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Contact Details
Graduate School of Applied English Linguistics
Faculty of Education and Languages
Atma Jaya Catholic University
Van Lith Building, 2nd Floor, Jalan Jenderal Sudirman 51
Jakarta 12930, Indonesia
Phone/Fax number: (62-21) 5708821
ijelt@atmajaya.ac.id
website: http://ojs.atmajaya.ac.id/index.php/ijelt

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Teaching – research nexus in higher education management: An overview

Madhukar Sharma
Lumbini Banijya Campus, Butwal, Nepal

Abstract

This paper aims to critically review the nexus between teaching and research in higher education. This study investigates the issue such as why universities and policy makers are calling for stronger integration of teaching and research in spite of a considerable tensions among researchers, scholars, and all the concerned with regard to teaching-research nexus. The researcher argues that symbiotic relationship between teaching and research should be perceived and treated accordingly by academics, students, and policy makers to fully promote quality education in terms of creating new knowledge and contributing to the local and global community. The research approach adopted in this study includes views, reviews, and critics put forward in different literature. The findings suggest that the nature of teaching-research relationship is not always a clear cut one. The paper concludes that despite varied relationship between teaching and research, a positive nexus between teaching and research is more common and therefore, teachers, academic staffs, and policy makers should pay a critical attention to a symbiotic relationship between teaching and research.

Keywords: teaching-research nexus, higher education, academic research

Introduction

Linking teaching and research in higher education is a demand of many academic institutes. Academics are often expected to be good researchers in order to be good teachers. Smith (2018) maintains, "there is an expectation that academics should be both active researchers and teachers" (para.1). This should be noted that "teaching-research nexus" is primarily confined to university level of education. According to Wuetherick (2009) "the teaching-research nexus refers to the interplay between the teaching and research roles of universities, whether at the level of the institution, faculty,

Direct all correspondence to: sharmamadhukar777@gmail.com

department, or individual academic" (p. 5). Teaching and research are linked to each other because research is how you produce or generate or create or recreate new knowledge and teaching is how you disseminate that knowledge. Research and teaching, therefore, needs to be viewed as scholarly activities. Boyer (1990) states that research has come to be viewed as the first and most essential form of scholarly activity and urges academics to view teaching as a fundamental aspect of scholarship.

However, there is not always a straightforward relationship between teaching and research. There are three main different claims about the relationship between teaching and research. According to Nehme (2012), there are three different findings of relationship between teaching and research. "Those that claim that there is a negative nexus between teaching and research; those that claim that there is no relationship between teaching and research; and those that claim that there is a positive nexus between teaching and research" (p. 1).

This paper aims at critically analyzing the relationship between teaching and research from the perspectives of academics, researchers, and students with the emphasis on balance between teaching and research. The researcher argues that symbiotic relationship between teaching and research should be perceived and treated accordingly by academics, researchers, students, and policy makers to fully promote quality education for creating new knowledge, concepts, and theories necessary for the local and global community.

Positive nexus between teaching and research

Numerous studies have demonstrated that there is a positive, neutral and negative correlation between teaching and research. Jusoh & Abidin (2010) give three different relationship between teaching and research as, "there are three contrasting perspectives-positive, negative and null/zero on the relationship between teaching and research" (p.142).

Different studies suggest a positive relationship between teaching and research. Brown and McCartney (1998) argued, "surveys show that the common belief among academics is that teaching and research are positively related" (as cited in Jusoh and Abidin, 2010, p.142). Similarly, Neumann (1992) reported " the connection between teaching and research is mutually enriching, stating that in practice the two often tend to merge and that the university environment is conducive to achieving some sort of excellent in both areas" (p. 162). Krause et al. (2007, as cited in Boyd et al.) suggested that with a properly design research teaching nexus (R-T-N) benefits such as enhancement of teaching and learning in higher education; engages and motivates students; develops important graduate attributes; prepares students

for future employment; and offers professional benefits for academic staff are observed. Teaching and research are a simultaneous process. The teaching-research nexus at universities is that teaching and research are so mutually reinforcing that they must occur simultaneously (Marsh & Hattie 2002). Research is a reliable and valid way of generating new knowledge which then becomes the basis of content of teaching. Stappenbelt (2013) argued "research should contribute to teaching, centers on the fact that knowledge generated through research forms the basis of the content of teaching" (p. 112). Teachers being active researchers are able to add new and relevant experiences and skills in terms of technological advances and new methodological approaches to their teaching. Stappenbelt (2013) further claimed that "educators who are active researchers are well positioned to report the latest technological advances in their field and their first-hand experience also provides authenticity to the material presented" (p.112). The belief that teaching and research are positively related to each other is supported by a number of qualitative research studies (Scott, 1988). Hattie and Marsh (1996) found that "two major arguments- the conventional wisdom model and the generic underlying ability model are offered to explain such findings" (p. 511-5112).

