242.
- Glaser, B.G. (1992). *Basics of grounded theory analysis*. Sociology Press.
- Jessop, B., Fairclough, N., & Wodak, R. (2008). *The knowledge-based economy and higher education in Europe*. Sense.
- Kearney, M. H. (2015). Predatory publishing: what authors need to know. *Research in Nursing and Health*, 38, 1–3. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nur.21640>.
- Kennedy, D. (1997) *Academic duty*. Harvard University Press.
- Kerkhof, vd, M. (2006). *The repertory grid technique, integrated assessment*. Retrieved October 14, 2022, from http://www.ivm.vu.nl/en/Images/PT4_tcm234-161509.pdf.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G.B. (2006). *Designing qualitative research (4 th ed.)*. Sage.
- Martin, B. (1998). *Tied knowledge: Power in higher education*. B. Martin.
- Marvasti, B. A. (2004). *Qualitative research in sociology*. Sage.
- Mayring, P. (2000). Qualitative content analysis. *Forum: Online Journal Qualitative Social Research*, 1(2), 1-10.
- Miles, M.B., & Huberman, M.A. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: A Sourcebook of New Methods*. Sage.
- Mowery, D.C., Nelson, R.R., Sampat, B.N., & Ziedonis, A.A. (2004). *The ivory tower and industrial innovation: University–industry technology transfer before and after the Bayh–Dole act*. Stanford University Press.
- Naidoo, R. (2018). The competition fetish in higher education: Shamans, mind snares and consequences. *European Educational Research Journal*, 17(5), 605–620. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474904118784839>
- Naidoo, R. (2011). *Rethinking development: Higher education and the new imperialism*. In: King R, Marginson S and Naidoo R (eds) *A Handbook on Globalization and Higher Education*. Edward Elgar (pp. 40–58).
- Pietz, W. (1985). The problem of the fetish I. *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 9(1), 5–17.

- Pietz, W., & Apter, E. (eds) (1993). *Fetishism as cultural discourse*. Cornell University Press.
- Punch, K.F. (2005). *Introduction to social research—quantitative & qualitative approaches*. Sage.
- Shen, C., & Björk, B. C. (2015). Predatory’ open access: a longitudinal study of article volumes and market characteristics. *BMC Medicine*, 13, 2-15.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-015-0469-2>. 11.
- Suber P. (2019). Ten challenges for open-access journals, *SPARC Open Access Newsletter*. Retrieved April 30, 2022, from <https://dash.harvard.edu/handle/1/4316131>.
- Shukla, S. K., & Dixit, V. K. (2016). Publication for promotion in medical academia. *Indian Journal Gastroenterology*, 35(5), 398–399. <https://doi.org/s12664-016-0689-1>
- Smith, P. (1961). Research and publication: As they affect academic performance and promotion. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 32(4), 199-205.
- Stephan, P.E. (2012). *How economics shapes science*, Harvard University Press.
- Tien, F. F. (2007). To what degree does the promotion system reward faculty research productivity? *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 28(1), 105-123,
<https://doi.org/01425690600996741>
- Teichler, U., Arimoto, A., & Cummings, W.K. (2013). *The changing academic profession: Major findings of a comparative study*. Springer
- TÜBA (2021). *Türkiye bilim raporu*. Retrieved April 30, 2022, from <http://www.tuba.gov.tr/files/yayinlar/raporlar/>
- van Dalen, H.P., & Henkens, K. (2012). Intended and unintended consequences of a publish-or-perish culture: A worldwide survey, *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 63(7), 1282–1293.
- Waaiker, C. J. F., Teelken, C., Wouters, P. F., & van der Weijden, I. C. M. (2018). Competition in science: Links between publication pressure, grant pressure and the academic job market. *Higher Education Policy*, 31, 225–243.
- Waaiker, C.J.F. (2015). The coming of age of the academic career: Differentiation and professionalization of German academic positions from the 19th century to the present’, *Minerva*, 53(1), 43–67.
- Xia, J. (2019). Economic modelling of predatory journal publishing. *Publishing Research Quarterly*, 35, 377–390. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12109-019-09661-9>
- Xia, J., Harmon, J. L., Connolly, K.G., Donnelly, R.M., Anderson, M.R., & Howard, H.A. (2014). Who publishes in “predatory” journals? *The Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology (JASIST)*, 66(7), 1406–17. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.23265>.