Insights on how students perceive the research-teaching nexus: A case study of hospitality management students

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Abstract

The nexus between teaching and research has long been an important element of most university strategies. The objectives of this research were to measure hospitality management students' attitudes towards the nexus between teaching and research and to identify which mode of this nexus, in terms of the curriculum design, is preferred by most students. Results revealed that students had a positive attitude towards this nexus and that lecturers are capable of organising their time well to give considerable contributions to both teaching and research.

Keywords: research-teaching; students' attitudes; hospitality management

Introduction

“Teaching and research are as inseparable as wool and mutton on a sheep farm” (Ball, 1992, p. 142). The emphasis on the linkage between research in a discipline and student teaching and learning in higher education has gathered momentum in recent years (Ball, 2004a, 2004b). Increasingly, institutions have formulated strategies to link teaching and research effectively and to stimulate staff to become more active in research. The reasons for this are based on the belief that research has a positive effect on teaching as it keeps teachers up-to-date on new methodological approaches and on developments which are of theoretical or applied significance to their subjects. The consequence of this is that students should be kept up-to-date with the subjects they are learning (Shattock, 2003).
Where the connection between research and teaching, sometimes referred to as the nexus, has been emphasised it has often become a core business in such institutions, and the curriculum has become the central site where the teaching-research linkage has been realised (Shattock, 2003). However, there are indications that institutional research and teaching strategies may not always have been effective. For example, policy-orientated research by Gibbs (2001) and JM Consulting (2000) indicated a failure of institutional strategies to link teaching and research effectively or, at least, to do this in a purposeful and explicit manner.

There are a number of possible reasons for seeking a greater understanding of the ways in which research and teaching inter-relate. These include increasing student motivation; enabling the taught curriculum to keep pace with the fast rate of change within the research and development agenda of the discipline; and providing an educational experience which encourages students to take deep approaches to their learning, thus effectively preparing them to be independent and life-long learners. Only a few students will go on to be researchers, but many will have professional roles which require them to constantly update their own skills, keep pace with ongoing change, and apply the high level skills associated with design, understanding and analysis which are often associated with a curriculum which successfully integrates teaching and research perspectives (White & Irons, 2007).

Therefore, the challenge for those universities which support the student experience of research is to recognise the complexities of the potential relationships between research and teaching, to develop practical integrated strategies to manage any tensions and disruptive interactions, and also to exploit positive relationships to deliver strategic aims (Lapworth, 2004).

To provide this support:

1. Courses should be designed to ensure that students experience the practice and process of research and develop their abilities as researchers (and perhaps develop their abilities to transfer these skills into future employment). In many cases this will require fundamental curriculum re-thinking, for the focus has to include an emphasis on active learning methods and radical re-thinking of how students are assessed.
2. Staff should manage the students experience of staff research. Students need to know why staff are involved in research and what the presumed benefits are to them.
3. Students should have opportunities to reflect, and report, on how they are experiencing a research-based curriculum (Jenkins, Blackman, Lindsay, & Paton-Saltzberg, 1998).

In previous studies of the teaching-research nexus, investigators have generally focussed on surveys of, or interviews with, academics in order to correlate work preferences, time usage and perceptions of the nexus, and have largely neglected students' attitudes and perspectives on staff research. Very few studies have focussed directly on students' attitudes towards this nexus related to particular disciplines (see, for example, Neumann, 1994; Mahony & Poulos, 2004; Jenkins et al., 1998). Within the hospitality context, few studies have measured students' attitudes towards the nexus (see, for example, Thomas & Harris, 2001; Ball, 2004a). Hence, there is a need to fill the gap in such research areas.

The objectives of this research were to measure hospitality management students' attitudes towards the nexus between teaching and research and also to determine the students' most preferred mode of this nexus.

The paradox of the research-teaching nexus

The term research-teaching nexus is often cited, but rarely well defined, and arriving at an optimal nexus has never been easy (Wee, 2004). Moreover, developing this nexus is constrained by modular systems, the dynamism of research and the constraints of syllabi (McLernon & Hughes, 2003). The separation of how the quality of research and the quality of
teaching is measured as well as the remarkable discrepancy in funding policy found between research and teaching has, according to Bowden et al. (2003), made it difficult for academics to pursue both research and teaching tasks effectively and efficiently.