The conventional wisdom model

Hattie and Marsh (1996) argued that according to the 'conventional wisdom' model, common belief of academics in the existence of a positive relationship between teaching and research is a good evidence to justify the positive nexus between teaching and research. Schimank and Winnes (2000) admitted that " many academics appear to take it for granted that a positive nexus exists between teaching and research" (p. 412). For example, Neumann (1993) interviewed senior academic administrators in Australia and found that they all supported and firmly believed in the existence of a positive nexus between teaching and research. Similarly, according to Taylor (2008) " a survey of academics in Sweden found evidence of a strong belief that teaching and research are mutually supportive " (p. 53-54). Ben-David stated the link between research and teaching as both positive and crucial:

> The location of advanced research in independent and competing universities, in each of which there has been a constant flow of new researchers, has served effectively to enforce high intellectual standards, to recognize originality and to ensure the circulation of ideals to students, and through them to society at large. Severance of the connection between research and teaching would eliminate these highly

> desirable incentives to both intellectual and cultural vitality. (p. 91)

Hence, teaching and research have been perceived by academics being closely related to each other and therefore they are complementary to each other. Robbins (1963) concluded "research and teaching are often perceived as complementary" (p. 181).

The generic underlying ability model

According to the 'generic underlying ability' model, Woodburne (1952) "teaching and research both rely upon a set of common characteristics: the capacities of academics for high commitment (hard work, unselfishness), creativity (originality and imagination) and critical analysis"(p 377). For example, academics who excel at research regularly organize their thoughts in writing. In this regard, Michalak and Friedrich (1983) argued " this preparation and organization is reflected in the quality of their teaching, as such academics are able to provide a clearer presentation of their subjects to students" (p. 145-146). Teaching and research both aim at disseminating and communicating knowledge to students and the community at large. As a result, learning is an essential link between teaching and research. Clark (1987) noted:

> As knowledge is newly created by research, and it is reformulated and repeatedly transmitted in teaching and service, its force continuously bubbles up from within daily operations, right in the palm of the professional hand. The logic, the identity, the very rationality of the academic profession is thereby rooted in the evolving organization of those categories of knowledge that disciplines and professional fields of study have established historically and carried to the present, producing an inertia that powerfully prefigures the future. (p. 268)

Thus, based on the literature above, it can be concluded that teaching and research are not two different aspects; they are positively correlated.

No nexus/neutral nexus between teaching and research

Different studies suggest that there is a neutral relationship between teaching and research. Barnett (1992) contended that research is an entirely different enterprise from teaching. Similarly, Rugarcia (1991) noted many divergent relationships between teaching and research, such as it should not be expected that they correlate positively and negatively. Marsh and Hattie (1996) demonstrated that the correlation between measures of teaching and

research excellence is zero. In a latter research study, Marsh and Hattie (2004) concluded "overall, we have consistently found that there is a zero relationship between teaching and research at the individual academic and at the Department level" (p.2). Based on the above literature, it can be argued that zero means that there can be as many excellent teachers and researchers as there are excellent teachers, excellent researchers, and not-so-excellent teachers or researchers. Zero does not mean that there are NO excellent teachers and researchers. According to Goldner and Harry (1972), "while some studies have found a negative nexus between teaching and research, a greater number of studies have concluded that there is no discernible relationship between the two activities" (p.47). Put it another way, attempts to improve the quality of one do not necessarily lead to any impact upon the quality of the other. In this context, Newman (1853) argued that research and teaching have different functions and therefore they are not united to each other. Three models have been described by Hattie and Marsh (1996) to explain the lack of nexus between teaching and research. They are: different enterprise model, unrelated personality model and bureaucratic model.

