"Whoever has the most publications win"

Time and research integrity: Researchers' experience of time, speed and acceleration in academia

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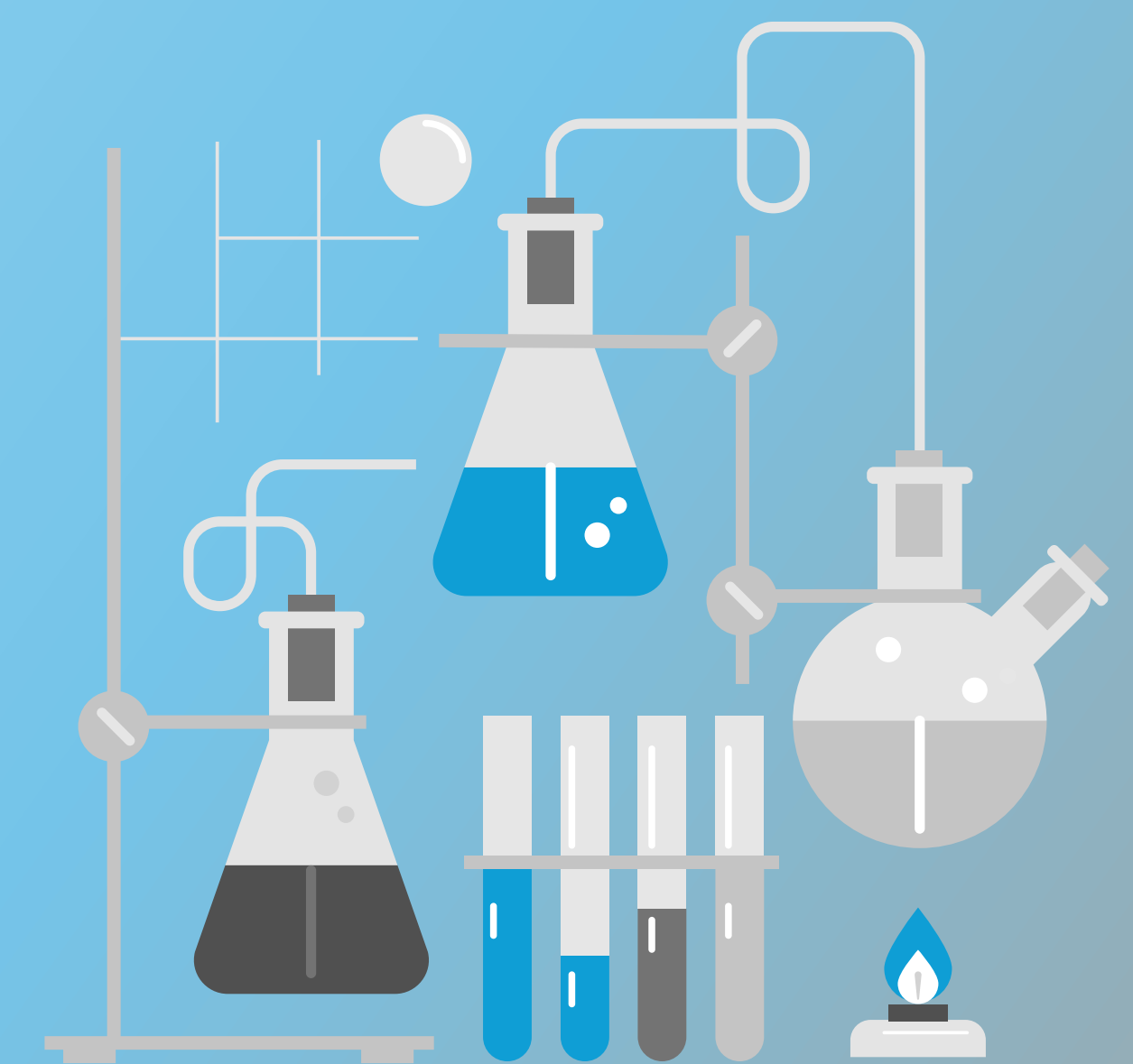*corresponding author: mps@ps.au.dk
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Competition

Focus on quantity and speed

Acceleration

No time to: read, collect new data, use advanced methods, do in-depth analyses, comply with relevant regulations, supervise etc.

Declining quality

36 Focus Group interviews, 176 researchers

Introduction
We wanted to know more about researchers' perception and experiences of acceleration and the current reward and merit system in academia – and the related impact these perceptions and experiences have on research integrity and quality.

Theoretical framework:
Inspired by Hartmut Rosa's theory of acceleration in modern societies (Rosa, 2010, 2013) as well as by scholarly work on acceleration-related change in the academy (Ylijoki and Mäntylä, 2003; Ylijoki, 2015; Vostal, 2015, Vostal et al., 2019; Müller, 2014; Felt, 2017).

Methods:
- Secondary analysis of thirty-six focus group interviews with 176 researchers in seven European countries.
- Re-examination of the focus group interviews to gain a deeper understanding of researchers' perceptions of the current research culture and to better understand the conditions of opportunity for good research practices in contemporary academia.
- A subjective approach to the study of time and research integrity.
- Interested in the narratives, because they guide researchers "by tacitly defining the horizons of possible and acceptable action" (Felt, 2017, p.143).

Findings:
- Researchers across countries, disciplines, gender, and seniority paint a strikingly similar picture of the current reward and merit system in academia: it harms the robustness of the knowledge produced because it rewards quantity and speed instead of quality and thoroughness.
- Study supports the research assessment reform movement's analysis (DORA, CoARA etc.) as well as previous studies by Aubert Bonn and Pinxten (2021) and Edwards and Roy (2017).
- QRPs attractiveness can partly be understood in relation to their ability to speed up research processes.
- Diminishing the use of QRPs require changing researchers' perception of what matters in academia.

Table 1. Two ideal type reward and merit systems	
Ideal type 1: The quantitative assessment system	**Ideal type 2: The qualitative assessment system**
This is **the current system**, which according to the interviewees rewards and/or encourage:	This is **the system as it ought to be or was in the past**, according to the interviewees. It rewards and/or encourage:
Quantity	Quality
Projectification and focus on 'project time'	Room for 'process time'
Papers	Books and more comprehensive papers
Incremental steps (salami slicing)	Substantial contribution (giving full accounts of findings in publications)
Playing it safe (knowing that you will get results)	Taking risks (blue ocean, basic research)
Copying and reusing ideas, approaches, designs, data, etc.	Originality, advanced methods, and time to do extra data collection
To be fast	To be thorough
Strategic thinking (related to career)	Joy of work
To publish as much as possible and as soon as you have first results	To publish when you have substantial results
More authors per paper	More strict interpretations of what it takes to be a co-author
Focus on writing and output	Focus on reading and process
Knowledge production as a means to an end (points in an assessment system, individual careers, new grants, solve pre-defined problems etc.)	Knowledge production as a goal in itself (enlightenment, deepening our understanding of Nature and the world etc.)
Ideal type researcher: The successful head of a lab or research unit, who is constantly applying for new grants and who gets his name on all papers from that unit by just reading and commenting on them.	Ideal type researcher: the Nobel prize laurate, who pursued a bold idea that nobody believed in, and who via basic funding from the university spent decades to study a problem (Jens Christian Skou)

What kind of system do we want?