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# Research collaborations and Performance of Academicians: An Empirical Analysis

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Abstract: The term "collaboration" is the action of working together with others to produce or create something, and in the context of academic bodies, it is used mostly on the level of research. In other words, it is the mutual engagement of participants in a coordinated effort to solve a problem together. However, the collaboration also involves cooperation, in which the responsibilities of each partner may not be shared equally. Collaborative learning is a widely used instructional method, but the learning potential of this instructional method is often underused in practice. Higher education institutions are facing an increasing demand to collaborate with each other in the knowledge economy. Yet, research on how higher education management enhances collaborative work is rare. Present study takes research collaboration as a catalyst for improving the faculty performance in higher education institutions. Since, it has ben observed by many researchers that better faculty performance leads to the higher productivity and student's learning. This study focuses on factors collaborative Research i.e., "physical facilities of the institute helpful for collaborative research work", "availability of sufficient time for collaborative research practices", "availability and allocation of funds from the institute or competitive authorities for collaborative research" and "receiving the inspiration by the superior / fellow colleagues for collaborative research". Series of Focused group interviews were conducted and data were analyzed. Results show that factors evoking effective collaboration were student autonomy and self-regulatory behaviour, combined with a challenging, open, and complex group task that required the students to create something new and original are directly related with the faculty performance. It is concluded that collaborative research practices in higher education should be designed that build shared growth and academic development. In this article, It has been also explored that how collaborative teacher research can reposition teachers to be powerful stakeholders and policymakers rather than skilled technicians and implementers.

**Keywords:** Higher Education Management, Research Collaboration, Social Network Perspective, Social Network Analysis, Theory-Practice Translation

#### 1. Introduction

Research collaboration can take on many forms: teacher and teacher academic and teacher whole school practitioner teams and community practitioner collaboration. Collaboration between different practitioners can offer opportunities for interdependence, diverse thought and blurred boundaries, Collaboration amongst teachers can help build and strengthen solidarity. Either with or between teachers, collaboration offers a way to address the technical rationalism that results from positivism by contextualizing findings. Common to all collaborative research is the goal to overcome the traditional and contentious theory/practice rift between academics and teachers. Without collaboration, academic researchers run the risk of developing ideas only through their data, while practitioners risk developing ideas only through interactions with students. Through collaborative work and dialogue, practitioners and researchers can build more robust educational theories and practices. Collaboration provides teachers and university researchers to explore common interests. In one study, in collaboration with Oakland Public Schools and Berkeley Unified School District, organized a professional development group of urban elementary school teachers who were all interested in studying diversity in their teaching. The teachers, who named themselves the San Francisco East Bay Teacher Study Group, met every Tuesday to discuss issues of diversity. Dyson and two graduate students made observational visits to the teachers' classrooms, and the teachers observed one another. They conducted case studies that they presented to the group. The group's collaboration resulted in a book entitled What Difference Does Difference Make: Teacher Reflections on Diversity, Literacy and the Urban Primary School. With the exception of a 20-page introduction, all chapters were written collectively and all of the collaborators' voices were included throughout the entire book. In this way, the teachers took ownership of their own professional development in a supportive and transformative environment through collaboration that included a "multiplicity" of voices. Consequently, the San Francisco East Bay Teacher Study Group's work

offers not only a framework for teacher reflection on issues of diversity; but also a model of how academics and classroom teachers can conduct collaborative research, while respecting one another's expertise. Collaboration can also result in beneficial explorations of content-area pedagogy. Consider, for example, the collaborative partnership between teachers, graduate students, and university researchers that fostered for over a decade. The focus of their collaborations was science

