

# Research in Myanmar Higher Education: The Role of Teaching and Student Learning

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## Abstract

With regard to the missions of higher education in Myanmar, universities have arrived at the following missions: (1) the paramount mission of higher education is to serve the human person and society; (2) through its work of research and inquiry, its courses of study and training, its cooperation activities and its partnerships with various social sectors, higher education is called upon to make a key contribution to opening up and high-lighting new paths to a better future for society and the individual, and to give direction and shape to that future. In the process of enhancing the quality of higher education, emphasis should be placed on the students' personal development for professional life. Currently, national processes for research-quality assessment have been introduced or amended across Myanmar. Research can promote teachers' teaching skills master new knowledge, develop new proficiency, which in turn, help to improve students' learning. The sources of the empirical data for the study were questionnaire and semi-structured interviews conducted with 154 members from the various departments and 22 senior researchers. This research aimed to contribute to a broader understanding of the role of research for the quality of teaching and student learning and, through the collection of good practices and recommendations, to argue for the integration of these indicators in research quality assessment tools and evaluation frameworks. The outcomes indicate the need to discuss the role of teaching, staff

professional development, assessment criteria and the impact of research on graduate / postgraduate student learning. It is hoped that this study will make a great contribution to the field of language teaching and learning in higher education.

**Keywords:** Research, Higher Education, The role of teaching, Student learning, Myanmar

## Introduction

Higher Education plays a vital role in the economic and social development of nations throughout the world. In this 21st century, qualitative transformation is, therefore, required in higher education institutions which are functionally interdependent because the world workforce markets need qualified persons. The higher education sector, comprising various professional institutions should be venues where quality teaching, learning and training are conducted, quality researches undertaken and quality service rendered. Research can also be defined as rational and methodical search for new and beneficial information about a certain topic (Rajasekar, Philominathan & Chinnathmbi 2013). Nowadays, Higher Education (HE) faces a wide range of challenges associated with the purpose of higher education and the status and role of research in the modern university,

the processes of globalization and internationalization, the influence of government policy and, particularly, the national systems of funding, research assessment, teaching quality evaluation and the impact of these on the governance and management of HE. At this level, the extent and desirability of associating the roles of teaching and research and the consequences for academics and students are growing areas of research in a debate sustained by accountability standards, ranking impositions and funding constraints. Nevertheless, in this scope, issues are complex and multilayered and may vary over time, be informed by different contexts and the links to be established may be seen quite differently by the multiple subjects and stakeholders. The present research intends to bring some insights about the experiences of researchers from the educational field of Myanmar universities regarding the influence and impact of such a system on teaching and student learning. Research on the roles of assessment, teaching and student learning

### 1. Research on the roles of assessment, teaching and student learning

In recent times, many distinct influences and forces have contributed to significant changes in how research and teaching are conceptualized, theorized and practiced.

Similarly, new paradigms in teaching and learning of higher education have put the student at the center of the process and the teacher as a facilitator in a new learning and research environment based on a wider demand for specific research skills and capacity. Overall, in the past decades research on the links between the roles of teaching, learning and research has evolved from a more narrow approach focused on the statistical relationships between teaching and research quality using the individual academic perspective to a more combined quantitative / qualitative methodology based on the study of a wider range of research and settings (Jenkins. 2005). At the level of the individual academic research has concentrated on the association between the amount of research production / research outputs and the level of teaching quality / effectiveness considering the involvement in research and the type of research developed at a professional domain. Moreover, the motivations, values and conceptions about teaching and research are also referred as essential for understanding this relationships and linkages although data is usually based on reflection on practice-based informed judgments (Jenkins. 2005). The way teaching and research are organized within departments and universities are also an important factor to study the extent of internal effort to

develop policies and strategies to promote the connection. At this level, the focus is set on the organization of disciplines for teaching and for research and its variations in the way relations are conceptualized and delivered. These variations are shaped by the conceptions of the nature of knowledge, the different forms of pedagogy and curricula, the impact of professional organizations and student interests on the content and practices of the disciplines. At an institutional level, however, the questions are raised about the different resources and missions and about the way research is perceived and supported especially in an institution wide nexus and when national policies and funding are based on their separation (Jenkins. 2005). At a more macro national level, the financial rewards and merit / prestige resulting from research funding (government or private sources) imply a wider attention to the way teaching is acknowledged and supported and how there is a growing structural separation between teaching and research. Focusing its attention on the role of students in the whole teaching-research area, the issue has been addressed in what concerns its impact on the student experience and development. Studies in different types of institutions reflect on how students value learning in a research-based environment, their attitudes to staff research according to

their academic orientation and on how the different forms of research-based learning influence the students' epistemological and intellectual development (Elton. 2001). In this scope, the methods and approaches are varied and fulfill the most different purposes, and, to a certain extent, Brew & Boud (1995) have tried to focus the debate to a context of specific relationships between research and learning by referring to learning as the “vital link between research and teaching”, the “shared process in these two enterprises”.

