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Unlocking Potential: A Closer Look at Research Engagement and Productivity Among EFL Academics in East Java, Indonesia

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Abstract

The Study highlighted research engagement and productivity among academics in East Java, Indonesia's private universities. It communicated three research inquiries: 1) How do 30 English Education Departments' research productivity levels represent 288 Academics in East Java's private universities? 2) To what extent do EFL academics' participate in different research-related activities? 3) What drives the EFL academics' interest in conducting research? Understanding these matters is critical for improving research production and personal performance. The Study utilized a Quantitative descriptive approach by analyzing evidence of overall productivity scores in the Sinta Database. In addition, an online survey was issued to point out academics' involvement in research and the drives beneath their participation. The findings indicated that the research productivity among 30 English education departments was mainly low. Academics intensively engaged in writing, citing, conducting, and reading research. However, publishing research in recognized international journals indexed by Scopus or Web of Science, publishing in accredited national (Sinta Tiers one and two), and proposing intellectual property rights received less scrutiny. Their research drive was primarily for professional development, knowledge contribution, and self-awareness; research is a component of their job, alongside teaching and community services. However, promotions, governmental positions, and professional allowances were less motivating. The findings emphasize the significance of targeted funding and mentorship to facilitate publications, promote technical advancement, and stimulate the pursuit of intellectual property rights to enhance research productivity.

Keywords: EFL academics, Indonesia, private universities, research engagement activities, research motivation, research productivity level, sinta database

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Introduction

In the present educational landscape, research has become one of the pivotal indicators of academics, institutions, and country performance (Cerado & Naanep, 2023; Hue et al., 2022; Jameel & Ahmad, 2020). Research Engagements offer substantial academic benefits, such as enriching knowledge, fostering personal and professional growth, and boosting career advancement (Alhassan & Ali, 2020; Khairiah et al., 2024 & Novita et al., 2023). At the institutional level, research is a pivotal determinant of national and international ranking (Ibrahim & Fadhli, 2021). Institutions with solid academic research engagement and cultures contribute to higher research outputs that enhance their rankings in global university assessments, attract substantial funding, and strengthen institutional missions (Vidal & Ferreira, 2020). Besides individual benefits, Research Engagement (RE) is paramount in elevating Research productivity (RP), determining a country's international standing, and bolstering innovation capabilities in higher education (Barrot, 2017; Henry et al., 2020; Jameel & Ahmad, 2020; Nguyen, 2015; Sukoco et al., 2023).

Despite the Indonesian government's efforts and investment to improve research through regulations, funding, and mentoring programs, research performance in Indonesia still needs global recognition (Ibrahim & Fadhli, 2021). Indonesia's research outputs have surpassed countries like Malaysia and Singapore. However, the quality and global impact remain insufficient; no one of the universities in Indonesia succeeded in the 100 lists of QS world-ranking universities in the last three years, while institutions like the National University of Singapore (NUS) have secured the eighth position, Nanyang Technological University ranks fifteen, and Universiti Malaysia holds position sixty. This discrepancy highlights a critical issue: the need to enhance research engagement and research productivity in Indonesia across all educational sectors, especially private universities whose research productivity was not outstanding compared with public universities (Huda et al., 2020).

One of the areas requiring attention in research productivity is English as a Foreign Language, a field within Arts and humanities, which consistently shows lower publication outcomes than other fields of study like natural science, technological engineering, and life science medicine (Haqiyah, et al., 2021). English Education Departments are notably absent from the top ten departments with the highest research productivity at the national level. The leading departments nationally include Informatics (S1) with a score of 3799, Management (S1) with 2868, and Electrical Engineering (S1) with 1787, underscoring the dominance of science, technology, and management fields in research outputs.

