



GROWING IMPORTANCE OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper builds a case to draw attention to the growing importance of academic research in education. While research in the West has received its due and is well funded and integrated into the curriculum, in India, high quality of academic research is limited to and produced by only the top 10-15 institutes in each field. But the growing importance of Academic research cannot be denied. Research adds value to the knowledge base not only of the learner but the field of knowledge itself. Whether it is about personal development or career development, well conducted, thorough research always brings crucial changes in the way we perceive something and contributes towards problem solving, trouble shooting and decision making. The exploratory study conducted showed that Academic Research is important for many reasons but primarily because-

- 1) *It facilitates learning and deeper understanding of the learner.*
- 2) *It highlights several questions that may arise in the mind while analyzing the situation and subject area.*
- 3) *It helps in the growth of business by addressing key issues.*
- 4) *It encourages the personal growth of students, learners and academicians.*
- 5) *It adds to the subject area in which research is conducted and contributes towards greater understanding in that area.*

It is imperative that educational institutions and centers for research in India upgrade the level of research being conducted and focus upon producing high quality of that is valid, reliable and can be verified.

KEYWORDS: *Academic Research, Knowledge, learning, inter-disciplinary, Education Sector*

INTRODUCTION

Academic organizations should work towards building 'academic value'. Academic value refers to A person's desire, preference, or "wanting" for certain academic goals and outcomes. It is imperative that all the constituents of the academic community, that is all categories of staff along with the external stakeholders from areas such as regulatory, commercial, professional and community contribute towards creating academic value.

A holistic academic effort, often called a 360-degree endeavor calls for the focus to be on:

- 1) *Academic developers*- Those who work on improving teaching and learning at individual and institutional levels
- 2) *Academic development* - The field of study and practice in order to create an environment that supports teaching and learning
- 3) *Active academic development* This refers to what goes beyond learning and teaching and includes: -
 - a) *The Role of Academics* that includes aspects of academic careers like research, service, administration, leadership, etc.
 - b) *The Institution as a Whole*- That builds liaison between disciplines, departments, leaders and managers on the development of, and strategic imperatives around, learning and teaching. It focus' upon not only the academicians but also professional and support staff, and the students, who support the development of teaching, learning, and research. For example, academic developers are now required to serve as activist-advocates within universities, to be models of leadership, to advocate for sustainable innovations, to be strategic, to be politically aware, aware of values, of power and positioning within the organization.
 - c) *The Academician as a person*- Academicians often feel torn between teaching and research identities and expectations, as well as between disciplinary affiliations and commitments. In developing teaching identities often, a divide between teaching and research emerges. It therefore becomes important to take all aspects of the academician into consideration.



Thus, the imperative lies in creating a collaborative effort between academic developers and several diverse members of the university communities. The idea is not to prioritize researcher development, or leadership or organizational development, over teaching development but to encourage the various research fields and the practitioners providing the professional development to interact and connect with each other.

Due to the availability of internet, there is so much information available and some of it is not accurate or even correct leading to difficulty in identifying information as reliable or correct. This heightens the need for scientific inquiry so that accurate, verifiable, measureable and reliable information on various subjects is available. A culture of serious research as part of the academic environment is thus very important.

The importance of research is often the subject of discussion in colleges and universities but in the current scenario its importance is unprecedented in the current scenario. In this exploratory research paper we shall try to highlight the importance of academic research and the value it adds to the subject area.

WHY ACADEMIC RESEARCH IS IMPORTANT

Every decision we take is a result of the informal research gathered over time but usually the first exposure to academic research is as college students. So while writing academic papers students learn the necessity to cite documented academic research. Managers and professionals refer to academic research to make decisions in practical life because the information derived from scientific academic research is impartial, reliable and valid. In fact, every field of study and every facet of life requires research.

Reasons why academic research is important

1) Objectivity of the Scientific Method- While we get a lot of our information from the media, one cannot be always sure about the reliability or impartiality of the information. The scientific methodology of academic research ensures objectivity and minimum personal bias.

2) Academic research follows the Scientific Method- The scientific method encourages the researcher to ask questions and then conduct research to answer those questions. This is done by formulating hypothesis, and then testing the hypothesis. The data collected leads to the hypothesis being either accepted or rejected.

3) Academic research is peer-reviewed and this ensures accuracy -Most academic research is *peer-reviewed* and the research methods and conclusions are examined by other professionals who also follow the scientific method and its principles. This strict adherence to truth is what makes academic research important.

4) Research results in technological innovation -Research in areas like physics, biology, economics, and culture result in an understanding of the world around us, and contributes to the development of new technology. Academic research is greatly beneficial to everyone.

5) Academic Research speeds up changes in society- In fact the benefits of academic research extend to all fields. For example, research in microbiology found a vaccine against Covid 19 or social science research identifies the changes taking place in human behavior post the pandemic. In fact, from the ergonomic design of your workspace, to the electric vehicle you drive to work or the medicine you are prescribed to tackle acid reflux, academic research steadily works towards improving the quality of our life.