As many academics and many institutional mission statements emphasise interdependence between quality teaching and staff research, that relationship has been subject to much research and policy discussion (National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education [NCIHE] (1997). Jenkins and Zetter (2003) argued that it is the academic department which should develop an effective link.

Terenzini and Pascarella (1994) concluded that the belief that good teachers are good researchers is a myth and that, at best, the association between ratings of undergraduate instruction and scholarly productivity is a small positive one. Other empirical studies have also generally found little or no relationship between how productive a person is as a researcher and how effective that person is as a teacher. However, Jenkins et al. (1998) stated that the evidence does not support claims that a good teacher equates to a good researcher, nor that doing research detracts from being an effective teacher.

Both quantitative and qualitative research establishes that there is no necessary or automatic link between research and teaching (Jenkins & Zetter 2003). However, Coate, Barnett and Williams (2001) concluded that teaching and research relate to each other in a variety of ways with a complicated set of relationships. Smey (1998) also argued that the difficulties encountered in measuring the quality, impact and effectiveness of the relationship between teaching and research should not detract from its importance, and that although the interaction between teaching and research is indirect and complex it does not mean that it is weak. Also, there are indications that the interfaces are important and manifold (Webb, 2003).

### Types of research-teaching nexus

Neumann (1992) suggested a framework for examining the nature of the research-teaching nexus which was tested in this investigation. The framework depicts the nexus as a multi-level relationship between research and teaching operating on three levels: (a) the tangible connection relating to the transmission of advanced knowledge and the most recent information, (b) the intangible connection relating to the development in students of an approach and attitude towards knowledge, and (c) the global connection describing the interaction between teaching and research at both the departmental and individual levels.

In order to identify the nature of research-teaching link, it is important to understand that there are many ways of linking research and teaching other than students learning about subject knowledge through lectures. Students may learn about research methods and techniques; they may undertake their own projects, whether individually or in teams; they may assist staff with their research; and they may gain experience of applied research and consultancy through work-based learning (Jenkins et al., 1998). Staff may model research-based approaches in the way they teach through, for example, adopting an inquiry-based learning approach (Elton, 2001). Staff may also exhibit the scholarship of teaching and learning and investigate the learning that takes place in their courses, to enhance their own teaching (Breslow, Drew, Healey, Matthew, & Norton, 2004; Cousin et al., 2003; Healey, 2000).

A range of terms is used in the literature, often interchangeably, to describe the research-teaching nexus (Healey, 2005a). Griffiths (2004) provided a useful distinction between research-led, research-oriented, research-based and research-informed teaching. According to Griffiths, teaching can be:

1. **Research-led**, in the sense that the curriculum is structured around subject content and the content selected is directly based on the specialist research interests of teaching staff. Teaching is often based on a traditional information transmission model. The emphasis tends to be on understanding research findings rather than
Ball and Mohamed (2010) Insights on how students perceive the research-teaching nexus: A case study of hospitality management students

research processes and limited emphasis is placed on maximising the potential positive impacts of teaching on research.

2. Research-oriented, in the sense that the curriculum places emphasis as much on understanding the processes by which knowledge is produced as on learning the codified knowledge that has been achieved. Careful attention is given to the teaching of inquiry skills and on acquiring a research ethos. The research experiences of teaching staff are brought to bear in a more diffuse way.

3. Research-based, in the sense that the curriculum is largely designed around inquiry-based activities, rather than on the acquisition of subject content. The experiences of staff in processes of inquiry are highly integrated into the student learning activities; the division of roles between teacher and student is minimised; the scope for two-way interactions between research and teaching is deliberately exploited.

4. Research-informed, in the sense that it draws consciously on systematic inquiry into the teaching and learning process itself.

However, according to Healey (2005b) a perusal of institutional teaching and learning strategies suggests that the terms are used loosely and interchangeably. Moreover individual academics often follow a combination of these approaches in different contexts.