## **2. Research assessment systems and their impacts on academic work**

Researchers, universities and other research performing organizations, research funders and policymakers are revisiting their approach to research assessment with a view to developing and implementing more accurate, transparent and responsible approaches to research evaluation. Rather than one single discussion, revisiting research assessment procedures involves reconsidering several issues ranging from the current state and future direction of academia to more technical discussions about the best ways to measure research quality. One of the most pervasive changes in the environment of Myanmar higher education in recent years

has been the introduction of centralized assessment and evaluation procedures. While higher education practitioners have long been accustomed to the processes of peer review in their many manifestations as part of the evaluation of applications for the assessment of and accepted processes of peer review gave them both credibility and acceptability. Research assessment systems have great impacts on research processes and academic work.

## **3. The Myanmar research assessment system approach**

In the last 10 years, Myanmar higher education has changed profoundly and its systemic changes include an impressive increase in the number of universities, a growth in student numbers, a change in the balance of research funding, and an increase in regulation and accountability requirements. In this context, the changes in research funding policy and performance appraisal have raised many questions about Myanmar's research power and the emphasis on the idea of research supremacy over teaching. In Myanmar, there is an explicit separation between the quality assessment of teaching and the assessment of research. In the assessment process, the starting point is the unit of output (publication, patent)

produced by ‘research-active’ individuals within academic departments which are organized to deliver teaching and research. The impact that this system has had on the management and organization of the research cultures and research work within university departments is huge and academic work (research work in particular) is under more pressure than ever before leaving the teaching role in a very specific place and context. At departmental level, these departments struggle with several constraints associated with the managerial need for research evidence and productivity, significance, accountability, impact, all concepts heavily influenced by requirements for the funding and evaluation. Academics are expected to engage in research and expertise is required by the departments and research centers at the national level. In this scope the present study aims to contribute to discuss the role of research for the quality of teaching and student learning. In the United Kingdom, there is an explicit separation between the quality assessment of teaching and the assessment of research and neither of the processes informs the other. In this context, research/ teaching connections are questioned by funding regimes attempting to separate the two activities although the topic is a wide area for debate at various

levels, across disciplines and including variables as departmental cultures and institutional missions. In the assessment process, the starting point is the unit of output (publication, patents...) produced by ‘research-active’ individuals within ‘units of assessment’, usually aligned with academic departments, which are organized to deliver teaching and research. In a general way, research is often done in teams that cross those structural boundaries, but very often members interdisciplinary teams disaggregate to their parent discipline and are judged outside the context in which they perform research (Brew & Lucas. 2009). Higher education plays an essential role in society by creating new knowledge, transmitting it to students and fostering innovation. Research-based education has lately received increasing interest both among researchers in higher education and in public discussion. The aim of this research is to develop a thorough understanding of the research development process.

## **Research Methodology**

The sources of the empirical data for the study were questionnaire and semi-structured interviews conducted with 154 members from the various departments for questionnaire survey and 22 senior

researchers (experts in the area of educational research) for semi-structured interviews. Quantitative survey data as well as in-depth qualitative data are collected from survey questionnaires and semi-structured interviews over a period of two months.

This research attempts to discuss the research policies, strategies and practices in selected universities and the contributions of research in developing high quality teaching. Findings of this research is expected to make research-informed contributions to contemporary issues, initiatives and reforms in Myanmar higher education, and will at least serve to contribute to the decisions that need to be made regarding the future of higher education in Myanmar. The respondents were invited to present their perceptions in the context of the research assessment experience in planning to achieve the objectives of the research. For the purposes of the present analysis, the focus was on the collection of as much input as possible from a variety of different participants. Therefore, data will concentrate on the content of the information collected rather than on the contexts and different approaches implied by the multiple participant profiles.

