

Pro-fashion Trivialization of Academic Researches: Mission Metamorphosing to Mockery

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Abstract

Research excellence and graph are popularly fashioned as well as deeply demanded attributes in almost every sector. Among others, it stands as no second priority or obsession- on any alibi or ground- to the professionals engaged in academic peregrination or galaxy/fraternity of higher education facilitators/resource persons. Most academicians opt to engage and present a tone of accruing confidence on commanding research skills followed with maintaining smart publication portfolio. Having number of publications and receiving wider citation responses are inherently presumed as an added charisma. Quite often, the same is deemed as core academic strength and pronouncedly ranked token of merit. Minus it, a bogeyman trap of incompetence is created and unethically extended too. However, the paper debunks the purported research culture and critiques the countless contemporary practices being exercised in name of research only as hugely hogwash attempts. Here, this paper boldly argues that most activities currently advancing in name of research are aligned to multifold mockeries, utter travesty than committed mission at all. Research attempts have been a cheap and light fashion instead, recently.

Keywords: Research; Mission; Academics; Quality Education; Mockery

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INTRODUCTION

Quality education is the backbone or motherboard of every country's development. Agreeing to the notion, Piao (2024) regards quality education as central engine or corner stone for the sustainable development and confirms the deduction of thesis from a set of data collected globally. The data covers 15 years of time span from 2000 to 2015 from 164 countries of the world. He argues, "relationship between economic development and human capital is inconclusive" (page, 17) as well as mentions that formation of such human capital can be sparked only with surge of quality education in nation. Firmly believing that the nexus between education and development is non-negotiable and indisputable, Assefa (2024) strongly expresses an unbeatable solidarity on having profound implication of classroom learnings in global progress status eventually.

Based on studies of China, Bangladesh and many more countries, Zhang et al. (2023), Islam & Alam (2023) & Angrist et al. (2021) infer conversely contributing outcome of sound education in overall progress cum prosperity of the respective nations. Learning

achievements and proficient human capital formation are incontrovertibly connected. Statistics, collected and presented in previously cited studies, show that nations which are successful, strong, progressive, and exemplary maintain a very high standard of education in pursuit of expected such outcomes.

Government in Nepal too has allocated comparatively a significant (around 11 percent) portion of the budget in the education sector. It is said that Japan had invested quarter of its budget in education for a few years subsequent to the Second World War hoping to mend and repair the devastations owing to global clashes. Dr. Jagdish Gandhi is deeply acknowledged and accredited to formally introducing the concept of Total Quality Management in Indian education system. These all were key initiatives adopted as progenitor of quality enhancement in education.

One key index, inter alia, to measure the quality of education itself is research. Research is often rated as vital cog and pivotal indicator of quality standard in educational ecosystem or atmosphere. Good researchers eventually turn as good teachers and that enhances teaching qualities (Palali et al. 2018). Furtherance, a thorough case study by Ahmadi et al. (2025) conducted in Banyan University also ascertains it. Mohammadi et al. (2023) urge that super thrust and quest in research is visibly playing significant role in upholding and upgrading the quality of education whereas Rahimi and Ayoubi (2023) regard that accreditation methods are indirectly encouraging and boosting research culture. Mostly accrediting authorities or governing bodies heavily rely on and passionately promote the research as foremost component of accreditation procedure. The special issue *Chetanako Muhan* (2080) published by Shreekant Adhikari Foundation also argues in similar note. But nowadays, research activities are becoming less of a mission and more of a mockery; many poignant practices and immaturely ridiculous attempts are to be witnessed in name of researches.