Healey (2005a) developed Griffiths' framework into a diagrammatic model, shown in Figure 1, which highlights the extent to which courses bring students into research as participants and develop their abilities to carry out research. He introduced an additional category – research-tutored – in which the curriculum is focussed around students writing essays and discussing ideas with faculty (tutors). He expressed the relationship of Griffiths' four categories along two axes, with the horizontal axis stretching from an emphasis on research content to an emphasis on research processes and problems, and the vertical axis running from student-focused activities with students as participants to teacher-focused activities with students as the audience.

The model (Figure 1) illustrates how curriculum design can be linked to the research-teaching nexus. Research-led teaching is in the bottom left hand quadrant, while research-based teaching is in the top right. Research-oriented teaching occurs in the bottom right. This leaves the top left quadrant which, although not recognised by Griffiths (2004), is student-focussed and emphasises research content. "Research-tutored", although perhaps slightly clumsy, might be an appropriate description to put alongside Griffiths' other categories.

Only a few curricula fit entirely in one quadrant. Although most traditional university teaching takes place in the bottom left quadrant, some disciplines have relatively more activity in the other quadrants. For example, medicine, engineering and social work focus their teaching on problem-based learning, a specialised form of inquiry-based learning, which falls predominantly in the top right quadrant. Many more departments engage students in aspects of inquiry-based learning for small parts of their curricula (Healey, 2005a). Often the most effective learning experiences involve a combination of all four approaches, but we would argue that the emphasis should be placed on the student-centred approaches (top half of Figure 1).

Each of the four types of research-teaching relationships can be subdivided further. For example, Barnett (2003) distinguished six types of research-led teaching according to whether individuals inject current or past research into their teaching and whether that research is, or was, carried out by themselves, others in their department or institution, or elsewhere. The extent to which it is necessary for research to be undertaken by specific teachers, or at least in the same department or university, for effective learning is critical to the policy debate about the impact of research selectivity. There are similar arguments about the extent to which teachers facilitating research-based or research-tutored learning need to
be active or experienced researchers. This in turn raises the question of how far the skills of facilitating learning and discovery research are co-located.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 1: Curriculum design and the research-teaching nexus**  
Source: Healey (2005a, p. 70)

Furthermore, there is evidence that the conceptions that staff hold of research influence their approach to the research-teaching nexus. For example, an academic who has a conception of research focused on the external environment may view research-led teaching as involving students in a range of social activities mirroring research conferences, journal publication, presenting posters, engaging in teamwork and networking, whereas someone who has a conception of research focused internally on the analysis of data to develop an understanding, may see research-led teaching more as a process of engaging students in courses on methodology, interpretation of data (Brew, 2001).

The core of research activity should be knowledge pursuit and creation by academics within an intellectual space that celebrates scientific inquiry, integrity, rigour, critique and autonomy. If this is achieved then beneficial economic and social consequences may flow in the form of knowledge dissemination, education, funding, and institutional, career and academy status (Morrison, 2002).

**The perceived advantages of the nexus**

Many different arguments have been advanced in support of the idea that doing research will improve a faculty member’s teaching. Friedrich and Michalak (1983) claimed that exposure to a person who is actively engaged in research will result in students somehow acquiring the "qualities of mind" of a scholar. On the other hand, Neumann (1994) considered that the nexus provides students with the enthusiasm for their discipline/research that some lecturers
Ball and Mohamed (2010) Insights on how students perceive the research-teaching nexus: A case study of hospitality management students

convey when they refer to their own work and positively impacts their motivation to learn. Students can also gain direct experience of the research environment and, in some disciplines, are themselves allowed to take part in research work (Jensen, 1988). In addition, students perceive clear benefits from staff research, including staff enthusiasm and the credibility of staff and their institution (Neumann, 1994).

Furthermore, if academics are not involved in research, then they are simply not at the forefront of their discipline and hence the students are disadvantaged. Students seeking a university education do so because they expect to have teachers who have gone beyond the average level of knowledge. In his research, Neumann (1992) found that several participants expressed that a profound knowledge of one's subject is considerably more important in the students’ eyes than the instructional skills of an academic. Breen and Lindsay (1999) also reported possible positive effects of research on teaching when teachers kept up-to-date on new methodological approaches and on current developments in their discipline. They found two positive effects of teaching on research: researchers maintained awareness of the discipline as a whole, enabling them to conceptualise narrower research topics, and researchers were also stimulated by new students' interest and questions.