The different enterprises model

According to the different enterprises model, teaching and research are inherently independent activities. Feldman (1987) concluded that " the likelihood that research productivity actually benefits teaching is extremely small or that the two, for all practical purposes, are essentially unrelated" (p. 272-275). The academics in teaching and researchers in research treat 'knowledge' as a different entity. According to Neumann (1996), "in teaching, the academic treats knowledge as something that can no longer be investigated, while in research effort is expended on knowledge that cannot yet be taught as it is still being examined" (p.5-6). Barnett (1992) claimed " teaching is private, integrative and process-orientated, while research is public, specialized and result orientated" (p. 619-624). Thus, teaching and research are quite different enterprises.

The unrelated personality model

According to 'unrelated personality' model, researchers and teachers possess very few personality qualities in common. Kaczynski et al.(2010) argued " the unrelated personality model insists that the lack of nexus between teaching and research is a consequence of the fact that researchers and teachers have very few personality attributes in common" (p.166). Paunonen et al. (1983) conducted a study into the personality characteristics associated with research originality and teaching efficiency and found

"creative researchers are ambitious, enduring, seeking definiteness, dominant, showing leadership, aggressive, independent, not meek, and non-supportive. While, effective teachers are liberal, sociable, showing leadership, extraverted, low in anxiety, objective, supportive, non-authoritarian, not defensive, intelligent, and aesthetically sensitive" (p. 93-111). In addition, their research illustrated that teaching and research productivity were not negatively or positively correlated.

The bureaucratic funding model

Nehme (2012) pointed , " the bureaucratic model insists there is no nexus between teaching and research because each activity is funded in a different way" (para. 2). For example, Access Economics Pty Ltd. (2010) asserted " in Australia, the funding of universities covers the separate categories of teaching and learning; research and research training; improving access and participation; and infrastructure" (p. 12). Similarly, Webster et al. (2011) maintained "the United Kingdom has a similar funding model distinguishing between teaching and research" (p. 23). Thus this approach to the allocation of funds enforces the notion that teaching and research are independent activities.

Negative nexus between teaching and research

Various studies conclude that the relationship between teaching and research is often negative. Barret and Milbourne (2011) asserted " findings from a number of studies support the view that there is a negative nexus between teaching and research" (p.10). Ramsden and Moses (1992) revealed typically no relation or a negative relation between research and undergraduate teaching in Australian higher education. Likewise, Blackburn (1974) noted that unsatisfactory classroom performance might result from academics neglecting their teaching responsibilities in order to pursue research and publications. Fox (1992) suggested that "rather than complementary, the teaching and research activities conducted by academics at universities are antagonistic, competing for time and resources" (p. 395). Hattie & Marsh (1996) argued for the same point in terms of the scarcity model, examining the dimensions of time, energy and commitment. It has also been suggested that the motivation and reward that the teaching and research support is often opposite. Barnett (1992) concluded that teaching and research are 'inescapably incompatible'. Lloyd (2009) stated "when you co-locate teaching and research, you reduce your efficiency in producing both". Ramsden & Moses (1992) asserted that "…these two [teaching and research] crucial activities are essentially separate endeavors that just

happen to occur in the same place. As far as the individual academic is concerned, there is no casual relation, no essential congruence" (p. 274). Three models have been described by Hattie and Marsh (1996) to explain the negative nexus between teaching and research. They are: the 'scarcity model', the 'different personality model' and the 'divergent model'.

The scarcity model

According to the 'scarcity' model there is a negative relationship between teaching and research because a teacher cannot equally spend time, energy, and effort to researching. Colbeck (1998) argued "while universities fulfil teaching, research and service roles, an individual academic cannot carry out all of these role to an equal degree, and as each of these roles competes with the others for an academic's time, energy and commitment , academics experience role strain" (p.647-649). Likewise, Moore (1963) admitted "it is difficult for an individual academic to balance the different roles that they are expected to fulfil" (p.108). Fox (1992) commented, "due to time constraints, those who are productive in research have a tendency to spend more time on research than teaching. Similarly, those who are more productive in teaching spend more time on teaching than research" (p.293). Hence, the teaching and research are negatively correlated to each other.