METHOD

Completing aligning with qualitative research framework, archival and doctrinal method is thoroughly adopted and willfully accepted in this analytical study. Certain principles of Critical research praxis i.e. thoughtful interpretation and discourse analysis are also deeply entertained. Secondary data, which are processed and presented by other scholars than instantaneously generated from the field at the time of studies in involvement of researcher, supplements as the key foundation of analyses and interpretations. Besides phenomenology, paradigm of interpretivism is concurrently utilized as qualitative research piece receives profound impacts from these methods. Resources received from and located in arch gateways i.e. Research Gate, Academia, Science Direct and so on and of relevant and possibly the recent in terms of publication dates are screened and shortlisted in studies. Scholars who are mentioned in text in either of forms are duly acknowledged with appropriate referencing upon citation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Representative Cases

A few months ago, a distinguished speaker invited to a regional program impulsively said, "I did research for half an hour today and discovered a few things". As a presenter at

that program, this researcher could not comprehend whether research is something that can be completed in half an hour. Attard (2018) confirms that scientific research is multi-tier and time-consuming task, whereas Tumin et al. (2022) mention that good research might take more than a year or 18 months (page: 108) even if completed smooth and fast. Another day, a person with an acclaimed academic identity uploaded a photo on Facebook—he was surfing social site (Facebook) newsfeed on his mobile phone—but reflexively captioned it “Doing some serious researches”. Has research been reduced to ‘mobile work’ now? Does simply knowing how to use Facebook qualify one as a researcher? However, the usefulness of cellphone on research has been researched a lot and worth assimilating findings have been derived frequently. In separate studies among 544 research scholars, Mondal et al. (2019) have noticed increasing trend of smart phone to assist people in research work particularly accessing digital journals as well as online libraries. Their graph of satisfaction towards mobile’s usefulness is also extremely high. In a study, where 156 sample students were surveyed and SPSS was used to analyze the data, Pokharel et al. (2025) found ‘strongly positive association between mobile learning and academic performance’ (page: 165).

After some time, an email from a PhD researcher reached to this writer. S/he had sent a questionnaire to measure patients’ perceptions to private hospitals. It attempted to woo phenomenological attempt to research as that relied on lived experience of the respondents. Fortunately, for a long past, this writer had never been to such any hospital as a patient, though had been there to wait for patients, express goodwill, or for other meetings. Upon informing the sender, s/he impetuously replied: no problem, just choose or engage in box-ticking exercise on whatever option seems good to ensure formal gatekeeping of research modus operandi. These are just representative incidents, but clearly show ‘to what an extent’ a dense and serious subject like research—an ocean of knowledge—is being undermined and relegated. Incorrect sampling is ubiquitous and followed by the data doctoring in dense scale. These like tendencies have seriously jeopardized the research sanctity and sanctuary. Xie et al. (2021) note such ethical lapses as some of frequently faced research misconducts. There is deluge of falsification and/or fabrication at the ratio of ‘about 15%’ (page: 22) which the author call ‘serious misconduct’ (page: 3). Furtherance, Gopalakrishna et al. (2022), in course of a study in Netherlands, has noted around 50% plus of self-engagement fabrication or purported calculation owing to low and grim response rate.

Research is the strong foundation and an essential pillar of academic life. Several studies i.e. Rajput & Azeem (2025), Sacre et al. (2023) & Calucag et al. (2024) regard the role of research quite crucial in education. Their studies confirm an appreciatively positive link between research and education quality, respectively. Anyone completing a master’s degree must conduct at least one research. Many begin their formal exposure to research here; and how far they take it depends on their compounded interest. Those who don’t will to fight should not join the army; those who don’t will to argue should not study law; those who don’t will to earn profit should not enter commerce; and those who don’t will to enjoy and engage in researches should not misread academia or opt sound academic involvement. However, in recent times, deepening distortions and ballooning damages seem to be alarmingly expanding more than purity in academic researches.