The perceived disadvantages of the nexus

Funding mechanisms and the inequity of rewards for research and teaching have caused tensions among academics (McLernon & Hughes, 2003). Also, seeking rewards, funds, and career development has made academics focus more on research at the expense of the teaching. This in turn, according to Turell (2003), has affected the quality of education.

Neumann's work (1994) indicated that students perceived disadvantages from staff involvement in research, particularly because staff were unavailable to students and also their perception that they were not among the stakeholders in staff research. Breen and Lindsay (1999) also cited that research activity diverts attention away from teaching duties such as contact with students. This contrasts with the findings of Friedrich and Michalak (1983), who denied the common complaint that there is not enough time to be a good researcher and a good teacher. They indicated that it is possible to do good research without detracting significantly from the time and attention devoted to teaching, and they suggested the key to reconciling the demands of the two is organising or managing time effectively.

Friedrich and Michalak (1983) concluded that there are two opposing viewpoints, namely either a trade-off or a synergetic relationship between research and teaching, and Baker, Bates, Garback-Kopman, & McEldowney (1998) reinforced a warning that immersion in research apparently can breed a narrowness that detracts from the broad-based knowledgeability that students perceive as being an important element of good teaching.

Students' attitudes towards the nexus

Breen and Lindsay (1999) focussed on students' attitudes to the nexus and found that students were twice as likely to be positive than negative about it. They also reported that although students expressed concerns about the lack of availability of lecturers because they were doing research, students still thought that staff needed to undertake research. Neumann's view (1994) was given that students are the recipients of university teaching, and that the arguments in favour of the existence of a nexus claim the benefits to teaching of academic research, they are the most important group to consider in any examination of the teaching-research nexus. In accordance with this, one of the study's objectives was to measure the attitudes of students towards the teaching-research nexus. Drawing on the previously reviewed literature, it was clear that the students' feedback is a crucial aspect of the teaching-learning experience and is considered crucial to assess the current nexus between research and education. Hence, student inputs are vitally important to any future development of the nexus.

Research design

There were two research objectives:

1. To measure the attitude of hospitality management students towards the research-teaching nexus.
2. To identify which mode of the research-teaching nexus in terms of the curriculum design is most preferred by students i.e. research-tutored; research-based; research-led; or research-oriented.

The hypotheses were:

\[ H_1: \text{There are no significant differences in the students' attitudes towards the research-teaching nexus.} \]

\[ H_2: \text{There are no significant differences among students in terms of the mode of the research-teaching nexus.} \]

The population in this study was the 90 final year hospitality management undergraduate students at Sheffield Hallam University in 2007/8. The rationale for the selection of final year students was that it was expected that their views about the nexus would be more discerning. For this study, a random sample of 73 students was selected, based on the work of Krejcie and Morgan (1970), and a questionnaire was chosen as the most appropriate means of obtaining independent data from students. The questionnaire was piloted prior to embarking on the formal data collection phase.

The actual questionnaire employed was divided into two main parts. The first aimed to obtain demographic data of the respondents and the mode of the research-module most preferred by students in terms of the curriculum design: research-tutored, research-based, research-led or research-oriented. Students were provided explanations of these four modes. The second part included 28 attributes which were considered as indicators of the extent to which respondents had benefited or suffered from the research-teaching nexus.

**Results**

In order to statistically test the research hypotheses, the Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was used to measure the respondents' attitudes towards the nexus. In addition, \( t \) test, standard deviation, and the mean difference were used to measure these differences, calculated using the statistical package for social science (SPSS).

A total of 50 valid and usable questionnaires were completed and used for analysis, a response rate of 68%.

