

Description

Should we expect research to make a societal impact, when it is not accessible to policy makers let alone the general public? For any advancement to make a meaningful societal impact, it must not exist in a vacuum. It is inextricably linked to the broader world, influencing policy decisions, technological advancements, healthcare, education, and our understanding of the world around us. But if the vast majority of research remains inaccessible due to financial constraints, the impact of research is curtailed.

One fundamental aspect of ensuring accessibility is open access (OA) publishing, and based on a global research we recently conducted by Enago reveals that 82% of researchers prefer their research to be accessible by all. As such accessibility demystifies research and empowers the general public to engage in informed debates on issues ranging from climate change and public health to technology and education. Yet, 79% researchers refrain from publishing on OA platforms due to the publishing costs levied by these platforms. Hence, there's a pressing concern that still lacks a universal action from different stakeholders in the research and publishing cycle, which arises the questions of who should be responsible for acquiring these funds? – the researchers or the institutions?

With researchers' days often filled with experiments, data analysis, and the relentless quest for breakthroughs, should they be also worrying about getting publication funds, if they haven't applied for them as part of their research grant? Whose responsibility is it anyway?

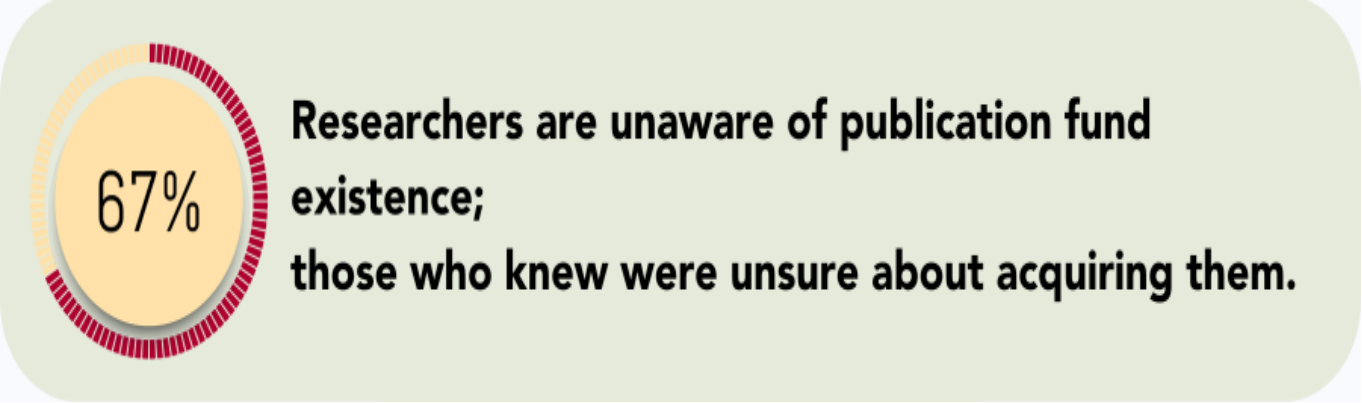
Research is a demanding endeavor that requires intense dedication and unwavering focus. Researchers are often buried under a mountain of responsibilities, from securing funding for their projects to designing experiments and analyzing data. Given this arduous journey, it's not surprising that many researchers may not allocate sufficient time to learn about publication funds and how to apply and budget for them. The result is a gap in understanding and awareness about best practices for open access publishing that can have detrimental consequences for both the researchers and the institutions they serve.

Acknowledging the Burden of Ignorance

Although researchers realize that publication stands paramount in academia, yet, many researchers may find themselves struggling to secure the necessary resources to cover publication costs, whether it be for open-access journals, page charges, or conference fees. This Ignorance about available

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publication funds can lead to financial stress, delayed publication, and, in some cases, underrepresentation of valuable research in the public domain.



Realizing that researchers are preoccupied with their demanding work and may not be fully aware of the funding opportunities available, there is a need for greater awareness amongst researchers and institutions must play a significant role in educating and empowering researchers on this front.

The Responsibility of Institutions

While the onus of conducting research falls on the shoulders of individual scientists and scholars, the responsibility of facilitating and supporting this research should be shared with academic institutions. This includes providing the necessary infrastructure, resources, and guidance to ensure the success of their researchers. In light of this, educating researchers about publication funds and providing resources for best practices is a responsibility that institutions should not neglect.

1. Raise Awareness

Academic institutions must take the lead in raising awareness about the various publication fund opportunities available to researchers. They should actively inform their faculty and students about the existence of such funds and the eligibility criteria. This can be achieved through regular workshops, information sessions, and clear, concise communication.

2. Simplify and Standardize Application Procedures

To further ease the burden on researchers, institutions should streamline the application process for publication funds. Complicated application forms and unclear guidelines can discourage researchers from seeking the financial support they need. Simplification of these procedures will make it more accessible and manageable for researchers, allowing them to focus their energy on research itself.