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inquiry. Wells explains that all phases of research, from grant writing, to formulating questions, to publishing, were "negotiated among all members of the group". In this way, collaboration was voluntary and leveraged different types of expertise from all collaborators. As the above collaborative research projects demonstrate, collaborative teacher research has the power to disrupt hierarchy. First, collaboration can protect teachers from exploitation, since the researchers share and interpret data together. Second, collaboration ensures that teachers' views are represented in the literature and that knowledge production is not unidirectional. Third, collaborative research facilitates publication for teachers, who would otherwise have much less access to research tools, journals, conferences, and research networks. Collaborative teacher research also helps build reciprocal alliances amongst teachers as well as between teachers and academics. Alliance building helps create communities of educators who have common instructional goals and agendas. These alliances broaden the collegiality within educational research. Additionally, alliances between all education practitioners can lead to coalitions that influence policymakers and help shape educational legislation. Collaborative teacher research alliances have emerged in school based and in pre-service settings. for example, chronicles efforts to create a culture of collaborative inquiry that embeds practitioner work in the ongoing work of the district. Their team, consisting of administrators and teachers, grew from a reflective teaching group to a classroom-based research group, a university researcher contracted to help assist in their qualitative study of multi-age classrooms. Their collaborative research explored concerns such as, the challenges to teaching and researching, district visions versus teacher research questions, and the rights of families during research. The collaborative alliance helped stakeholders support and understand teacher inquiry. Alliances have been especially important in pre-service teacher education as well. In one collaborative effort, both professors at the University of Georgia, reformed their teacher education program to better integrate theory and practice. Together with mentor teachers, they began their collaborative reform efforts by examining their respective roles in knowledge production and in the education of student teachers. Very early on, Graham and Hudson-Ross discovered that mentor teachers were disgruntled with their previous roles in teacher education and perceived the split between university and schools as a "great divide":

#### 1.1 Investigation of Secondary Data

Collaboration in different forms supports the development of research quality and quantity of organisation or a specific research topic. There are many evidences for support this statement. Riahi et al. (2014) in their bibliometric study on the research performance of Iran state that scientific collaborations with researchers in other countries could play a major role in enhancing the level of knowledge of our researchers. Sweile et al. (2016) doing the worldwide overviews says that collaboration among industry, clinical researchers and academic institutions can improve research quantity. One of the findings in Kodama, Watatani, and Sengoku (2013) in their analysis demonstrated a research assessment by proposing and introducing key performance indicators and found that a certain degree of interdisciplinarity and internal collaboration may bring about high research productivity. Graue et al. (2013) in their analysis of Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden from 1979 - 2009 revealed that international collaborative research networks facilitate funding opportunities and contribute to further development of professional research competence in the same series Stein et al. (2006) stated that local and international collaboration may be useful in increasing research capacity in South Africa, and ultimately in improving mental health services, research collaboration in different ways: international as well as national and intra organisational is necessary for the increase the general research productivity of organizations. The examples of positive influence of research collaboration on research productivity and capacity can defunds in many bibliometric studies that cover publications of different countries and research organisation in different fields of science and topics. Elhorst and Zigova (2014) measuring the research productivity of academic economists employed at 81 universities and 17 economic research in Austria, Germany and Switzerland stated that empirical results support the hypotheses that collaboration and that the existence of economies of scale increase research productivity. Chakravarty and Madaan (2016) in their analysis of research performance of Chandigarh city suggested that foreign collaborations and foreign journals have remained the epicentre of the research activity, National and international collaborations also form the basis of growth of research productivity. Zucker and Darby (2011) in their study on research activity at Japan find that identifiable collaborations between particular university star scientists and firms have a large positive impact on firms' research productivity, increasing the average firm's biotech patents by 34 percent, products in development by 27 percent, and products on the market by 8 percent as of 1989-1990. Collaboration (primarily collaboration with developed countries) can also help less developed countries to build their research capacity and increase research performance. Zdravkovic, Chiwona- Karltun and Zink (2016) measuring the research performance of five southern African Universities in fields of mathematics, physics, chemistry concluded that supporting international and national collaboration which includes increased scientific mobility, strong scientific groups and networks, are key factors for capacity building of research in southern African Universities. Collaboration also in general leads to the increase of levels of citations. Collaborated (especially internationally collaborated) publications receive higher number of citations the single-authorship papers. Evidence of positive influence of collaboration on the level of citation can be found in different studies. O'Leary et al. (2015) in their analysis of University of Toronto's Faculty of Medicine research performance for 2008–2012 show that the academic

