

The Publication–Pedagogy Paradox: Rethinking What Counts as Faculty Work in Indian Business Schools

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Abstract

Indian business schools increasingly evaluate faculty on indexed publication output—a metric formally embedded in NBA, NAAC, and NIRF accreditation criteria and recently intensified under India's National Education Policy 2020—even though the institutions' core mission is management pedagogy rather than research output. This paper argues that this phenomenon represents a specific, regulatorily hardened instance of a broader collapse Boyer (1990) diagnosed decades ago: scholarship narrowed from four legitimate forms (discovery, integration, application, and teaching) to discovery alone. It further argues that this collapse happened because Indian business schools anxiously copied Western accreditation standards, rather than building their own approach.

Drawing on international and Indian studies of faculty research and teaching, the paper shows how accreditation metrics have shifted faculty priorities via appraisal systems. It discusses the consequent strain on teaching, reviews the mixed evidence on research–teaching synergy (strong at the macro level, weak in practice), and puts forward three proposals, based on Boyer's (1990) scholarship typology and Van de Ven's (2007) engaged scholarship framework, to reform incentives at both the institutional and policy levels.

Keywords: business school faculty incentives, publish or perish, scholarship of teaching, Indian management education, accreditation metrics

1. Introduction

Business schools were founded to produce competent, ethical managers. Yet faculty are now increasingly evaluated and rewarded based on publication output in Scopus- or ABDC-indexed journals—a criterion only loosely tied to that mission. While not unique to India, this trend has intensified there, as accreditation and ranking bodies (NBA, NAAC, NIRF) have tightened publication-linked metrics as proxies for quality. This creates a structural paradox: institutions meant for management education now direct faculty time and prestige toward research publication, which competes directly with teaching.

This paradox is not new. Boyer (1990) criticized American higher education for narrowing "scholarship" (the full range of intellectual and professional work that professors do as part of their academic role) to discovery alone, overlooking teaching, application, and integration. Pfeffer and Fong (2002) pondered on whether business school research connects to managerial practice or student learning. Bennis and O'Toole (2005) argued that business schools adopted a scientific, publication-driven model ill-suited to a professional field. What this paper adds is an examination of how this paradox plays out under India's accreditation architecture, where such metrics are formal compliance requirements tied to institutional survival and rankings.

This paper offers a conceptual, not empirical, contribution. It argues that Indian B-schools have reduced Boyer's differentiated scholarship model to a single publication-weighted proxy, with under-discussed consequences for teaching quality. The solution, it suggests, is not a simple reversal—research does enrich teaching, and a purely teaching-focused model would create opposite problems—but a deliberate rebalancing of incentives along Boyer's fourfold distinction. The paper proceeds in five stages: (1) how the research-incentive model entered a professional field; (2) how journal lists and appraisal KPIs made publication a proxy for quality; (3) the consequences for teaching; (4) the counterargument that research strengthens teaching; and (5) a proposed recalibrated faculty evaluation framework, grounded in Boyer's typology and adapted to India's regulatory context.

2. The Historical Drift — How B-Schools Adopted the Research University Model

The publication-focused faculty incentive system now common in Indian B-schools comes from a mid-twentieth-century American reform. Bennis and O'Toole (2005) trace this shift to the late 1950s, when major American foundations judged business schools as intellectually weaker than arts-and-sciences departments and pushed them towards a more "scientific" model—emphasizing statistical rigor, peer-reviewed publishing, and doctoral training like the natural sciences. The goal was to give the field more academic legitimacy, which it had lacked as a vocational pursuit. But the unintended effect, as both Bennis and O'Toole (2005) and Pfeffer and Fong (2002) argue, was a slow move away from practical management: faculty built their careers on methodological skill rather than managerial relevance and hiring and

promotion came to depend more on publication records than on teaching or industry engagement.

This American model did not stay in the US. It became the template for international business education as it sought global legitimacy through accreditation and rankings. Üsdiken, Kipping, and Engwall (2021) noted that B-schools across the world have been chasing scientific credibility through publications, despite more and more people criticizing this approach. In India, this played out differently. Kothiyal, Bell, and Clarke (2018) say Indian B-schools mostly copied Western research models to get accreditation, rather than building something that fit India's own educational and managerial context. Vakkayil and Chatterjee (2017) reach a similar conclusion, describing top Indian B-schools as caught between global conformity and local distinctiveness—a paradox that this paper dwells on at the level of faculty incentives.