Studies on RE and RP in the EFL context within Higher Education have addressed significant concerns on a global scale. Borg's (2009) pioneering research on research engagement (RE) established a foundational framework for understanding academics' views on research and its quality. This framework was replicated by Borg and Alshumaimeri (2012), who studied RE in Saudi Arabia, especially to seek light on how actively English teachers in two leading universities are involved in research, their beliefs driving their engagement, and their views on how supportive their institution is towards fostering productive research endeavors. Similarly, Borg and Liu (2013) extended the exploration to China, focusing on the extent of teachers' engagement and contribution. Further, Kutlay (2013) continued this line of inquiry in Turkey, offering further insights into how English teachers engage with research in different institutional contexts.

Building on the initial work of Borg (2009), subsequent studies have refined and expanded the concept of RE across various settings. Sadeghi and Abutorabi (2017) shed light on the English

teachers' conceptions of research and reasons for conducting research in Iran. Furthermore, Al-Maamari et al. (2017), studied promoting RE through research programs in Oman. Then, Banegas (2018) investigated the research conceptions of EFL academics in Argentina, especially to examine how EFL teachers in Argentina think of research and engage in it. Bai (2018), highlighted the perceptions of English Teachers toward research in China. Farsani and Babaii (2019) underscored how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) faculty members participate in research activities and provided insights into how demographic characteristics correlate with research activities in Iran. Furthermore, Alhassan and Ali (2020) highlighted EFL teachers' perspectives and attitudes towards RE to enhance teachers' professional development in Oman's higher education. Besides, Jamoom & Al-Omrani (2021) accentuated EFL teachers' RE at a university in Libya.

Furthermore, studies on RP by Tien et al.(2019) emphasized the role of postgraduate supervision and mentorship in enhancing RP in Taiwanese universities. Then, Yousefi et al. (2019) assessed the impact of research training programs on academics' RP in Iranian universities. Jameel and Ahmad (2020) highlighted the critical role of research culture and institutional support in fostering RP In Iraq. Moreover, Henry et al. (2020) pointed out factors significantly influencing RP in Malaysia's higher education. Sakarkaya and Bümen (2022) analyzed the influence of digital resources and technology on research productivity in Turkish universities. Hue et al. (2022) evaluated the impact of government policies and national research agendas on the RP of academics in Chinese universities. Li and Zhang (2022) reinforced the impact of mentorship and work environment on EFL RP, and Alemu (2023) underlined the challenges and opportunities in RP in Ethiopian universities.

Notably, the researchers only found a few studies related to the topic in Indonesia, such as Wulyani et al. (2021), who conducted a study focusing on defining research and Research Engagement in teacher research of EFL academics at tertiary and secondary education levels, shedding light on their involvement in research activities and the factors influencing their engagement. Recently, Floris et al. (2024) explored the dynamics of Research Engagement within Indonesian EFL settings in four departments in reputable universities in Surabaya. It focused on their reading habits, preferences for literature, and the impact on professional practices. Moreover, the current study focused on both Research Engagement and Research productivity. It was conducted in private universities in East Java, Indonesia, contributing to this diversification trend by focusing on the Research productivity levels among 30 S1 English Education Departments and the intensity of EFL academics' engagement in research and motivations for involving themselves in or with research. What sets this research apart is the meticulous adjustment of the survey, moving away from the previous studies, which mainly adopted ideas from (Borg, 2009). The current study used a framework for a more tailored assessment aligned with Indonesian evaluation from the SINTA database.

Moreover, the current study addresses a research gap in the Indonesian context and provides a comparative view of prior studies conducted outside Indonesia. It compared the motives for participating in research activities within the Indonesian EFL academic community to correspond with or differ from global trends. The current study investigates research engagement and productivity among EFL academics at East Java's private universities in Indonesia. Understanding these matters is crucial for increasing research productivity and academic performance and regulating appropriate policies based on the real challenges academics face. The study was addressed to answer three research questions: 1) How do 30 English Education Departments' research productivity levels represent 288 Academics in East Java's private universities? 2) To what extent do EFL academics participate in

different research-related activities? 3) What are their drives of interest in involving themselves in or with research-related activities?