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departments with the highest levels of collaboration and interdisciplinary research activity also had the highest research impact in the same linkage Fu et al. (2012) analysing the Acupuncture research for 1980-2009 state that international collaborative papers are the most frequently cited. Isiordia-Lachica et al. (2015) in the analysis of research performance of Universidad de Sonora (Mexico) stated that international co-authorship produced higher citation rates while Chuang, and Ho (2015) stated that research collaboration is responsible for the increasing number of highly cited papers over the years. Obamba and Mwema (2009) in their analysis find out that strategic international research collaboration between research communities located within Africa and those in developed countries, as well as regional partnerships among African universities themselves, represent the most productive framework for reinvigorating and strengthening research capacity within sub-Saharan universities, such collaboration also increases the visibility of research. Collaborative publications are in general more visible than purely national or one-author papers. Geracitano, Chaves, and Monserrat (2009) stated that the establishment of collaborative research could be one of the strategies to improve the research.

## 1.2 Research Methodology

The ex post facto An ex-post facto research design was considered appropriate because, it examines the cause-and-effect relationship between one variable and the other, it describes the relationship that exist between research collaborations and academic performance of faculties. involves the study of a large population, data were collected by using the simple random sampling through the use of structured and validated questionnaire, to elicit information from respondent on the impact of collaborative research on academicians' performance. Total 500 questionnaires were circulated among the respondents Out of 500 only 427, (were received back, yielding a response rate of 84.6%). On further scrutiny of the collected responses, only 413 (all total) were found valid for further analysis as rest were incomplete and hence it was decided to remove. The respondents comprised academicians from higher educational institutions located at Delhi NCR, India. Where top 30 institutions were selected for the study on the basis of their faculty strength (population).

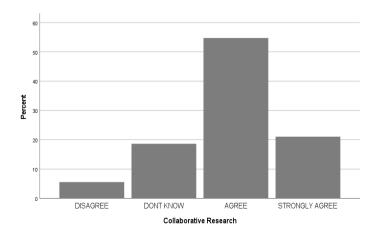
The research instrument was validated with the help of experts in during the pilot analysis. The reliability of the instrument was determined using test-re-test methods. It gave a coefficient of 0.85 which was considered high enough.

#### 1.3 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics of determinants influencing academic environment in HEI.

(Likert Scale: Strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, don't know = 3, agree = 4, strongly agree = 5)

Construct	tem	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Collaborative	The work environment of institute is	4.11	1.426	076	-1.300
Research (COR)	conducive for research work.				
	Develop knowledge translation and	4.18	1.397	.001	-1.278
	exchange				
	Get enough time and resources from the	4.29	1.454	034	-1.382
	institute for collaborative research.				
	Addressing Disciplinary and Sectoral	4.22	1.368	057	-1.185
	Issues				



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The mean participant score for different items of Collaborative Research i.e., "infrastructure of institute is conducive for research work", "enough time for collaborative research", "receiving grants from the institute for collaborative research" and "inspired by the senior /colleagues for research" were 4.11, 4.18, 4.29 and 4.22 respectively. The result indicates that "receiving grants from institute for collaborative research" (4.29) was the most important factor influencing academic environment, followed by "addressing disciplinary and sectoral issues" (4.22), "enough time for collaborative research" (4.18) and "infrastructure of the institute" (4.11). The previous studies carried out under wide range of collaborative research revealed that, receiving grants from the institute or funding agencies was the important motivating determinants collaborative research. The collaborative research approach (i.e., participation of different stakeholders) has been acknowledged to benefit the breadth and depth of research in the field by integrating different perspectives, methods, and experiences (Annerstedt, 2010; Matso, Dix, Chicoski, Hernandez, & Schubel, 2008; Podestá, Natenzon, Hidalgo, & Toranzo, 2013) as well as contributing to the relevancy and usability of the research (Campbell et al., 2015; Cook, 2008; Reed, 2008). Which influences the academic environment (Table 4.1).