The different personality model

The different personality model is one of the models that have been used to support the existence of a negative nexus between teaching and research. Teaching and research attract different personalities. According to Eble (1976) " a researcher is a solitary person. He or she likes to work alone, responds poorly to outside distractions and pressures, is more at ease with stuff of ideas, facts and materials of a discipline than with students and learning" (p. 19). "A teacher on the other hand, is gregarious" (Straus and Linsky, 1975, p.89-91). The teacher often looks for space for interacting with students. Eble (1976) asserted "He or she seeks out company, can handle pressures and distractions and prefers interacting with students to manipulating materials or ideas" (p.19). As a result, teaching and research are contradictory to each other. This, in turns, leads to the creation of a negative nexus between teaching and research.

The divergent reward model

According to the 'divergent reward' model, universities' reward policy has created a negative relationship between teaching and research. Neumann(2002) concluded " universities' reward systems often lead to the

creation of a conflict between, and even the separation of, teaching and research" (p.532). Many universities give more priority to research than to teaching. Nicholls (2005) admitted "in fact, within many universities there is a culture that values and rewards research at the expense of teaching" (p.21). For instance, in a report by a university " in Australia, the majority of universities do not support the promotion of academics if these academics are not research active, irrespective of the fact that they are excellent teachers" (University of Sydney, 2012, p. 4). Therefore, academics are urged to choose between teaching and research. According to Marsh and Hattie (2008) "academics are forced to choose between teaching and research and for an academic to put an emphasis on teaching at the expense of research may have a negative impact on his or her career and salary prospects" (p.183). In addition, teachers with no research are often given extra teaching load as an indication of punishment. Kaczynski et al. (2010) commented " if academics are not research active, they are required to undertake an increased teaching load-that is, teaching is viewed as punishment" (p.166). Such actions communicate a message at an institutional level that research is more important and rewarding than teaching.

Student perceptions of the teaching-research nexus

Various studies conducted in order to understand the perceptions of students, particularly undergraduate and post graduate suggest both positive as well as negative relationship between teaching and research. Perceived benefits included increased motivation and interest in the subject, because of the teacher's enthusiasm and greater credibility (Jenkins et al. 1998; Robertson and Blackler 2006). In addition, classes were considered more challenging and intellectual stimulating, especially when research assignments were given to students; interactions with teacher and researchers, including being part of a research community, were especially valued (Neumann 1994; Robertson and Blackler 2006). Other challenges included academic staff prioritizing research over teaching, leading, among other things, to reduced availability for students, or limiting the curriculum or a course to the teacher–researchers' interests (Lindsay et al. 2002; Neumann 1994). Jenkins et al. (1998), Lindsey et al. (2002), Zamorski (2002), Robertson and Blackler (2006), and Turner et al.(2008) demonstrated strong positive student perceptions of staff research. In support of these studies, Jusoh and Abidin (2010) reported to the positive perceptions of students towards teaching-research relationship when they write, "in these studies, undergraduate students' perceptions of research reported that research has positive benefits to students including course credibility and relevant current course content" (p.143). In addition, they

argued, "the research interests of staff gave students the opportunity to view instructors as "real people" and to relate on a level of interest and enthusiasm" (p. 143). Jenkins et al. (1998) conclude, "students are also motivated and interested when they are taught by lectures who are active in research". However, some studies conducted in the United Kingdom revealed that students often had both positive and negative perceptions towards teaching-research nexus. Jerkins et al. (1998) conducted a survey on 40 students at Oxford Brookes University, and found:

> while some of the participants in the study complained that researchers were often unavailable, and as a consequence appeared preoccupied with their research at the expense of teaching, the overall conclusion was that perceptions of the teaching-research nexus "are largely positive, while the main adverse impacts can, in part, be resolved through effective management. (p. 139)

In another study conducted at a university, students were found to have made negative perceptions towards research. Breen and Lindsay (1999) in a study conducted at Oxford Brookes University conclude, "negative perceptions of research are often formed by students less willing to interact with academic staff" (as cited in Griffiths, 2018).