Literature Review

Research Engagement

Research Engagement (RE) encompasses active involvement in conducting and interacting with research (Heng et al., 2020). Borg affirmed that RE refers to engaging in research (for example, by conducting it) and engaging with research, for example, by reading and using it (Borg, 2010). Similarly, RE includes reading and systematically using research for professional development (Anwaruddin & Pervin, 2013). Eam (2015) referred to RE as activities related to research, such as proposing funding, carrying out research, developing the framework, method, and procedure of the study, reviewing the literature, publishing articles, disseminating research, data analysis, writing research, giving research reports to stakeholders and the public, as well as integrating research in teaching. In addition, Bai (2018) highlighted activities that counted as research, including compiling books or dictionaries, translating texts, synthesizing literature, reflecting on teaching practices, and conducting principled inquiries. Moreover, Yousefi et al. (2019) conceptualized RE-encompassing activities such as publishing journal articles, presenting papers at conferences, authored books, and participating in research projects. Further, this involvement extends beyond researching to generating ideas, leading projects, writing reports, and disseminating research (Heng et al., 2020).

The conceptualization of activities related to research provided by Eam (2015); Bai (2018) Yousefi et al.(2019), and Heng et al.(2020) covered a wide range of activities, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of RE. However, these definitions only partially capture the scope of RE in Indonesia. Through its detailed metrics for assessing RP, the Sinta Database implies that RE in Indonesia includes additional activities such as conducting community service, registering intellectual property rights, developing technological prototypes, supervising a thesis, becoming an editor in a journal, reviewing research outputs in a journal, networking which is crucial for academic assessment and recognition in the local context. This highlights the need for an expanded and localized understanding of RE that reflects Indonesia's unique educational environment and expectations, going beyond the definitions provided by previous scholars.

Research Productivity

Research Engagement and research productivity are closely intertwined, as RP is the tangible outcome of scientific academics' involvement in various research-related activities called publications (Yousefi et al., 2019). They are commonly measured through quantifiable indicators covering published books or book chapters, disseminated findings, reviewed articles, and achieved research funding, including grants and commercialization income (Heng et al., 2020; Akbaritabar et al., 2021). Further, the dimension of excellence in academics' research profiles is evaluated through bibliometric methodologies such as the count of citations, rates of citations, the h-index, and other metrics (Agarwal et al., 2016). In the Indonesian context, RP for academics can be the measurable output in research activities stated in individual metrics of RP in the Sinta database. Sinta is the integrated information system that records and manages academics' research and community service in Indonesia, including scientific publications, researchers, and research institutions (Ibrahim & Fadhli, 2021; Ahmadi, 2019). The current study utilized the academics' overall score in the Sinta database as the basis for level categorization.

Methods

The researchers employed descriptive quantitative research to gain and analyze numerical information that intends to describe, explain, predict, or control the phenomenon under investigation through quantitative measures that do not manipulate variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In alignment with this research's objectives, using descriptive quantitative data, including measures such as mean and percentages, facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of the studied phenomenon. It is comprehensively suitable for achieving the intended goal by describing, highlighting, and underscoring the RP and RE of EFL academics in East Java's private universities.

Participants

The study involved 30 SI EEDs that covered 288 EFL Academics in private universities in East Java, Indonesia, recorded in the Sinta databases. It was intended to investigate the SI English Education Department based on their overall Sinta scores. Further, to achieve the second and third objectives of the study, 165 respondents from a total population of 288 were involved in the online survey. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants based on specific criteria: respondents had to be active lecturers, teach in S1 English Education programs, and possess a National Lecturer Identification Number. This method ensured that the sample was representative of the population relevant to the study. The minimum sample size of 100-200 respondents is often considered adequate for descriptive quantitative studies if the population is minor. It provides a sufficient margin for error and enhances the generalizability of the results (Memon et al., 2020); Researchers referred to Slovin's formula to calculate the sample size; a confidence level of 95% was applied, providing a margin of error and enhancing the generalizability of the findings. The sampling strategy employed was purposive sampling. It is a non-probability method for choosing individuals or cases with specific characteristics or experiences relevant to the research aims. Although this sample may not accurately reflect the broader population, the selected participants can offer substantial insights into the investigated research question (Turner, 2019).