#### 1.4 Reliability and validity of measurement model

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to evaluate internal consistency, reliability and validity of conceptual / measurement model. The factor loading, cronbach alpha, composite reliability and average variance extracted for quality education, student background, professional capabilities of faculty, student/teacher ratio, faculty engagement, collaborative research, presence of quality assurance cell/agencies, policies of the institution industry- institution collaboration, Physical environment of the educational institute influencing academic environment are presented in Table 4.2. The factor loading of all items of quality education, student background, professional capabilities of faculty, student/teacher ratio, faculty engagement, collaborative research, presence of quality assurance cell/agencies, policies of the institution industry- institution collaboration, Physical environment constructs were statistically significant (p≤0.01) and ranged from 0.765 to 0.913; 0.763 to 0.953; 0.879 to 0.963; 0.714 to 0.865; 0.716 to 0.861; 0.643 to 0.797; 0.724 to 0.910; 0.698 to 0.885; 0.712 to 0.817 and 0.923 respectively (Table 4.2). The factor loading of all items of quality education, student background, professional capabilities of faculty, student/teacher ratio, faculty engagement, collaborative research, presence of quality assurance cell/agencies, policies of the institution industry- institution collaboration, Physical environment of the educational institute exceeded the minimum acceptable value of 0.60, hence all the items were included for the interpretation of the factors influencing academic environment (Hair et al., 2006; Hair et al., 2010). The cronbach alpha for quality education, student background, professional capabilities of faculty, student/teacher ratio, faculty engagement, collaborative research, presence of quality assurance cell/agencies, policies of the institution industry- institution collaboration, Physical environment of the educational institute ranged from 0.731 to 0.901, which exceeded the threshold value of 0.60 (Nunnally 1978). The composite reliability of quality education, student background, professional capabilities of faculty, student/teacher ratio, faculty engagement, collaborative research, presence of quality assurance cell/agencies, policies of the institution industry- institution collaboration, Physical environment of the educational institute constructs in context of academic environment exceeded the minimum recommended cut off point of 0.60 (Baggozi and Yi, 1988; Anderson and Garbing, 1991; Hair et al., 2010; Calvo-Porral et al., 2013). The cronbach alpha and composite reliability obtained for quality education, student background, professional capabilities of faculty, student/teacher ratio, faculty engagement, collaborative research, presence of quality assurance cell/agencies, policies of the institution industry- institution collaboration, Physical environment of the educational institute constructs in context of academic environment revealed good internal consistency and reliability of the scale items (Hair et al., 2006; Hair et al., 2010). The average variance extracted is used to examine the validity of the constructs associated with academic environment. The average variance extracted for quality education, student background, professional capabilities of faculty, student/teacher ratio, faculty engagement, collaborative research, presence of quality assurance cell/agencies, policies of the institution industry- institution collaboration, Physical environment of the educational institute, influencing academic environment ranged from 0.610 to 0.834, which exceeded the threshold value of 0.50 (Hair et al., 1998; Tuu et al., 2008). The factor loading and average variance extracted values obtained from confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the convergent validity of the constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010; Contini et al., 2018).

The confirmatory factor analysis was performed to examine the overall fit of conceptual / measurement model. The Comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker -Lewis index (TLI), Goodness of fit index (GFI), Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and standardized mean square residual (SRMR) indexes were used to assess the overall fit of conceptual / measurement model. The CFI was 0.913; TLI was 0.856; GFI was 0.842; RMSEA was 0.079 and SRMR was 0.048, which were within the recommended acceptable range (Table 4.2). The CFI, TLI, GFI, RMSEA and SRMR values revealed that the conceptual / measurement model was fitted good to respondents' score / data (Martens et al., 2005; Hair et al., 2006; O'Connor et al., 2017; Lu et al., 2015; Konuk, 2019; Shi et al. 2019).