Unlike in the US, where the publication imperative spread gradually through academic culture, in India it was formalized through a dense regulatory framework: the UGC's Academic Performance Indicator system, the NBA's outcome-based criteria, NAAC's institutional grading, and the NIRF's annual rankings. Each of these bodies treats faculty publication counts—increasingly weighted toward Scopus- or Web of Science-indexed journals—as a measurable proxy for institutional quality. Kumar and Israel (2013), in one of the few Indian studies on business faculty publishing motivation, found that much of this activity is driven by institutional and career-advancement pressure rather than genuine scholarly interest—a pattern consistent with the broader "publish or perish" literature, but sharpened in India by accreditation-linked incentives. Thus, what was a cultural drift in America became a formal compliance requirement in India, adopted largely through the mimicry mechanism Kothiyal et al. (2018) identify—arguably a more rigid and imported version of the same underlying problem.

3. The Mechanism—How Metrics Became a Proxy for Quality

Publication became a proxy for institutional and faculty quality through two linked levels: the regulatory and the institutional.

At the regulatory level, counting publications in Scopus- or ABDC-indexed journals offers administrators and accreditors a metric that is easy to audit, compare across institutions, and justify to outsiders. But this administrative convenience comes at a cost to teaching - indexing status reflects editorial processes and citation reach, not classroom relevance, teaching skill, or a faculty member's ability to translate research into student learning. Khatri and colleagues (2012) found that management research in India was still maturing. Over a decade later, that finding seems at odds with the heavy pressure on faculty to publish—meaning the system expects more than its research infrastructure can support. Tyagi (2022) shows that even top

IIMs use accreditation-style publication metrics, promoting a narrow view of scholarship. Lower-ranked institutes copy this aspect to look credible, even when their own context requires a different focus.

This regulatory pressure has grown recently. India's National Education Policy 2020 introduced a two-year accreditation cycle and pushed for a stronger research culture across higher education (Shah, 2021). But Kulal, Abhishek, Dinesh, Bhat, and Girish (2024), surveying teachers and experts on NEP 2020's implementation, found that increased workload and lack of infrastructure or training were major concerns. This matters for this paper's argument because raising research expectations without supporting faculty is effectively an unfunded mandate- and its costs are borne mainly by teaching.

At the institutional level, this regulatory pressure is operationalized through faculty appraisal systems that translate accreditation metrics into individual key performance indicators. Publication counts, journal quartile, and citation metrics typically carry dominant weight in appraisal, increment, and promotion decisions, while teaching quality is assessed through blunt instruments—student feedback scores (vulnerable to grade-lenience bias) or infrequent, often perfunctory peer observations. Subaveerapandiyan et al. (2025) found that 'publish-or-perish pressure' at private Indian universities prioritises research quantity of publications over their quality. This paper argues the same trade-off applies to publishing versus teaching investment. Van Dalen and Henkens (2012), in a worldwide survey of academics, similarly found that publication pressure is widely perceived to displace other academically valuable activities. What gets measured gets managed; what is unmeasured—the slow, iterative work of case development, curriculum redesign, and student mentoring—gets neglected, not because faculty lack commitment, but because the incentive architecture deems it inconsequential.

This neglect shows up clearly in the numbers: over half of the management institutes that submitted to the 2024 NIRF rankings had no research publications at all, while almost all the publications came from a handful of top institutes (Chettri, 2024). So, the metric meant to improve research across the board has instead created two groups—a small elite that publishes, and a large majority where the publication rule exists in name only, even as faculty everywhere still feel the pressure to publish.

4. The Consequence — Effects on Teaching Quality

The way faculty time and attention are redirected under this incentive system has consequences that are easier to describe qualitatively than to measure statistically—a limitation this paper acknowledges. Time spent on case development, updating syllabi, or mentoring students is time not spent on publishing. With fixed working hours and an appraisal system that rewards publication far more visibly, a rational faculty member shifts effort accordingly.