## Results

### 1. Role of assessment, teaching and student learning

Linking research and teaching is a topic of international interest. The main aim of the research is to explore the nature of the research-teaching nexus in national context, with particular reference to arts and science universities of Myanmar. It is argued that the relationship depends on how the terms ‘research, teaching and learning’ are conceptualized, theorized and practiced. It is suggested that undergraduate students are likely to gain most benefit from research in terms of depth of learning and understanding when they are involved actively, particularly through various forms of inquiry-based learning.

Table 1 presents the responses of the participants on the role of assessment, teaching and student learning. At an individual level, 82%, 51% and 67% of respondents were voted on changes are conceptualized, changes are theorized and changes are practiced. The points are over 50%, and the results show that the changes in association between the amount of research outputs and the teaching quality are conceptualized, theorized and practiced. At an institutional level, 76%, 49% and 69% of respondents were voted on changes are conceptualized,

changes are theorized and changes are practiced. The results point out that there is less theorization about resources and mission than conceptualization and practice. At a more micro national level, 37%, 40% and 40% of respondents were voted on changes are conceptualized, changes are theorized and changes are practiced. This reveals the less agreement on financial rewards and prestige resulting from research funding to the way teaching is acknowledged and supported. The results describe the fact that there should be better theoretical frames of missions and different resources so that there are better practical benefits.

**Table 1** Responses of the participants in research assessment experience (n=176)

S.N.	Context of the research assessment experience	On the roles of assessment, teaching and student learning					
		Changes are conceptualized		Changes are theorized		Changes are practiced	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	At the individual level, research has concentrated on the association between the amount of research outputs and the level of teaching quality at a professional domain.	82%	18%	51%	50%	67%	33%
2	At an institutional level, research has concentrated on the different resources and missions and on the way research in perceived and supported.	76%	24%	49%	52%	69%	31%
3	At a more macro national level, the financial rewards and prestige resulting from research funding (government or private sources) imply a wider attention to the way teaching is acknowledged and supported.	37%	63%	40%	61%	40%	60%
Average		65%	35%	46%	54%	59%	41%

In this table, responses of the participants towards the changes in the role of research outputs, research funding policy and performance appraisal have been collected to explore the research power and emphasis on the idea of research supremacy over teaching. According to the data, changes on research assessment are conceptualized (65%) and practiced (59%) to some extent compared to theorized (46%).

## 2. Research assessment systems and their impacts on academic work

A growing number of universities have started to develop and implement new and innovative practices to make their approach to research evaluation more accurate, transparent and responsible. In many countries attention is being directed towards research assessment and the development of procedures for assessment both in universities and at a national level. In Myanmar, which has had a national research assessment process aimed at fostering research excellence, research assessment has absorbed huge amounts of attention, effort and time, and has undoubtedly contributed towards a shift in attitudes of university leaders and research communities towards their missions and towards their fellow institutions. Some believe that competitiveness has displaced the collegiate, collaborative values that the academy once held.

Table 2 presents the responses of senior researchers on the application of different measures used to evaluate the research activities. It is clear that 50% of respondents applied research output on the basis of number of publications, and 50% applied research collaborations on co-authorship. The number of citations and views or downloads are not applied yet in the research sector. This point reflects the research practice of the current situation: importance of building better research capacity and ability.

**Table 2** Responses of the senior researchers (n=22)

S. N.	Measures Based on	Responses	
		Applied	Not Yet
Research output	Number of publications	A	-
	Number of citations	-	A
Research Collaborations	Co-authorship	A	
	Number of views or down-loads	-	A
Average		50%	50%



It is clear that different countries have different ideas about the ideal form of research assessment. The system in Myanmar went through an expert review process to agree a selection and ranking of journals and other publications. If researchers publish in them, they accrue rewards within the scope of the assessment regime. In Myanmar, universities have undertaken internal reviews. Internal research assessment leaders at all levels need management information if they are to manage their organizations and human resources effectively. In addition to the production and use of strategic-level management information, departmental heads normally also have a responsibility to conduct individual reviews of their staff not just to assess their performance but to mentor them and nurture their research careers. In Myanmar, where there is national research assessment regime, internal reviews are conducted for the reasons described above and some universities have gone further by conducting internal, institution-wide research assessment exercises.