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**Table 1** Factor loading, cronbach alpha, composite reliability and average variance extracted of determinants influencing academic environment.

(Likert Scale: Strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, don't know = 3, agree = 4, strongly agree = 5)

Construct	Item	Factor loading (β)	p – value	Cronbach alpha	Composite reliability (CR)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Collaborative Research (COR)				0.845	0.919	0.610
	OR 1	0.658	***			
	OR 2	0.765	***			
	• COR 3	0.797	***			
	OR 4	0.643	***			

#### 2. Hypothesis

The hypothesis H6 that proposed **positive relationship between collaborative research and faculty performance in higher education institution** was accepted (Table 4.3), because the standardized estimate of the path was significant ( $\beta$  = 0.684, S.E. = 0.033, z -value = -1.384, p ≤ 0.01). The results of the present study revealed that in collaborative research the work environment of institute, developing knowledge translation and exchange, getting enough time and resources from the institute for collaborative research, addressing disciplinary and sectoral issues, influencing faculty performance in higher education institution. This is due to fact that in India the governing body of higher education gives more emphasis on collaborative research. Therefore, the role of collaborative research on maintaining academic environment in higher education institution was significant. The information regarding collaborative research which is the major factor influences faculty performance. However, collaborative research may build a sense of greater equity in decentralized higher education environments which influences faculty performance (Siemens et al., 2014; Misra et al., 2017).

### Impact of collaborative research on faculty performance

**Collaborative Research** 

Mean  $(\sum) = 3.5$ Standard Deviation  $(\sigma) = 1.235$ Sample size(n)= 413 Faculty Performance

Mean ( $\Sigma$ ) = 4.3 Standard Deviation ( $\sigma$ ) = .828 Sample size(n)= 413

Cohen's d = (4.3 - 3.5) / 1.0513 = 0.760903

The average effect size of Cohen's d = 0.7, with 0.2, 0.5 and 0.8 considered small, medium and large effects. This is the large effect of collaborative research on overall faculty performance. The association among the collaborative research and faculty performance is related with the commitment toward the organization. The employees who were engaged highly with their work and job tasks, they also emphasize on their physical efforts and the task relevant goals, but they were also rational and emotionally linked to the organization (Kahn, 1999). Aldieri and Vinci (2016) and Aldieri, Kotsemir and Vinci (2017), stated that the model of collaboration on the research leads to best performance of the faculties in Russian universities.

#### 3. Major Findings

The mean participant score for different items of Collaborative Research i.e. "infrastructure of institute is conducive for research work", "enough time for collaborative research", "receiving grants from the institute for collaborative research" and "inspired by the senior /colleagues for research" were 4.11, 4.18, 4.29 and 4.22 respectively. The result indicates that "receiving grants from institute for collaborative research" (4.29) was the most important factor influencing academic environment, followed by "addressing disciplinary and sectoral issues" (4.22), "enough time for collaborative research" (4.18) and "infrastructure of the institute" (4.11).

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#### 4. Conclusions

The scientific openness is an important aspect for the development of research and academics. Recent researches also revealed that higher educational institutions are becoming more important in the analysis of knowledge flows between researchers and academicians. Collaborative research become important in modern era to foster productivity and faculty performance. We approach this issue both theoretically and empirically. In particular, the rationale behind the model is that the scientific publications published by collaborations generate positive externalities for all the universities involved in the economic process, as introduced through the theoretical model. The analyzed data revealed the importance of research collaborations for academic performance. Furthermore, it also shows that the knowledge flows that arise among researchers enhancing the quality of research as well as academic performance of faculty members.

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