Burke and Rau (2010), studying what they call the "research-teaching gap" in management education, argue that management scholarship and pedagogy have developed as separate professional tracks within the same discipline, each with its own rewards, communities, and career logic. This structural description fits closely with the mechanism this paper traces in India's accreditation context. Similarly, Van Dalen and Henkens (2012) found that academics widely feel publication pressure comes at the expense of other valued activities—a finding that directly supports this paper's concern about teaching investment, even though their study did not isolate teaching as a separate category.

Kumar (2022) finds that engaging teaching in Indian B-schools requires preparation time, curriculum updates, and facilitation skills—efforts this paper argues are devalued under publication-focused appraisals. Alongside Burke and Rau (2010), this suggests that good teaching is not just a side-effect of the publication mandate, but a separate track that the current system does not recognize as equal to research. Beyond this reallocation, three further consequences recur across the literature:

1. **Faculty burnout** – maintaining both a heavy teaching load and a publication quota, often without relief from either, creates a "two full-time jobs" problem. This is unsustainable for some, especially early-career academics building both a teaching practice and a research portfolio simultaneously.
2. **Erosion of industry engagement** – case teaching and applied pedagogy require faculty to maintain active contact with practitioners, a time-intensive activity that competes directly with the more visible and rewarded activity of publishing.
3. **Narrowing of intellectual effort** – Newer faculty see what senior colleagues get rewarded for and follow suit. This keeps the imbalance going year after year, even if no one actually makes a conscious choice to prioritise publishing over teaching.

5. The Counter-Argument — Research's Contribution to Teaching

A resolution that simply reversed the incentive weights—rewarding teaching heavily and research minimally—would recreate the same problem in reverse. The strongest case for research deserves serious engagement, not dismissal.

The intuitive case for research strengthening teaching is straightforward: research-active faculty are thought to bring current knowledge, methodological rigor, and exposure to the latest developments that a teaching-only faculty member might lack. Research is also often credited with attracting better students, institutional partnerships, and the accreditation status that signals quality to students and employers. This is not just speculation. Mitra and Golder (2008), in an empirical study of MBA programs, found that faculty research productivity was positively

linked to program-level outcomes like institutional reputation and rankings—evidence that a purely dismissive view of the research-teaching relationship would have to reckon with.

However, the empirical evidence for this link is more mixed than either side typically admits. Hattie and Marsh's (1996) meta-analysis of fifty-eight studies across higher education found the overall relationship between research productivity and teaching effectiveness to be statistically zero at the individual instructor level—a finding that has remained influential, even as later scholars have debated its interpretation at different levels (institution, department, and individual). Mitra and Golder's (2008) finding of a positive research-reputation link operates largely at the program and institutional level, not the individual classroom level. This suggests the two studies are not in conflict: research may benefit an institution's standing without necessarily improving what happens in any given classroom—precisely the distinction this paper's argument hinges on. Shortlidge and Eddy (2018), studying graduate students, tested the assumed inverse relationship between research and teaching effort and found no evidence that time in one necessarily reduces the other; research and teaching functioned less as zero-sum competitors than as separate skill areas, each responsive to its own investment and training.

Stremersch, Winer, and Camacho (2021) offer a useful distinction: they separate incentive structures that serve individual career advancement for faculty from those that serve the broader intellectual and reputational standing of the business school. They argue that it is the design of the incentive system—not the mere presence of a research requirement—that determines whether research translates into institutional benefit. This distinction sharpens rather than weakens this paper's case: it is not research itself that damages teaching, but a specific, narrowly count-based incentive design of the kind traced through NBA, NAAC, and NIRF metrics in Section 3.

Taken together, this evidence complicates rather than settles the debate. It suggests that the presumed synergy between research and teaching is real at some levels (institutional reputation) and weak or absent at others (individual classroom effectiveness). Current incentive systems built on an undifferentiated assumption of positive synergy rest on weaker empirical ground than their designers may have assumed. The honest conclusion is that research and teaching operate as more independent, level-specific phenomena than either the traditional research model or a purely reactive counter-model would suggest. This itself is the strongest argument for treating them as separate scholarship domains requiring separate, deliberate institutional investment, rather than assuming one automatically produces the other.