Research Instruments

Researchers collected data from the Sinta Database regarding the universities' names, SI EED, EFL numbers, and average overall scores to achieve the first aim. The consistency of this data was verified by cross-referencing it with other databases, such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and "PDDIKTI" to ensure accuracy. Additionally, the researchers utilized a closed-ended online survey to determine EFL academics' RE consisting of 23 statements in part 1 with a 5-option Likert scale: Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, and Never. Part 2 of this survey aimed to underscore the motivations behind EFL academics' involvement in or with research, covering 15 statements with a five-option Likert scale: Agree, Agree, Slightly Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. This survey slightly differed from previous studies, which mostly adopted Borg's. This current survey was aligned with the activities related to research based on academics' scoring metrics in the Sinta database. Before distributing it, a pilot study was conducted on 37 respondents to ensure validity and reliability. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient result demonstrated good internal consistency higher than 0,7. The result indicated that the items were valid and reliable (Ghazali, 2016).

Research Procedures

Before conducting the research, the researchers designed instruments tailored to the

Indonesian context and conducted pilot projects to ensure the validity and reliability of these instruments. Additionally, a preliminary analysis of the research productivity (RP) of several English Education Departments (EED) in private universities in East Java was performed. This analysis included a comparison of the RP of EEDs with other institutional departments to provide a general overview of their productivity. During the research, the researchers investigated the RP among 30 EEDs in East Java's private universities. Then, the research productivity level of these departments is based on the average overall score in the Sinta database, divided into high, moderate, and low levels, to achieve the first research objective. Following the analysis of these results, the researchers conducted an online survey to determine the activities related to research that are less engaged by EFL academics and investigate the motivations behind EFL academics' involvement in or with research; the survey results were then analyzed and reported to gain insights into the current state of RE among EFL academics at EEDs in East Java's private universities

Results

Research Productivity Level of 30 SI EEDS at Private Universities in East Java, Indonesia

Research productivity levels of 30 SI EEDS recorded in the sinta database at private universities in East Java, Indonesia, were primarily low there are only 4 out of 30 EEDs (13.3%) have achieved high research productivity, indicating that a small proportion of these departments perform exceptionally well in research output. 10 EEDs (33.3%) fall into the moderate productivity category. This suggests that while these departments are active in research, there is still room for improvement to reach a high productivity level. The majority, 16 out of 30 EEDs (53.3%), have low research productivity. This imbalance indicates a need to enhance research engagements and research productivity. Further information regarding research productivity levels of 3o EEDs can be seen Research productivity levels of 30 SI EEDS recorded in the sinta database at private universities in East Java, Indonesia, were primarily low there are only 4 out of 30 EEDs (13.3%) have achieved high research productivity, indicating that a small proportion of these departments perform exceptionally well in research output. 10 EEDs (33.3%) fall into the moderate productivity category. This suggests that while these departments are active in research, there is still room for improvement to reach a high productivity level. The majority, 16 out of 30 EEDs (53.3%), have low research productivity. This imbalance indicates a need to enhance research engagements and research productivity. Further information regarding research productivity levels of 3o EEDs can be seen in Table One in the appendix of the supplementary materials.