Deepening Distortions and Damages

It is shameful that thousands of identical research copies under the same title recurringly appear in academic circles. Research outputs that lack thorough study and deep effort- readymade and home delivered theses- are becoming increasingly common among outgoing graduates. Awasthi et al. (2024) note around 31 percent of similarity index in title of PhD level dissertations in India only. Based on analysis of 25 thousand plus written assignments from scholars at various universities, Eshet (2025) confirms the growing awareness among scholars about plagiarism, thus found an increasing rate of originality in academic work compared to pre-COVID time. However, the study worrisomely notices that originality is largely plagued with use of AI generative tools and applications. Sometimes, we find dissertations where unmarried researchers, in their acknowledgement, thank “my husband/wife” referring mistakenly to their friend’s spouse. Some pages even read, “I am deeply grateful to my supervisor for continuous support, advice, suggestions, and for providing tireless encouragement and motivation throughout the study”—but yet the supervisor might never have met the student even once. Should one laugh or cry? Wu et al. (2024) consider the discussion meeting as key component but often negated or undermined by the supervisees in required frequency. Analyzing 462 master’s level theses, Neupane & Hu (2024) mention that most had inflated reporting about meeting numbers than real time and frequency of meeting with the designated supervisors.

Off late, there is a growing misconception that research must be based strictly on primary data. Many bluntly respond that ‘expert opinion doesn’t count, but respondents do’. Co-aligning with supposition, Kumar (2024) believes that secondary data can’t always address the objectives of scientific research and Ajayi (2023) also lays additional focus on primary or first-hand field generated data over secondary. Yet the validity, participation, pertinence, caliber and honesty of respondents are rarely checked. Most of questionnaire formats often collect loose opinions rather than factual information. Most researches, which are called quantitative, have been barely based on statistical values of response or information on number. They simply engage in mapping the mindset or thinking of respondents in various Likert scales. Whatever the majority of respondents agree on that is supposed to be most significant or valuable factor being aloof to the fact if respondents are honest enough and dependably true on their answers.

Needless to say, research is not an election episode where whatever the majority agrees becomes true or acceptable. If the goal is to collect critical analysis or deeper studies, the choice of respondents should depend based on whether the topic demands: general people or experts. For example, if one is researching the usefulness of a particular political or electoral system, one can’t reach to conclusions merely by asking random people on the street. Instead, is it more logical to sit in a library, study the views of expert authors, learn from previous research, and compare practices across countries and consult subject experts. So is undoubtedly the prime desideratum should anyone is engaging in research to path-find impressive overhauling or restructuring mechanisms of higher education systems. Thick data- major strength of qualitative research- can be seldom collected and gained shrugging off the experts, analysts and their published opinions. Pretnar Žagar & Podjed (2024) highlight critical minds and expert interpretations as an arch prerequisite of this type of

research work. Joshi (2001), in his book *Research Methodology*, argues that comparative and analytical self-study must form a larger part of higher education academic research. Many issues are such where consulting famous literature and interpreting those can only unwaveringly and unswervingly serve the research purpose than merely picking countless heads on the pavement to present their mindset. Library based or doctrinal research is also equally strong and undeniably valid research method these days. More critical and sound ideas are likely to be received from depth studies than field conversations. Nonetheless, the University Grants Commission and universities as well hesitate to recognize deeper desk studies as legitimate research effort. The UGC in Nepal considers time spent running around fields for collecting data as worthy of grants; while the time spent in doing dense comparative analysis based on expert literature is adamantly abjured. The biased response to bluntly dismiss the deep study as research shot should be mended promptly.

Whatever the method, once research is completed, publishing it in relevant journal is unconditionally desirable. Recently, many journals, those with so-called ‘high fashioned rankings’, levy huge fees to publish such works. But when universities categorize journals, those seeking small collaboration or partnerships are defamed or discredited as “predatory” and illogically lobby them as inappropriate platform. Meanwhile, journals from the several publication business houses in the West that charge enormous fees in dollar are given prestigious rankings from Q4 up to Q1. Many of them even seek, sometimes publicly call, co-authors on ready to publish papers charging lofty cost. Alike business houses, they even charge processing and production fees too. Haustein et al. (2024) express concern on unfairness and disparity on article processing charge those journals siphon off from researchers. Segado-Boj (2022), through a survey, collected a mixed response that it was double fold unfair as: in one hand side, fees are exorbitant and virtually non-affordable to the low-income countries; and, in other hand side, provided assistance is opted/sought from others except them that is called predatory. Dahal (2025) strongly objects the trend then questions such a nature as objectionably hegemonic and evidently exploitative. If homegrown institutions opting for little support is predatory, those are super and multifold predatory and bogus publications.