### **3. The Myanmar research assessment system approach**

Research assessment lies at the core of the activities of universities, and is fundamental to the research enterprise. It is used to select projects and researchers for funding, recruitment, and promotion. It forms the basis for the rewards and incentives system of research. Universities periodically review how the assessment of research is designed and implemented. They aim to ascertain that their assessment processes are robust, fair, and successful in selecting the best projects and researchers for funding and promotion. Research assessment must reward all excellent scientific contributions and promote good research practices, reproducibility, and integrity. To that end, it needs to capture the diversity of research outputs, in a manner that is appropriate to each research field. In Table 3, data on research assessment system approach has been mentioned.

**Table 3** Responses of the participants on research assessment system approach (n=176)

S. N.	Research assessment system approach	In the context of the research assessment experience			
		Members from the various departments (n=154)		Senior researchers (n=22)	
		Agree to undertake	Disagree to undertake	Agree to undertake	Disagree to undertake
1	At individual level, the unit of output (publication / patent) produced by ‘research-active’ individuals within academic departments should be organized to deliver teaching and research.	84%	16%	83%	17%
2	At departmental level, these departments should provide the requirements for the national funding and evaluation.	76%	24%	81%	19%
3	At the national level, academics are expected to engage in research and expertise is required by the departments and research centers.	91%	10%	84%	16%
Average		84%	17%	83%	17%

According to the data, 84% of the participants from the various departments and 83% of senior researchers agreed to undertake the assessment system approach at all levels.

Moreover, research funding organizations are key actors in revisiting research assessment procedures. Their decisions can set the agenda. Cooperation between universities and research funders on the national level has been highlighted as one of the decisive factors in ensuring that individual researchers and research units are appropriately incentivized and rewarded for their work. The research quality plus assessment tool has focused attention on recognizing research outcomes captured in conventional metrics or easily valued by peer review. Specifically, it is challenging to capture the value of research projects aimed at making local improvements for communities in the global projects. By rethinking their approach to funding decisions for global projects, the research centers have drawn attention to this aspect of research assessment and placed it on the discussion agenda.

Table 4 presents the results based on the factor analysis towards Myanmar universities' research assessment system that concerns for teaching. It also shows the challenges and pitfalls for university teachers engaging in research assessment. Research is at the core of universities' multiple missions. To remain vital and at the leading edge of a continually changing research landscape universities need ever more sophisticated research assessment tools suited to the task of strategically assessing research strengths and weaknesses for the institution as a whole or parts of it.

**Table 4** Responses of the senior researchers towards Myanmar universities' research assessment system that concerns for teaching (n=22)

S. N.	Research assessment system that concerns for teaching	Responses of the Senior Researchers		
		Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
1	Myanmar's research assessment system reinforce on the concern for teaching.	41%	22%	37%
2	The judgment of research is done in isolation and even from teaching.	62%	13%	25%
3	The system universities currently practiced itself has impacted significantly on the performance of universities and academics and they face their reputational success associated with a shared alignment of interests and rewards in doing research.	67%	21%	12%

Table 4 (Continued)

S. N.	Research assessment system that concerns for teaching	Responses of the Senior Researchers		
		Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
4	It is very important for the university teachers to have a preference for pure research and applied research to publish quickly and preferably in top journals.	81%	11%	8%

For universities, assessment should reflect research reality and the needs of those involved. Above all, universities should stand firm in defending the long-term value of their research activity, which is not easy to assess in a culture. According to the data, 81% of the senior researchers agreed that it is very important for the university teachers to have a preference for pure research and applied research to publish quickly and preferably in top journals. Only 41% of respondents agreed in Myanmar’s research assessment system’s reinforcement on the concern for teaching. This shows that there are needs of reinforcement to some extent. 62% revealed that research is done in isolation and even from teaching. It is very important to do research in collaboration two heads is better than one for better results. 67% described that the system universities currently practiced itself has impacted significantly on the performance of universities and academics and they face their reputational success associated with a shared alignment of interests and rewards in doing research. The point highlights the current situation and values of research in universities.