EFL Academics' Engagement in Activities Related to Research

The survey result revealed that EFL academics were mainly engaged in citing researchers' work in writing, with a score of 93.45%; conducting research regularly (at least once a year), with a score of 92.48%; and reading research outputs such as articles, books, or proceedings, with a score of 91.03%. These activities highlight the academics' commitment to staying informed and contributing to scholarly discourse. On the other hand, the three activities with the most minor engagement are publishing articles in reputable international journals indexed by Scopus and Web of Science, with a mean score of 31.48%; publishing articles in accredited national journals (Sinta 1 and 2), with a score of 41.67%. Moreover, proposed intellectual property rights (IPR) for innovations, with a score of 43.67%. These lower engagement levels suggest challenges in achieving high-impact publications and securing intellectual property rights, which may require additional support and resources. Further information regarding the EFL academics' engagement

in activities related to research can be found in Figure one in the appendix of the supplementary materials.

The Motivation for EFL Academics' Engagement in /with Research

The finding indicated that the highest score of EFL academics' research motivation was to enhance professional development (89.45%), followed by contributing to disciplinary knowledge (88.24%) and academics' awareness that research was part of their job besides teaching (87.27%). A significant number also research out of love for it (85.94%) and to solve classroom problems (84.24%). Lower motivations include researching for government ranking improvement (75.27%), obtaining professional allowances (75.40%), and institutional obligations (77.09%). These results indicate that while intrinsic motivations and job-related duties are motivating drivers, external incentives like promotions and allowances are less effective in encouraging research engagement. Additional detail regarding the EFL academics' motivation of involving in or with activities related to research can be found in Figure Two in the appendix of the supplementary materials.

Discussion

The findings reported that 1) the research productivity level among 30 EEDs at private universities in East Java, Indonesia, was mainly low. 2) EFL academics are intensively engaged in activities related to research, including writing, citing, conducting, and reading research. However, publishing research in recognized international journals indexed by Scopus or Web of Science, publishing in accredited national publications (Sinta Tiers one and two), and proposing intellectual property rights received less scrutiny. 3) EFL academics' research drives were primarily for professional advancement, knowledge addition, and recognition that research is a component of their job alongside teaching and community services. However, promotions, governmental positions, and professional allowances were less motivating.

The first finding showed that most EEDs achieved low levels of research productivity based on the overall score in the Sinta Database. 4 out of 30 EEDs achieved high research productivity. In addition, 10 EEDs fell into the moderate productivity category. Most EEDs, 16 out of 30 EEDs, have low research productivity. The EEDs achieved high levels of RP, including EED at Universitas Islam Balitar, Universitas Muhamadiyah Surabaya, Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Surabaya, and Universitas Ronggolawe. Remarkably, a small institution like the EED of Universitas Islam Balitar has surpassed more prominent universities despite its faculty members. This finding suggests that a solid commitment to research excellence, self-driving forces, and a strategic focus on research activities can significantly enhance RP. These results underscore the importance of institutions in boosting the internal motivation of their academics by offering appreciation and rewards as well as a research mentoring system (Arsyad et al., 2019; Chen, 2015 & Tien et al., 2019)

Moreover, the EED in Universitas Islam Balitar performed high RP with only six academics. However, the EED at Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, with twenty-three academics, and Universitas Islam Malang, with sixteen academics, suggest improvement in their RP. This result emphasizes the crucial role of individual commitment and active participation in research, whatever the institution's condition (Novita et al., 2023). In addition, EEDs like Universitas Islam Majapahit Mojokerto, Universitas Bhineka PGRI Tulungagung, Universitas Islam Jember Universitas Katolik Widya Mandala Surabaya demonstrate potential for growth through enhanced institutional support, faculty development initiatives, and fostering a robust

research culture in the field of EFL to foster academic productivity (Al-Maamari et al., 2017; Jameel & Ahmad, 2020; Yousefi et al., 2019).