Academic perceptions of the teaching-research nexus

Various studies suggest that there is a positive relationship between teaching and research. In a survey conducted by Neumann (1992) to understand the perceptions of academic staffs, results show a strong teaching-research nexus, "the analysis of the interview findings reveals a firm conviction among all participants about the existence of a nexus between teaching and research" (p. 169-171). Neumann further stated "without exception, all interview participants were in no doubt about the existence of a nexus between the teaching and research activities of academics and believed this conviction to be shared by most of their colleagues" (p.159-171). Whether academics build positive or rather neutral or even negative perceptions towards research –teaching nexus depends on the culture and the environment of the universities they are involved in. According to Colbeck (1998), "the culture of the University and the broader environment in which the academic finds them has a significant influence on the success of linking research and teaching" (p.647-671). Colbeck (1998) further argued where academics perceive their teaching and research as separate they tend to struggle when integrating the two activities, while those who took a more

integrated approach integrate their activities more successfully. Some studies reveal the importance of teacher as a researcher's accountability towards their teaching activity. Altbach (2005) contends that "research staff are not turning their back on their teaching responsibilities" (p. 299). Policy makers and academics agree with the statement that teaching-research nexus needs to be promoted in the institutions. Griffths (2018) mentioned, "several recommendations from policy makers and academics encourage institutions to emphasize a more symbiotic relationship between the two disciplines" (p. 2). Boyd et al. suggested "the teaching-research nexus may be viewed as a core trope of university education: there is a fundamental relationship between the scholarships of teaching and of research, and that this differentiates universities from other forms of higher education" (p. 5).

Conclusion

Teaching-research nexus has been a debatable issue to date from the point of views of students, academics, and researchers. There is not always a clear cut relationship between teaching and research in higher education. The relationship between teaching and research can be from positive to neutral to negative. Although, nexus between teaching and research is negative and neutral, the positive integration between these activities should be realized by the higher academic institutions, students, academics and researchers. In seeking to achieve the nexus between teaching and research, one of the first steps that an institution should do is adopt broader and more inclusive definitions of teaching and research. This can help the institutions, academics and researchers to recognize the value of both teaching and research. It is up to the institutions, academics, and researchers to take initiative to generate a positive nexus between teaching and research. Therefore, teachers, academic staffs, and policy makers should pay a critical attention to a symbiotic relationship between teaching and research. The balanced nexus between teaching and research does not only benefit the faculty, it also helps the student to learn on the basis of research. Thus, it promotes a culture of "research-led", "research-oriented", "research-based", and "research-informed" (Ching ,2016) teaching. In essence, students are expected to study and prove their creative thinking ability rather than simply receiving knowledge from their teachers.

The author

Madhukar Sharma has earned M.Ed. in English and M.Phil. in English from Tribhuvan University in 2007 and 2017 respectively. He has been associated with the field of ELT for thirteen years. Currently, he is teaching at Lumbini

Banijya Campus, one of the best community as well as re-accredited campuses in Nepal. He has published more than ten research articles on ELT, nature-culture symbiosis, and business communication. Besides, he has presented research papers in national and international seminars.

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INDONESIAN JOURNAL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING (INDONESIAN JELT) SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

AIMS AND SCOPE

Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching (Indonesian JELT) is a peer-reviewed journal in which submitted articles will go through a blind review process. IJELT is published twice a year in May and in October every year. It is devoted to the teaching and learning of English. It also invites articles related to language evaluation. Committed to finding the solution to problems associated with the study of English Language Teaching (ELT), Indonesian JELT strongly encourages submission of unpublished articles on topics that are highly relevant and contribute significantly to issues in ELT. The journal particularly welcomes manuscripts that are drawn from research related to other cross-disciplines (e.g. linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, education, culture as well as first and second language acquisition), the application of theories, critical analysis of theories or studies.

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Texts should be between 6,000 and 7,000 words in length. A word-count should be given at the end of the article. The word-count should include abstract, tables and appendices.

Abstracts

All articles should have an abstract comprising 100-250 words in length. A word-count and keywords are required at the end of the abstract.

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A manuscript will be accepted for publication if it meets the following requirements:

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- It is likely to arouse readers' interest and is accessible to a broad readership.
- It offers novel and original insights as well as makes significant contribution to the body of knowledge related to this journal.
- It contains a cogent and coherent theoretical basis so as to reflect sound scholarship (especially for practical articles). Theoretical articles and report research should include discussion and implications, and application for practice.
- It has clarity of presentation, is well written and organized, and conforms to the format of this journal.

Articles and a brief bio-data (max. 150 words) should be sent to: ijelt@atmajaya.ac.id