### Overall findings

Over the past 20 years, processes for research-quality assessment have been introduced or amended across the countries. Whatever the benefits of these systems might have brought to the organization and quality of research most of them have contributed for a devaluing teaching and to a growing separation between the research worlds of the university and student learning. This research aims to contribute to a broader understanding of the role of research for the quality of teaching and student learning and, through the collection of good practices and recommendations, argue for the integration of these

indicators in research quality assessment tools and evaluation frameworks. The outcomes indicate the need to discuss the role of teaching, staff professional development, assessment criteria and the impact of research on graduate/ postgraduate student learning. Research assessment systems should value teaching and student learning through research and, at an institutional level, planning must support this link through the development of strategies based on a broader and context-driven conception of ‘scholarship’. Neville (2007 : 1) defines research as “a process of enquiry and investigation; it is systematic, methodical and ethical; research can help solve practical problems and increase knowledge.” Modern society demands high quality teaching and learning from teachers. Although most teachers and researchers have conceptualized changes at the individual level, changes are not theorized and practiced fully on the roles of assessment, teaching and student learning. In our review of the research evidence, changes can be theorized and practiced according to the level of students at an institutional level. Linking teaching and research is central to the institutional mission and formulate strategies and plans to support the nexus. In view of the responses of the researchers from the educational field of Myanmar Universities regarding the research assessment system approach, almost all the research active individuals within academic departments have interest to undertake the unit of output (publication, patent). Based on the results of the study, 82% of the respondents have concentrated on the association between the amount of research outputs and the level of teaching quality at a professional domain. 76% of the respondents have concentrated on the different resources and mission at an institutional level. 37% of the researchers agreed that the requirements for the funding and evaluation should be provided at national level.

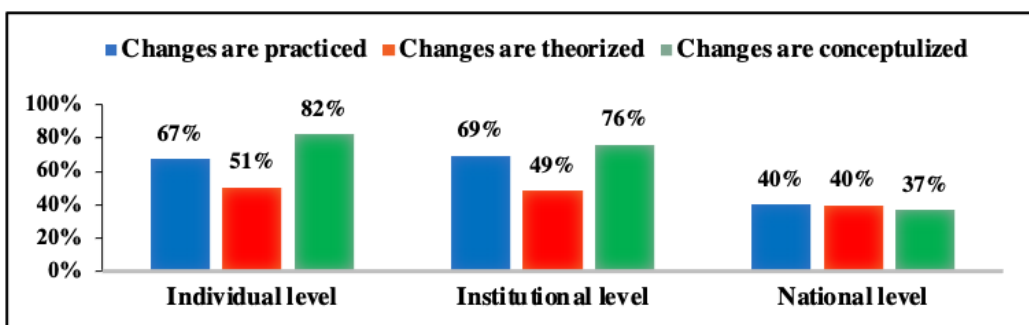
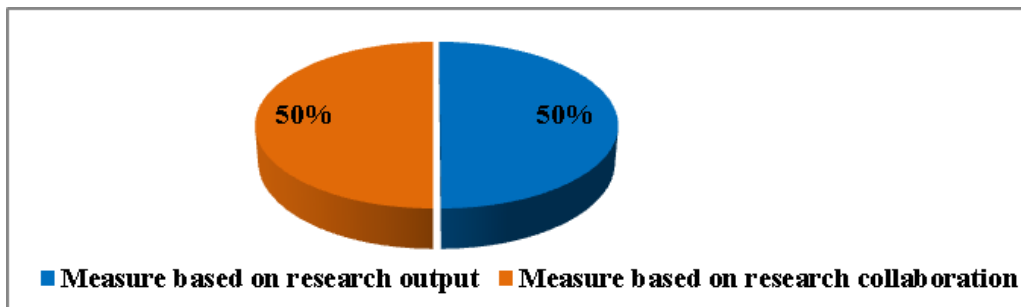


Figure 1 Responses of the participants on research assessment experience (n=176)

According to the results, recommendations include the need to “provide active support at departmental level (for example, writing for publication), encourage new researchers to become involved in high quality research, develop a collegial and inclusive culture for the development of high quality research and identify key areas of strength that will support this culture”.

Researchers, universities and other research performing organizations, research funders and policymakers are revisiting their approaches to research assessment. While university missions concentrate on education, research and innovation, current incentive and reward structures predominantly focus on research output (50%). Moreover, the dominance of journal level metrics, particularly the journal impact factor, means that research output is often narrowed to articles published in high-ranking journals. Furthermore, journal-level metrics’ dominance in research assessment procedures plays an important role in the scholarly publication crisis, systemic marginalization of certain regions and subjects, breaches of research ethics and integrity, etc.