The second finding highlighted that EFL academics at private universities in East Java, Indonesia, primarily engaged in activities such as writing and citing researchers' works, conducting research regularly, and reading research outputs. The results indicated that EFL academics knew reading, conducting, writing, citing, and publishing research were essential. It signifies a proactive approach of EFL academics towards staying informed and contributing to existing knowledge (Floris et al., 2024). However, their publication is mostly in national journals or journals accredited in Sinta Tier 3,4,5 and 6. Furthermore, the survey results revealed that the three activities with minor engagements are publishing research in reputable international journals indexed by Scopus and Web of Science, publishing research in accredited national journals (Tiers 1 and 2), and proposing intellectual property rights. These lower engagement levels suggest challenges in achieving high-impact publications and securing intellectual property rights, which may require additional support and resources. The lower engagement in international publications, especially publishing in journals indexed by Scopus and WoS, or events in Tier 1 or Tier 2 of accredited national journals was in the same vein as previous researchers who have admitted that academics have many challenges in publishing research in those prestigious journals (Arsyad et al., 2019; Teixeira da Silva, 2021; Kardiyanto, et al., 2021).

The challenges stem from exceptionally high standards and rigorous peer-review processes; articles submitted to these databases frequently require extensive revisions, increasing the time and effort needed to meet the journals' stringent criteria (Paltridge & Starfield, 2023). The competition for publishing in Scopus and WoS journals is intense, and researchers often experience rejection, which can be discouraging (Asif et al., 2020). This result highlights the need for institutional and governmental funding support, especially for academics from small or developed universities to publish research in reputable journals (Arsyad et al., 2019; &Pho & Tran, 2016). It implies the need for future research to know the factors contributing to the challenges in publishing research in reputable journals indexed by Scopus or Wos and accredited national journals Tier 1 and Tier 2. Furthermore, IPR engagement is low, possibly due to a lack of awareness or limited knowledge about the process. Increasing socialization and understanding of IPR can encourage its pursuit. Institutions should prioritize legal reforms and training programs to protect intellectual property and enhance RP (Judijanto et al., 2024). Further research is needed to understand why IPR engagement is low among EFL academics.

The last finding underscores that the top reasons for EFL academics' engagement in research are for professional development, contributing to disciplinary knowledge, and the awareness of academics that research is part of their job, not only teaching. These highlighted a solid commitment to personal growth, academic contribution, and professional responsibilities. Conversely, the three most minor motivating factors are researching for promotion, increasing the government's international rank, and getting an honorary or professional allowance. This result indicates that while intrinsic motivations and job-related duties are significant drivers, external incentives like promotions and allowances are less effective in encouraging research engagement. Compared with a previous study by Borg and Alshumaimeri, (2012), it can be inferred that intrinsic and extrinsic motivations influence research engagement among EFL academics. This research highlighted that academics are motivated by a genuine love for research and a commitment to professional development, aligning with the intrinsic factors discussed in the contemporary literature. However, in contrast to the study mentioned, the external promotion driver has a

relatively lower motivation for research engagement in this context.

Furthermore, the study aligned with Borg and Liu, (2013) that emphasizing professional development as a key motivation, with 89.45% of respondents in the current survey aligning with Borg and Liu's top-ranked reason. Borg and Liu also highlight finding better ways of teaching and solving professional problems, similar to solving classroom problems (84.24%) in the present study. However, the present study places a higher emphasis on contributing to disciplinary knowledge and the awareness of academics toward the research as their job besides teaching the students. The implications suggest that EFL academics are driven by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, with a strong focus on professional growth and contributing to their academic discipline.

In addition, the findings aligned with Kutlay's regarding the primary reasons for engaging in research (Kutlay, 2013). Both studies reported that personal and professional development were the primary motivators, followed by academic reasons, reaffirming that personal and professional development and academic reasons are significant driving forces. This consistency underscores the prevalent role of these factors in motivating research activities among teachers, reflecting a stable pattern in educational research engagement. Both studies highlight the importance of research for self-improvement and career advancement, suggesting that these motivations are deeply rooted in the academic profession.