3. Financial Support and Incentives

Institutions should also consider providing financial support to researchers in need, either through internal funds or by partnering with external organizations or funders. Such financial assistance can alleviate the burden on researchers and ensure that their findings reach a wider audience. Additionally, institutions can offer incentives, such as merit-based awards or bonuses, to motivate researchers to

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publish their work in high-impact journals.

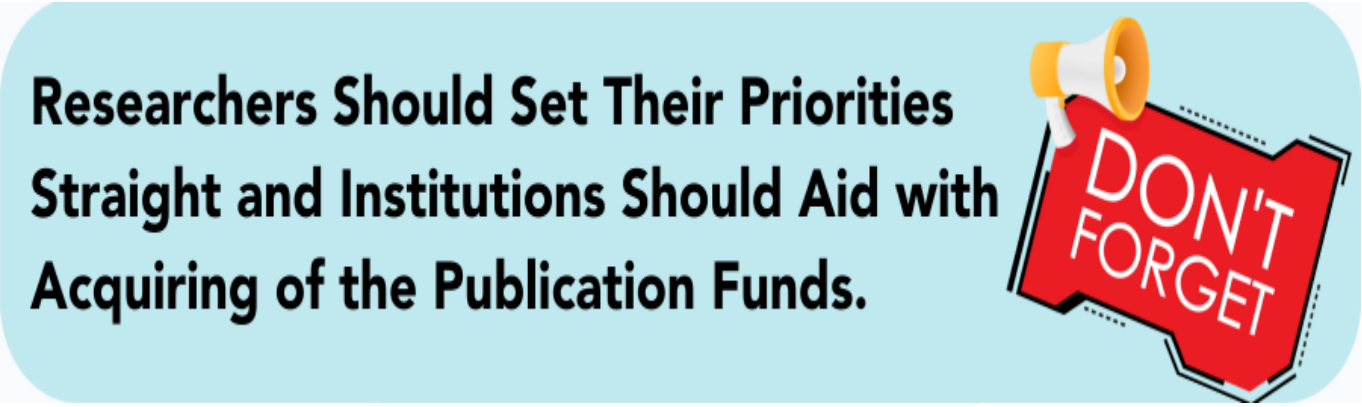
4. Mentorship and Guidance

The academic environment thrives on mentorship and guidance. Institutions can provide researchers with mentorship programs, where experienced faculty members guide junior researchers in navigating the publication process, including seeking publication funds. This mentorship not only empowers researchers but also strengthens the research culture within the institution.

5. Encourage Collaboration

Collaborating with other institutions on “Read and Publish” agreements is instrumental in alleviating financial burdens for researchers by lowering article processing Charges (APCs) and improving access to scholarly work. To create awareness, institutions can conduct workshops, distribute informative newsletters, and utilize online open platforms to emphasize the cost savings and expanded research dissemination possibilities. These efforts can empower researchers to make informed decisions and leverage these agreements for their academic pursuits.

Defining Roles Is Necessary



Beyond conducting experiments and producing publications, researchers are often engaged in teaching, supervising students, and participating in collaborative projects. Furthermore, they must secure research funding, contribute to grant proposals, and remain updated on the latest developments in their field.

All of these responsibilities are not only time-consuming but also mentally taxing. Therefore, expecting researchers to proactively seek out publication funds, without the institutional support and guidance, can be an unrealistic burden. It is the institutions’ responsibility to provide the resources and knowledge to facilitate the process and ensure that researchers can focus on their primary roles.

Ultimately, the collaborative relationship between researchers and their institutions can make a significant difference in addressing the issue of publication funds awareness. Researchers should be encouraged to communicate their needs and concerns regarding publication funding, and institutions should be receptive to these concerns.

Transparency and open dialogue between researchers and institutions can lead to the development of

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better policies and practices, ensuring that publication funds are more accessible and that researchers are better equipped to secure them. In this way, institutions can empower researchers and support their crucial work, rather than burdening them with yet another responsibility.

It’s Time for a Substantial Universal Change

As we look toward the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals and the pressing challenges our world faces, including climate change, public health crises, and technological advancements, the need for transparent, accessible, and impactful research becomes even more apparent. When researchers can effectively communicate their findings to policymakers, they provide the foundation for informed decision-making that can shape the future of our societies.

Institutions can empower researchers, alleviate their burden, and ensure that their valuable contributions reach a broader audience. In this collaborative effort, we can foster a research environment where the pursuit of knowledge is unencumbered, and researchers are free to focus on their primary mission – the advancement of science and understanding.

Institutions are not just the homes of researchers but also the guardians of the knowledge generated within their walls.

This discussion doesn’t end here. We have launched our global survey that will unveil some interesting trends of the academic funding domain for not just researchers or institutions but for all the funders and publishing industry professionals.

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