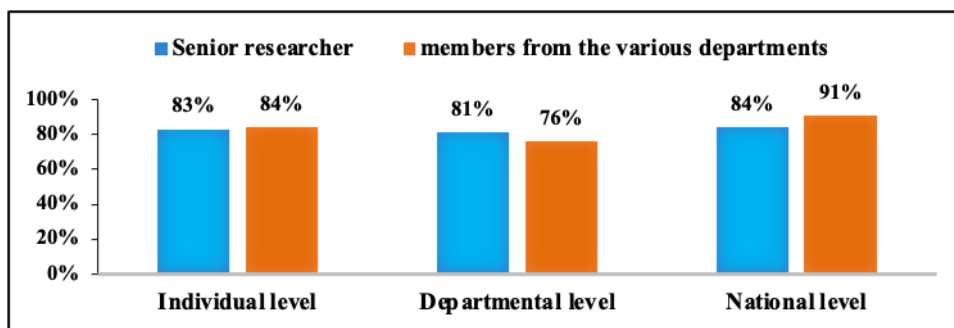


**Figure 2** Procedures for assessment based on the conventional metrics research assessment system (n=22)

Research assessment includes the evaluation of research quality and measurements of research inputs, outputs and impacts, and embraces both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, including the application of bibliometric indicators and mapping, and peer review.

At present, the area of research assessment is considered to be such a vital aspect of any university’s activity. Figure 3 shows questionnaire responses of the participants towards experiences of researchers from the educational field of Myanmar universities

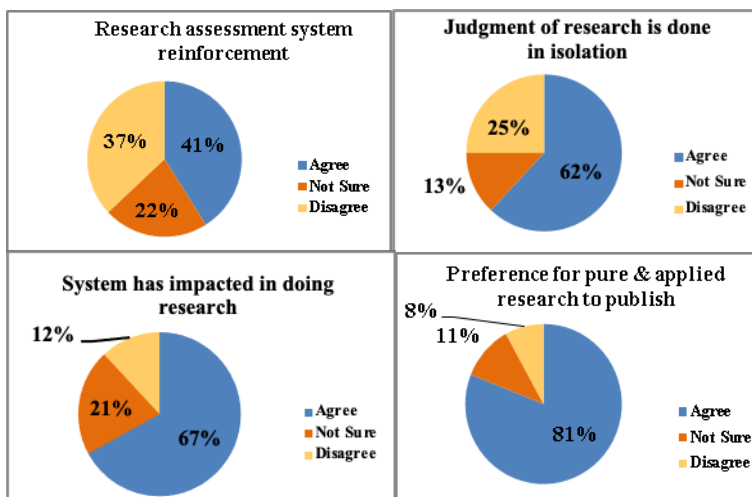
regarding the research assessment system approach.



**Figure 3** Responses of the participants on research assessment system approach (n=176)

According to data, both senior researchers (83%) and member from the various departments (84%) agreed to undertake the unit of output (publication / patent) to be organized to deliver teaching and research. Respective departments should provide the requirements for the national funding and evaluation (76%). Academics are expected to engage in research and expertise is required by the departments and research centers (91%).

To fulfill the mission of higher education, not only the teaching quality of teachers but also the research quality assessment has become a major concern. Researchers, universities, other research performing organizations, research funders and policy makers should revisit their approaches to research evaluation. Moreover, they should have to work together to develop and implement more accurate, transparent and responsible approaches to research evaluation. Semi-structured interview responses of the senior researchers (experts in the area of educational research) towards Myanmar universities' research assessment system that concerns for teaching are mentioned in the following figure 4.



**Figure 4** Responses of the senior researchers towards Myanmar universities' research assessment system that concerns for teaching (n=22)

In the scope of this specific study context, the respondents generally agreed that the Myanmar's research assessment system reinforce (41%) on the concern for teaching. The judgment of research (62%) is done in isolation and even from teaching. It is, therefore, implied that the system itself has impacted significantly (67%) on the performance of institutions and academics and on the way they face their financial and reputational success associated with a shared alignment of interests and rewards. Simultaneously, the specific types of publication outputs is referred to some sorts of publication that are relevant in the education research field, a preference for pure research and applied research (81%) to publish quickly and preferably in top journals.