The results are also in line with a study by Sadeghi and Abutorabi, (2017) that revealed the top reasons for engaging in the research were personal and professional development, seeking better teaching methods, and solving teaching problems These motivations closely mirror the present study's findings, highlighting personal and professional growth as primary drivers. However, their study also reveals a significant emphasis on improving teaching practices and addressing practical problems in teaching, which aligns with the goals reported by our participants.

The results of the current study are in the same vein as Banegas (2018), who reported that professional development was the top motivator, and personal satisfaction and enhanced teaching practices were significant factors. Barriers such as lack of time and insufficient knowledge about research methods were also identified, echoing the challenges faced by our respondents. practical barriers such as time constraints and knowledge gaps are crucial for fostering research engagement. Institutions should provide better support and resources to mitigate these barriers. In addition, this study aligns with Wulyani et al. (2021), which revealed shared motivations among language teachers engaging in research in several key aspects. Both studies underscore the significance of personal inclination, with enjoyment being a driving force for research participation.

Besides, it aligns with vital aspects of Jamoom and Al-Omrani, (2021), shedding light on the motivations that drive teachers' engagement. Both studies identify the paramount importance of professional development as a primary motivator for teachers to delve into research activities. The pursuit of finding better ways of teaching and solving professional challenges emerges as a shared objective among participants in both investigations. Similar to their findings, the current research emphasizes the intrinsic motivations behind research engagement, such as enhancing teaching skills, promoting self-confidence, and fostering critical and analytical thinking about teaching practices. The recognition that research contributes to personal growth and skill development resonates across both studies. However, a nuanced difference emerges in research, where collaboration is a noteworthy motivation. Jamoom's study explicitly highlights this aspect, our participants are keenly interested in collaborative research experiences. Collaboration and contribution to disciplinary knowledge emerge as strong motivators, emphasizing research's social

and collective nature within the academic community (Alhassan & Ali, 2020; Khairiah et al., 2024). While financial incentives and career advancement are factors, they are less prominent than intrinsic and professional development motivations. This finding resonates with studies emphasizing that extrinsic motivators alone may or may not sustain long-term RE (Bai, 2018; Peng & Gao, 2019).

Lastly, it is crucial to concede the limitation of this study. The study focused exclusively on private universities in East Java, Indonesia, and the findings may not be generalizable to public institutions or other regions. Additionally, it is noteworthy that utilizing data from Sinta could represent a limitation concerning the comprehensiveness and diversity of available data. The inherent limitations associated with Sinta data, possibly due to delays in updates or other discrepancies, could introduce potential biases or misinterpretations, emphasizing the need for cautious interpretation of the results within these constraints. Future research could explore additional factors influencing research engagement, such as institutional policies and support structures. Longitudinal studies could provide insights into the sustainability of RE over time. Moreover, qualitative research methods could offer a deeper understanding of individual motivations and institutional dynamics.

Conclusion

The investigation of EFL academics' RP in private universities in East Java, Indonesia, revealed that over half of EEDs at private universities in East Java, Indonesia, achieved low research productivity. Only four EEDs belong to High levels, such as EED at Universitas Islam Balitar, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surabaya, Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Surabaya, and Universitas Muhamadiyah Ronggolawe. In addition, EFL academics showed engagement intensely in research activities, such as writing and citing research, conducting research regularly, and reading research outputs; however, they were less involved themselves in activities such as publishing research in recognized international journals indexed in Scopus and WoS, publishing in accredited national Tier 1 and 2, and proposing intellectual property rights. Furthermore, the primary motivations behind their research engagement were intrinsic, focusing on professional development, knowledge contributions, and the awareness that research is an academic duty besides teaching. At the same time, promotion, increasing government rank, and career incentives are less motivating. The implications of these results highlight the need for targeted funding and mentorship to support publication in reputable international journals, promote technological development, and encourage the pursuit of intellectual property rights to enhance research productivity.

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