Description

Research endeavors in the 21st century are made easier by collaborations. As academia becomes increasingly more complex, researchers are pooling their resources towards a common goal: scientific discovery. Collaborations not only benefit researchers but journals as well. For instance, journals such as *Nature* and *Science* have found a positive correlation between the number of authors in a publication and their impact factor. One pertinent example is the discovery of novel compounds that lead to the synthesis of medicines. Often, these ventures require a multidisciplinary team until completion.

Collaborations in Scientific Research

Early career researchers (ECRs) often feel more comfortable working with researchers that they are familiar with. While this creates fluency and routine, which are undoubtedly important for working in teams, there is a rising notion that ECRs must step outside of their comfort zone and consider collaborating with like-minded scientists. Although collaboration with local researchers can be a big help towards completing research, collaborating with international researchers is also advisable. A case worth noting is that of Germany, where collaboration was proven to be successful and, indeed, crucial to success.

Importance of International Collaborations

Collaboration with international researchers is often deemed as an option. However, international collaborations have several benefits that should not be underestimated. The Royal Society released a press statement about collaboration, stating that "…the primary driver of most collaboration is individual scientists. In seeking to work with the best of their peers and to gain access to complementary resources, equipment, and knowledge, researchers fundamentally enhance the quality and improve the efficacy of their work."

There are other benefits to international collaborations. For instance, Bornstein stated that crossing cultural boundaries aids in social science research by helping researchers parse the parts that depend on culture, as well as culture-independent forces. Another importance of international collaborations is that it will allow for a deeper and more thorough interpretation of data because of different cultural views. International collaborations benefit both students and universities, allowing for a richer

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exchange of knowledge and expertise. Science is becoming more and more complex, and many researchers have a narrowly focused expertise. These researchers will benefit from international collaborations with other specializations.

They are Good for Your Career

Academic researchers are becoming more aware of the need for collaborating internationally. UNESCO recognized the importance of academic collaborations. By 2014, international scientific collaborations contributed 86% of all published articles. In addition, it comes as no surprise that Europeans partner with Europeans. However, the United States is the top collaborator. The benefits of international collaboration have been recognized, and these benefits are listed below:

- International collaborations allow for researchers in other countries to gain access to information from scientists with relatively more knowledge. International collaborations thus provide an important channel for pooling resources.
- Working with foreign scientists provides a good way of enhancing local scientific capabilities because knowledge and expertise are exchanged.
- International collaborations allow local researchers to access materials and equipment that are not available locally. These include computing facilities, particle accelerators, and radio telescopes.
- Collaborations also pave the way for accessing funding, especially for those in low-income countries.
- Emerging scientists can also be given the chance to work with experts in the field, advancing their scientific careers.
- Lastly, international collaborations aid in finding solutions on a regional scale, benefiting the scientific community.

How the Research Community Benefits

International collaborations are essential to research. The research community benefits from international collaborations because of the pool of knowledge that international researchers bring. Aside from this, institutions also benefit from collaborations on a macro scale.

- Collaborations pay off. In the academic community, scientists survive by sharing knowledge and expertise with each other. The presence of communication channels and stable partnerships benefit the research community because information can be shared.
- International collaborations are also essential for low-income countries because these collaborations help develop an academic climate. In turn, the research community benefits from information exchange.
- Collaboration has become easier due to modern science. New materials and methods improve the quality of research. However, collaboration is important for ensuring research quality.
- Institutional quality is also improved by collaborations. It allows changes in the type of culture that is supportive of teamwork and pooling of resources.
- Collaborations with top-tier universities can increase the standings of universities in developing countries.

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Whether you are just starting out or have advanced in your career, international collaborations are worth looking into. These collaborations may also have their share of disadvantages, however, the benefits outweigh the risks. Understanding collaborations on a deeper level will enable researchers to contribute knowledge and expertise to improving scientific research.

Have you collaborated with other researchers on your research project? How has the experience of research collaboration been? Share your thoughts with us in the comments below!

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