

AGGREGATION OF RESEARCH WITH TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Aggregation of research and teaching and as the two key elements of education offered by the institutions of higher education has been and is a challenging task for the educational leadership and policy makers. So, this paper is devoted to investigate the existing theories related to aggregation of research with teaching along with the objective of diagnosing the pros and cons of assembling of research and teaching together, identifying implications associated with the education model based on aggregation of research with teaching in the higher education institutions and presenting valid peculiar suggestions to achieve better research and teaching blending activities for higher education institutions. The papers findings suggest that a balanced blending of teaching and research activities affects positively the overall education quality and standards. However, higher education institutions must demonstrate a strong academic and research leadership, committing all necessary resources, to create the key conditions for such a sound and judicious blending between these two distinct but interdependent academic activities. Must show operational flexibility, and last but not the least, build a supportive institutional culture.

Keywords: Balance between research and teaching, pedagogy, advantages of assembling research with teaching, models of assembling of research with teaching.

INTRODUCTION

When we look at the history of the higher education institutions, we find that the dilemma of having a balanced approach towards research and education has not really been properly addressed by either the education administrators or the policy makers of the institution. It is found that some higher education institutions do more teaching accompanied some research effort and continuing education. Some other universities focus relatively more on research and publication activities and teaching being a secondary function of the institution. Although they do not declare it officially but devote substantial resources (time, faculty, money) to research and publication.

As focused in existing research work, the factors listed below are believed to explicitly or indirectly influence such strategic decisions and the direction of the institution:

- 1) **Culture of Institution's origin country-** Certain national policies and programs promote research and development activities and initiatives in the country and hence provide adequate resources to academic institutions to conduct research and development activities.
- 2) **Culture of Institution-** Some universities have been able to develop a culture, system and process to focus on teaching or research as the main activity of the institution.

- 3) **Public vs Private Institutions-** Private institutions mainly depend on the tuition fees paid by the students as a major source of income. Hence, dedicated towards teaching to provide quality education to the present and future students. While public institutions derive all or most of their financial resources from public funds and use it to support teaching and research activities.
- 4) **Job opportunities-** There are no job opportunities for researchers and even if there are job opportunities they are not well compensated professionally and financially, so students and faculty are devoted to educational programs and activities that are economically viable and profitable.
- 5) **Size of institutions-** It is assumed that institutions of large size have sufficient resources to allocate to both teaching and research. Whereas, smaller sized institutions with few academic programs allocate resources for teaching and other wealth-generating activities.

Anyway, the topic of how much teaching versus how much research should be done within higher education institutions, how much teaching and research a professor should do as part of their normal academic workload has been a long-standing debate. There is no conclusive answer. Some of the research indicates that there is a significant positive relationship between research and teaching in terms of enriching the teaching material. While some other research suggests that such relationships may not be beneficial. As a matter of fact, over the last several decades research expectations from higher education faculty have been increasing to such an extent that research productivity has become the dominant and sometimes the sole criterion for recruitment, tenure and promotion in higher education institutions. Two main reasons for which are increasing dependence of the institutions on external research funds and the demand or need to rank among the top institutions.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1) To know the importance of higher education institutions to aggregate their research and teaching efforts as a successful method for providing high-quality education.
- 2) To know the effect of aggregation of two distinct but connected educational tools and components.
- 3) To find some possible implications for aggregation of research operations with teaching in higher education institutions.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study is purely based on literature review of researches, articles etc. related to the aggregation of research with teaching.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To fulfil these objectives a comprehensive review of the existing literature on research education and teaching is done in the following sections.

Comparison between research and teaching activities

The functions of research and teaching are different from each other. Obviously doing both requires dedication, motivation, and resources. Both have concrete and abstract advantages for the educational institutions, teachers and students. Still there are some distinctive differences and similarities between these two important components of higher education.