## Discussion

The present study aims to contribute to discuss the role of research for the quality of teaching and student learning. Modern society demands high quality teaching and learning from teachers. Teachers have to possess a great deal of knowledge and skills with regard to both teaching and assessment practices in order to meet those demands and standards of quality education. "The COA (1992) acknowledged that educational research requires a great deal of support if education is to improve"; cited in Brown (2019). Effective teacher learning and professional development are important for student achievement in learning. Students investing in higher education must be given exposure and opportunities to be



able to use all that knowledge to evolve themselves as well as be able to contribute in the discipline with better research, studies and other discoveries made. Accordingly, du Plessis (2006) stated that “cultivating a culture based on knowledge production and knowledge sharing is reliant upon the values of the individuals within the organization or community of practice, with two key values being transparency and trust; cited in Brown (2019).” According to the survey results, recommendations include the need to provide active support at departmental level (for example, writing for publication), encourage new researchers to become involved in high quality research, develop a collegial and inclusive culture for the development of high quality research and identify key areas of strength that will support this culture. According to Moed (2011), at an institutional level, there is a need to design flexible and efficient tools to adapt to the different higher education contexts and to the growing complexity of disciplinary approaches to research to evaluate, monitor and promote the quality of research; cited in Cabral & Huet (2014). In addition, it is also agreed that academics are expected to engage in research and expertise is required by the departments and research centers at the national level. Academic departments are central to developing the

links between research in the discipline and student learning. Moreover, it is also found that there is a strong belief within Myanmar higher education that relationship between research and teaching can be highly beneficial for the student learning. Universities have started to question their reliance on conventional metrics as indicators to assess research quality. “The National Research Council [NRC], cited in Brown (2019), “What makes research scientific is not the motive for carrying it out, but the manner in which it is carried out” and suggest that this battle which exists serves to discredit education and “diminish its promise” (2002 : 20)”. The results of the survey point to a growing trend among institutions to agree their reliance on conventional metrics to research evaluation. A growing number of universities have started to develop and implement new and innovative practices to make their approach to research evaluation more accurate, transparent and responsible. Researchers and universities are well-placed to explore new and innovative approaches to research evaluation that is tailored to their diverse internal drivers and external pressures. As Saenen & Damián, (2019) stated that researchers, universities and other research performing organizations, research funders and policy-makers are revisiting their approaches to research assessment. Increasingly concerned

by the current state of play and its negative effects on academia, they are starting to engage in discussions about more accurate, transparent and responsible approaches to research assessment”. Myanmar universities pay attention to the quality of teaching and evaluate the results of student assessment as a certain criterion. Teaching quality is the core of education. Improving the quality of teaching is the primary task of university work. According to Campbell & Groundwater-Smith. 2010; Hong & Lawrence. 2011; Hilton & Hilton. 2017; Wall & Hall. 2017), “Teachers can improve their professional practice have focused on practitioner research (action research) as the most viable and powerful alternative to enhance teachers’ effectiveness”; cited in Abukari & Abubakar (2018). In the responses of the senior researchers towards Myanmar universities’ research assessment system that concerns for teaching, the results support the agreement to the research assessment system reinforcement, the judgment of research, the system’s significant impact, and preference for pure research and applied research. Blue skies research is scientific research in domains where “real-world” applications are not immediately apparent. It has been defined as “research without a clear goal”. It is sometimes used interchangeably with the term “basic

research”. When discussing the assessment of quality in applied and practice-based educational research, multi-dimensional framework based on several dimensions of quality (epistemic, technological, capacity building and value for people and economic) is applied in different contexts to enter their work departments. In this research, the results strongly show a preference for pure research and applied research to publish quickly and preferably in top journals. It is noted that research assessment systems should value teaching and student learning through research and, at an institutional level, planning must support this link through the development of strategies.

## Conclusion

The present research consists of a questionnaire survey developed in the Myanmar context and intends to bring some insights about the experiences of researchers from the educational field of Myanmar universities regarding the influence and impact of such a system on teaching and student learning. We start with a short review of the research evidence on the topic followed by a contextualized description of the Myanmar research assessment system aiming to build some platforms for a more informed discussion. The outcomes indicate the need to discuss the role of teaching, staff

professional development, assessment criteria and the impact of research on graduate/postgraduate student learning. Research assessment systems should value teaching and student learning through research and, at an institutional level, planning must support this link through the development of strategies based on a broader and context-driven conception of 'scholarship'. Universities can improve the relevance of the education and can better prepare the students for follow-up studies and to the new and emerging demands of the labor market in the twenty-first century. Moreover,

a close intertwining of teaching and research strengthens their identity. Academics can help students by engaging them in research to better develop highly valued competencies. More research-based teaching can also make teaching more attractive for academics and can make teaching instrumental to the academics' own research. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the consolidation of what we believe is an important field of research and one of the most important phenomena in the higher education research arena.

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