6. Toward Resolution — A Proposed Framework

Boyer (1990) offered exactly this kind of separation nearly three and a half decades ago. He proposed that academic scholarship be understood not as a single activity but as four interrelated, independently valuable forms:



1. **Discovery** – original research.
2. **Integration** – synthesising and connecting knowledge across fields.
3. **Application** – practice-relevant work (later formalised by Van de Ven (2007) as "engaged scholarship" for management and organisational research).
4. **Teaching** – the systematic study of how a field is best taught and learned.

Boyer's main argument was that American higher education had reduced this four-part model to discovery alone, and that faculty reward systems needed to be rebuilt to recognise all four forms as legitimate scholarly output.

This paper argues that Indian B-schools have undergone the same shift—from a four-part model of scholarship to a single publication-focused one, but through a more rigid and formally auditable mechanism—namely, the accreditation-linked publication metrics detailed in Section 3. Applying Boyer's framework to this context yields three propositions for institutional change:

P1 — Differentiated appraisal tracks. Faculty appraisal systems should formally recognise Boyer's four scholarship types as independently weighted categories, rather than treating indexed publication as a proxy for all four. A faculty member who develops a widely adopted teaching case, or who publishes a rigorous pedagogical study, should receive appraisal credit comparable to someone who publishes an empirical research article—not credit that is structurally subordinate to it.

P2 — Engaged scholarship as a legitimate discovery pathway. Following Van de Ven (2007), institutions should recognise practice-embedded, industry-collaborative research—such as case development based on real organisational problems or action research with corporate partners—as a legitimate form of discovery scholarship, not merely as a teaching-support activity subordinate to journal publication. This directly addresses the erosion of industry engagement identified in Section 4 by making that engagement a rewarded research output rather than an unrewarded time cost.

P3 — Accreditation metrics should be reweighted at the regulatory level, not only the institutional level. Since the mechanism identified in Section 3 originates largely in NBA, NAAC, and NIRF metrics rather than institutional choice alone, a lasting solution requires these bodies to formally weight teaching scholarship and application scholarship alongside indexed publication counts in their assessment frameworks. This is a change beyond any single institution's control, but one that institutional bodies and faculty associations could advocate for collectively. Notably, AACSB International's 2020 accreditation standards have moved in this direction: AACSB (2020) now frames intellectual contributions as part of a broader "thought leadership" expectation and states that peer-reviewed publication volume alone is not sufficient, requiring schools to document societal and applied impact alongside indexed output. NBA and NAAC criteria, by contrast, remain considerably more count-centric in practice, even

where their published frameworks gesture toward broader quality dimensions—a gap this paper's P3 is intended to close.

7. Implications

For policy- The NBA, NAAC, and NIRF have an opportunity to revise their criteria to formally recognise diverse forms of Boyer-type scholarship, rather than defaulting to indexed publication counts as the main proxy for research quality. This would require methodological work to implement reliably, but the conceptual foundation already exists in the broader higher-education literature.

For institutional leadership- B-school deans and appraisal committees do not need to wait for regulatory changes to start reweighting internal KPIs along the lines proposed in Section 6. Some of this recalibration is within institutional discretion even under current accreditation constraints.

For individual faculty- Until systemic change happens, individual faculty face a real career-strategy constraint. The propositions above describe an aspirational reweighting, not the current reality. Faculty navigating today's appraisal systems must balance idealism against the practical demands of promotion and job security under the existing structure.

8. Conclusion

The paradox this paper has examined—business schools rewarding faculty overwhelmingly for indexed publication, an activity that competes directly with the teaching mission they exist to serve—is not unique to India. But it has become particularly rigid in the Indian context through the formal, auditable metrics of NBA, NAAC, and NIRF. Boyer's (1990) diagnosis, offered for American higher education, applies with equal and perhaps greater force here: scholarship has been narrowed to a single form when it is properly four. Van de Ven's (2007) engaged scholarship, together with the recalibrated appraisal architecture proposed in Section 6, offers a path back toward that fuller definition. Business schools that continue to treat publication count as a sufficient proxy for quality risk producing a faculty that is increasingly unequipped and unmotivated to do the most important thing their students came for—teaching.

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