Prioritizing commercial interest over scholarly partnership seems to be the underlying motive of such publication houses. Most projects in regulatory bodies of higher education are from the West and donor-driven. The supposed quality assessment of research publications also may have become summarily a straight victim of doner’s prejudiced mindset of self-praising trend and undermining rest of all. That might have been didactically implanted as well. Looking at recent data, only seven journals- in Medical Science field- from Nepal are listed in these self-proclaimed, dollar-fee-soaking purportedly ranked journals. No journal from other subjects or disciplines is included (<https://www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php?country=NP>) at all. In subjects of Social Science, publication criteria seem biased toward Western preconceptions and colonial narcissism. Ingdegenious knowledge and original efforts are mostly responded as low standard in quality and willfully culled.

Until when, will the universities in home continue to be self-enclaved of foreign biased standards to evaluate local academic works? When will homegrown institutions demolish

the delusion that “foreign does not necessarily means international”. Anything can be international not because of borders but because of standards or qualities. Not only journals published by those business houses are international or standard simply because West publishes them, there may be several of similar status with us too. Chen (2021) strongly objects and utterly refuses faulty notion that the external engagement to be automatically international; Volokhov et al. (2025) say that international is benchmark of standard, quality and its indications not an origin or location. Researchers in other spheres of the globe are illogically considering only publication from Europe or America as standard; and that is another pathetic proposition that demands immediate overhaul or surgery. Universities and academic institutions only regarding those biased ranking and west-centric journals as revered as well as world standard is mere reflection of inferiority complex and gross and grave underestimation. Further it is an offence to the home country and moral deficit in self to recognize own strength.

The irony is that even the publications of our own universities and the University Grants Commission are not included in those professed rankings. Nor is it necessary for them to be. Evaluating domestic scholarship based on publication on foreign commercial and biased journals is profoundly immature, fully faulty and outrightly dismissible decision.

There is also no shortage of scholars who have few or nil publications of their own but are presumptuously experts at giving heavy-handed suggestions to others. The tergiversating feedback given by evaluators on others’ research is another sad and sordid aspect. Many internal and external examiners often speak superficially and against basic principles of research while reviewing the others’ works. This writer has frequently witnessed (as ongoing lived experience- what is adequately admissible research source as per phenomenology) reviewers contradicting with what they themselves said previously. Minimal accuracy is also found missing in subsequential stages of feedbacks and guidance from them. Many bluntly say ‘it’s not correct’, yet fail to clarify what is wrong and how to correct it. Such distortions deeply wound the core of research and apparently discourage the determined researchers.

Exacerbating the series of frustrating experiences, a friend who claimed to have strong interest and high skill in research recently bragged: “now, you don’t need to work hard to write research articles. Just give some clear prompts or bullet points to ChatGPT, and it will satisfactorily prepare it for you in a jiffy. Then you can submit it wherever you want”. Such remarks additionally dim whatever little enthusiasm and commitment remain uncharred yet. Due to the negligence of researchers and regulatory bodies are alike, genuine dedication to research is being demotivated and deviated a lot.

DECLARATIONS

- Author : Atindra Dahal (PhD) is currently full-time serving at Kathmandu School of Law on capacity of Professor. As a passionate academician and rigorous researcher, he has deeply credited the field of research based academic exercises with various sorts of academic engagement from facilitating learning minds in classrooms to relentless research engagement/publications. @ <https://tinyurl.com/33c98st8>
- Conflict of Interest : Based on this study, the author has no any implied/explicit conflict of interest to or against any scholar/ author/ institution/ authority

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