6) Academic Research Facilitates Learning-Academic research is important not just for students, but for the entire academic community. Research helps to understand issues through various perspectives. While conducting the research, a scholar goes beyond the personal experience and collects the evidence on the basis of facts and rationality. That is how academic research papers open the gates for further discourse and discussions. It is the best tool to develop or enhance knowledge and to facilitate learning

7)Research highlights important issues-Academic research often highlights issues prevalent in society. These issues could be related to cultural norms, health, education, etc. For example, research in the field of mental health may lead to new findings and treatment of clinical depression among the youth.

8) Research helps in the growth of a business

Research plays an important role in the field of business. Market research can help study market trends and prepare accordingly. In fact several industries like healthcare, agriculture, Pharmaceuticals, constructions, robotics, aerospace, aviation, have Research and development centers to support product innovation and change.

9)Academic research leads to the personal growth of students-Academic research helps students to develop their analytical skills. Students learn how to identify a problem and reach a possible solution or develop a point of view on a specific topic. Students develop the following skills through academic research:

- Analytical skills by analyzing a large piece of data.
- They learn how to frame questions.



- Students develop focus by studying key issues.
- In writing academic research papers, students learn to organize their ideas. They enlarge their perspective and develop a broader mindset.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WELL CONDUCTED RESEARCH

It is when the benefits of research reach society that its importance gets greater recognition. Academic research impacts several areas of modern life. Let us examine the main issues of our times. To take up a few:

1. Climate change is the reality of our times. It is only through academic research that issues like the melting of glaciers, shifts in fundamental pieces of ecosystems, global warming and similar issues are understood.

Academic research guides our response in order to counteract the causes of climate change. These efforts will be beneficial only if the actions taken are based on scientific method and identified through academic research.

2. The World of Business depends heavily on the outcomes of academic research. Businesses use research to understand markets better and make profitable decisions. Academic Research also helps consumers by helping businesses to understand and cater to the needs of the consumers. Research also ensures that the products and services provided to consumers are safe and reliable. This would be highly relevant for the pharmaceutical sector.

3. Political Opinion

Most politicians wield great influence on thousands of people. Social media has also become a powerful tool for politicians as it helps them to reach out to millions of people in seconds and influence their ideas and ideologies.

Research is needed to create the data that politicians use to inform their audiences and from the point of view of the public research can be used to determine whether or not politicians are being honest or trying to manipulate numbers and data. Exit polls, predictions, trends and vote swings are all the results of research.

HOW TO CONDUCT ACADEMIC RESEARCH

Students who are confronted with the need to undertake research for the first time are often confused about the basic requirements for academic research. There are a few things that need to be kept in mind while embarking on the path of academic research. Here are the steps to be followed:

STEP 1 Exploration, Hypothesis Formulation, Literature Review Data Collection One should spend maximum time on this as this is the most important section and the complete solution is based on this. After collecting the relevant links and collecting relevant secondary and primary data for the research project. One should read all the documents and draft an outline of the work done. This outline should include important facts observed, relevant studies that offer insights into the topic under research, graphs that offer a bird's eye view, and critical reasoning supporting the ideas that emerge from this step.



STEP 2 Data tabulation & Classification. Data Processing & Interpretation Discuss, consult and seek ideas from anyone who is an expert in that field – it could be a professor, a practitioner, a technical expert or another researcher. The more information one gathers, the better one's perspective becomes and the better one's approach to the research problem becomes.



STEP 3 Drawing Inferences & Conclusions, After the first draft is complete and the referencing documents are included, a student should consult with one's guide for feedback about the content of the academic work. Early feedback helps in achieving the better quality and correct solution.



The Benefits of Technology in Education and Research

Student performance in the area of research can benefit greatly from technology. In fact, the educational institutions must first help teachers gain the competencies in technical skills useful in research as that they may enhance learning for students through technology. Technology in the classroom will also eventually make the teachers' job easier.

Technology supports students to access information easily, accelerate the learning process, and offer an opportunity to enjoy practicing what they learn. It also helps students to explore new subject areas and understand difficult concepts and ideas. Through the use of technology inside and outside the classroom, students can gain 21st-century technical skills necessary for future occupations.

Leaders and administrators must analyze where their faculty is in terms of their understanding of online spaces and ensure that the use of technology in learning extends to areas of research and answering questions that may arise in the mind of the learner.

CONCLUSION

In order for the research activity in any educational organization be most optimum, it is imperative that all three dimensions discussed, that is, the role of academics, the entire institution and the individual researchers must be devoted to the idea of conducting relevant and well conducted research. Academic Research is important for many reasons as it facilitates learning and deeper understanding of the learner, highlights several questions that may arise in the mind while analyzing the situation and subject area, helps in the growth of business by addressing key issues, encourages the personal growth of students, learners and academicians, and adds to the subject area in which research is conducted and contributes towards greater understanding in that area. It is therefore of utmost importance that educational institutions and centers for research in India upgrade the level of research being conducted and focus upon producing high quality of that is valid, reliable and can be verified.

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