The students' attitudes towards the relationship between teaching and research were measured by the attributes shown in Table 1. Results revealed that 90% of respondents were generally satisfied with the links between research and teaching (attrib. 20). Seventy-four percent of the respondents stated that they generally had an interest in research (attrib. 21). The same percentage realised that research in their discipline was important (attrib. 25) and 68% felt that there was a need for developing the curricula of research modules (attrib. 17). Most students (88%), believed that the link between teaching and research had motivated them to study and attend classes (attrib.1), while only 6% considered that the research-modules approach was not of any great value to themselves (attrib. 2). Eighty eight percent agreed that they gained an analytical approach (attrib. 12) and 80% a more positive attitude towards knowledge as a result of being involved in the research modules (attrib. 13). Also, as a result of the research modules, 70% of the sample thought that their research skills had improved (attrib. 7). Seventy-four percent of respondents thought that their ability to enquire and criticise due to the research modules had increased while 60% thought their self confidence had improved through these modules (attrib. 15 and16). Ninety-two percent agreed that research played an important role in enhancing the quality of their educational experience in general (attrib. 18). However, 82% considered the issue of presenting or publishing research as complicated and needing more support from the lecturer (attrib. 22).
Ball and Mohamed (2010) Insights on how students perceive the research-teaching nexus: A case study of hospitality management students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 The link between teaching and research has motivated you to study and attend classes.</td>
<td>6 12</td>
<td>38 76</td>
<td>6 12</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 The research-modules approach is of a great value to you.</td>
<td>6 12</td>
<td>25 50</td>
<td>13 26</td>
<td>6 12</td>
<td>- -</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Much more applied practical curricula are needed.</td>
<td>13 26</td>
<td>12 24</td>
<td>13 26</td>
<td>12 24</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 You are aware of the majority of research that goes on in the hospitality subject.</td>
<td>20 40</td>
<td>16 32</td>
<td>10 20</td>
<td>4 8</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 You have many opportunities to present/publish research.</td>
<td>15 30</td>
<td>24 48</td>
<td>2 4</td>
<td>6 12</td>
<td>3 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Being involved in research activities is beneficial.</td>
<td>9 18</td>
<td>35 70</td>
<td>6 12</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Remarkable development in research skills is acquired by research modules.</td>
<td>16 32</td>
<td>19 38</td>
<td>8 16</td>
<td>7 14</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 The lecturer is enthusiastic in class.</td>
<td>12 24</td>
<td>25 50</td>
<td>13 26</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 You feel currency of lecturer knowledge.</td>
<td>17 34</td>
<td>21 42</td>
<td>12 24</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 The lecturer is able to illustrate from personal experience.</td>
<td>12 24</td>
<td>38 76</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 You feel credibility in the lecturer.</td>
<td>16 32</td>
<td>22 44</td>
<td>12 24</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Due to research modules, you have gained an analytical approach.</td>
<td>12 24</td>
<td>32 64</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>6 12</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Research modules enabled you to have a positive attitude towards knowledge.</td>
<td>8 16</td>
<td>32 64</td>
<td>2 4</td>
<td>8 16</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 You feel that lecturer is too busy in his/her own research and should give more time to students.</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>30 60</td>
<td>12 24</td>
<td>8 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Due to research modules, your opportunity to enquire and criticise has been increased.</td>
<td>25 50</td>
<td>12 24</td>
<td>8 16</td>
<td>5 10</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 The research modules gave you much more self-confidence.</td>
<td>12 24</td>
<td>18 36</td>
<td>17 34</td>
<td>3 6</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Most of the research modules curricula need more development.</td>
<td>22 44</td>
<td>12 24</td>
<td>12 24</td>
<td>4 8</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Research plays an important role in enhancing the quality of your educational experience in general.</td>
<td>9 18</td>
<td>37 74</td>
<td>4 8</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is a two way transfer of knowledge in the class, i.e. between you and the lecturer.

It could be stated that you are generally satisfied with the links between research and teaching.

You are interested in research in general.

The issue of presenting or publishing research still complicated and needs more support and motivation from the lecturer.

The lecturer had effective communication skills.

You feel that academic research carried out in Hallam university credible.

Research in your discipline is important.

The teacher should use examples from his/her research in lectures.

An academic researcher makes a good teacher.