Those differences and similarities are associated with:

- 1) The objectives and needs of research and teaching.
- 2) The process and resources required to carry out research and teaching activities.

- 3) The impact of research and teaching on the higher education institutions.
- 4) Eligibility, knowledge and abilities needed to perform either research or teaching.
- 5) The importance and benefits of teaching or research for the researcher or teacher.

Pros of aggregating research with teaching

The proper aggregation of research with teaching may have productive, permanent and comprehensive advantages not only for higher education institution but for all contributors of education industry like- students (knowledge receiver) and teachers (knowledge provider). Theories suggest that higher education institutions can get advantage from aggregation of research with teaching by improving their reputation and image in the eyes of their contributors. Also, this technique will help bringing students into research field and teachers will bring their research projects to the classrooms. A strong aggregation of research with teaching in higher education level may produce quality teachers-researchers and quality learners-researchers.

There are arguments in favour and against the idea of including students in research related projects but majority believe that it can help them build different skills. Other thinkers claim that outstanding researchers are the best teachers as well. These thinkers are of the view that research professors become more closely associated with their colleagues in the same field at other institutions. Professors involve in research share their research knowledge and experiences with their students in class.

Research makes the teaching richer, wider and more original. Research oriented teachers tend to be more self-confident, self-reliant and students show more interest in their class.

Cons of aggregating research with teaching

When aggregate research with teaching, research activities should not distract teaching in any way. The topic and activities of research should be related to the teaching subject and interest area of teacher. Research is the need of the hour but high involvement in research projects is time consuming and can distract faculty from student-teaching supportive activities.

The importance of research and teaching activities cannot be quarrelled as both these activities and functions have long term impact on the reputation and success of higher educational institutions. The reputation of an institution is based on the quality of research done by its faculty and any invention or patent or award received by the faculty at the national and international level is certainly beneficial to the institution. Contrary to this belief, if faculty members focus too much on their research and less on their classes. The institution may have a negative teaching image in the community. To overcome these extremes, institutions should adopt a balanced approach to research and teaching.

Following are some suggestions for the same:

- 1) Allocate time and resources to the Professor who have the potential, interest and capacity to do research and similarly allocate more teaching activities to those professors who like and enjoy only teaching.
- 2) Introduce planning and performance evaluation systems which integrate all activities of research and teaching and also consider both teaching and research equally important for the institution.
- 3) Teaching and research should be given equal points or credits when evaluating the performance of professors or doing appraisal.

Potential benefits of aggregating research with teaching

There are several eminent benefits of aggregating research with teaching for the professors, students and institutions. Some benefits are following:

1. Research is an intellectual work. It broadens the knowledge horizon and help to generate new teaching theories, concepts, models.
2. Carrying out research with teaching diversify professional development opportunities for faculty.

3. Direct involvement of students in research as a part of their course help them to learn research basics.
4. Once students involve in research can find out problems in real world in different conditions among different horizons like teaching, learning, society or personal level.
5. It also helps to create strong relationship between research and quality teaching.
6. As now we are moving towards knowledge-based societies and economies where research skills are key attributes in vocational and professional fields.
7. Acquiring research skills enhances graduate employability and provides the resources and confidence to understand and adapt to a society whose knowledge-base is fast changing.

Options to aggregate research with teaching

There is no one best option available to aggregate research with teaching for higher education institutions to suit their needs, interests and limitations. Scholars emphasizing upon aggregating research with teaching at classroom level. We can aggregate research with teaching by including four kinds of research activities:

1. **Research-tutored Activities:** Students divide in small groups to work on research paper or essay writing on a specific topic under guidance of teacher and ask to engage deeply with the topic.
2. **Research-based Activities:** It includes research activities emphasize on curriculum designed and undertaking inquiry-based learning, to promote focused learning attitude.
3. **Research-led Activities:** It emphasizes on curriculum designed to promote and focus the learning of the content of teaching subject.
4. **Research-oriented Activities:** It emphasizes on curriculum designed to promote the teaching process to construct knowledge in the concern subject.

Pedagogical approach to aggregate research with teaching

It is important for the higher educational institutions to design appropriate, effective and best pedagogical methods to aggregate research with teaching function of the faculty along with the research integrated learning environment for students. Some options for the same are mentioned below:

- 1) Involve Undergraduate and post graduate students directly in research projects on any topic (of their interest) related to their course.
- 2) Inform the students about the importance and implications research activities not only in academics and institution but also in society and real world.
- 3) Higher education institutions may provide some Value Added Courses based on research.
- 4) Research based assignments should be given to the students so that they can understand the importance of research and try to do that.
- 5) Involve deserving students as a part in departmental or institutional research and projects.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aggregation of research activities with teaching in higher education institutions is a contentious issue that has not yet found a consensus. Institutions of higher learning were established with the purpose of imparting knowledge, fostering knowledge sharing, and developing graduates' competencies. Any institutional strategy that combines these two distinct but related tasks should be carefully considered and implemented in order to achieve the value addition goal that drives it. Instead of viewing research and teaching as obstacles to one another, educational management should view them as complimentary. Simply we can say that the majority of higher education institution's professors are expected to teach, conduct research and engage in continuing education also.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Aggregation of research activities with teaching in higher education institutions is seen as a wise strategy to improve and maintain the quality of higher educational services.

1. **Selection of the best model:** Since not all teaching and research integration models suit all institutions as one size does not fit all. So, it is necessary to consider several factors such as financial resources, availability of faculty and institutional culture while making such strategic decisions.
2. **Pedagogical Approach:** Traditionally teaching is the core aim to establish Institutions and research is secondary. So, to aggregate research with core aim (teaching), pedagogy require changes in the existing system of curriculum design, resource management and faculty task allocation etc.
3. **Issue of Strategy:** Higher education institutions should bring strategic changes at various levels like Institutional strategies; Departmental policies, research & teaching management.
4. **Emerging requirements from various contributors:** Requirements for the quality education from various contributors in education industry have create the need and importance of aggregation of research activities with teaching.
5. **Current vigorous issues:** Some issues are vigorously discussed nowadays. Like parents want graduates equipped with professional awareness, communication and teamwork skills. So, to meet the demands of the parents, institutions have to aggregate the research activities with teaching.
6. **Higher education institution's ownership:** Each ownership has specific effects on the degree of freedom; resource creation; teaching and research approaches and policies.
 - A. Private and independent institutions (administered by a non-governmental organization)
 - B. Public institutions (administered by government education authority i.e. Ministry of education)
 - C. Private government-dependent institutions (administered by a non-governmental organization but depend on the government sources.
7. **Status of Research Faculty in Society-** Faculty members who are dedicated to research and publication get more social and professional status and financial benefits like- better pay, funds for research and traveling, comparatively less workload of teaching.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following guidelines can help higher education institutions to encourage, expand and assess teaching-research activities equally within the institutions.

- 1) Recognize and reward faculty members who successfully aggregate research with teaching in their classes.
- 2) At the institutional level, recognize and reward academic units and initiatives that successfully promote aggregation of research and teaching.
- 3) Create FDP's that initiate ways to aggregate research with teaching.
- 4) Connect the research initiatives of faculty, department and higher education institutions with the initiatives and programmes of the federal, state, local, private, and non-profit organizations.
- 5) Higher education institutions must have enough labs for research and experimentation, access to both printed and online research databases, and publication and editorial services.

Educational institutions interested in aggregation of research with teaching are recommended to create a conducive environment for faculty to do so. A strong institutional support is critical for such integration. Ultimately, such aggregated programs should be advantageous and interesting to faculty and students. An academic leader with a global mindset along with clear-cut knowledge of educational pedagogy, aggregation of research with teaching and research experience will be able to bring about any sort of changes in the organization.

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