It would be better if the lecturer is currently involved in a topic related to your modules.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>There is a two way transfer of knowledge in the class, i.e. between you and the lecturer.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>54</td>
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<td>24</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>22</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>An academic researcher makes a good teacher</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>It would be better if the lecturer is currently involved in a topic related to your modules</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Students attitudes measures distribution
Likert Scale: 1-5 (Strongly Disagree - Strongly Agree)

The proportion of students agreeing/strongly agreeing with statements concerning the lecturers’ enthusiasm, currency of knowledge, effective communication, illustrations from their personal experience and credibility, were 74%, 76%, 94%, 100% and 76% respectively (attrib. 8, 9, 23, 10 and 11). In addition, 76% of the students stated that there was a transfer of knowledge in the class between the lecturer and the students (attrib. 19). However, 80% of respondents considered that the lecturer should use more examples from their research in lectures (attrib. 26). Nobody thought that the lecturer was too busy in their own research or was unsatisfied with the time given to them (attrib. 14).

All the attributes were statistically tested using the t test, standard deviation and mean difference, with 95% confidence interval of the difference. As Table 2 shows, the standard deviation of mean ranged from .50 to 1.24 and the mean difference ranged from 3.52 to 4.48, with an average mean of 4.02. In other words, most students’ attitudes were near to the agree point on the scale. Also, results of significance (2-tailed) equal 0.000 < 0.005 which leads to acceptance of H1 since there was no significant difference in the students’ attitudes towards the research-teaching nexus.
Results also revealed that both research-based and research-tutored modes were the most preferred modes of the research-teaching nexus by students (44% and 38% respectively), whilst research-oriented and research-led were less preferred (16% and 1% respectively). This leads to rejection of H2 since there was a significant difference among students in terms of the mode of the research-teaching nexus (see Table 3 and Figure 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of nexus</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research-tutored</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research-based</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research-led</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research-oriented</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 3: Most preferred mode of nexus
Discussion

The results revealed that students were generally satisfied with having research linked with teaching in their modules and felt that research was playing an important role in enhancing the quality of their educational experience. This satisfaction can be attributed to a variety of reasons. Among them was their growing interest in research which made them more willing to attend classes. Also, students believed that research-based modules provided them with many advantages that might help them in their studies and future career. These reasons also included students getting a positive attitude towards knowledge, an analytical approach, and a remarkable development in their research skills and self-confidence. The latter was considered by White and Irons (2007) as one of the crucial drivers to satisfying students with the teaching-research nexus.

Results suggested that lecturers could be considered as power engines, generating satisfaction amongst students through their enthusiasm, currency of knowledge and effective communication. However, students needed more examples derived from their research to be discussed in lectures. Unlike much of the previous works, such as that of Neumann (1994), all students were satisfied with the time given to them by lecturers and there were no complaints about the unavailability of lecturers because of their engagement in their personal research.

The results highlighted the need for improvements in informing students about the hospitality research activities of the University. Students also needed encouragement and motivation to publish papers. Results also revealed that the curriculum should be re-engineered to include more practical and applicable research dimensions. Moreover, research-based and research-tutored were shown to be the modes of the research-teaching nexus most preferred by students. This result is logical given the various advantages that these modes offer to students, as indicated by Healey (2005a) who argued that these modes bring students into research as participants rather than just as the audience. However, there was no consensus among students about the statement that an academic researcher makes a good teacher. This tends to agree with the conclusion of Terenzini and Pascarella (1994) that the belief that good teachers are good researchers is a myth.

Conclusion and recommendations

This empirical study investigated the effect of research on teaching and how hospitality management students perceive the nexus between them. Results showed that the students questioned had a positive attitude towards this nexus since it helped them to develop their research skills and better understand their course. The study also unexpectedly found that
the view that the lecturers are too busy doing their own research and thus do not give their students enough time was not supported, implying that the respondents' lecturers organised their time well to enable a balanced approach to research and teaching so that one did not adversely affect the other.

This study points to a number of recommendations when thinking about developing learning strategies in general and the nexus in particular:

1. Students should be motivated more to take a part in conferences, workshops, seminars and so on, related to their hospitality industry.
2. Some of the implications and applications of the researcher's work should be incorporated in the curriculum content.
3. Students should be provided with updates of university research activities to enhance the credibility of the university in the eyes of students.

Further research is required in order to investigate how universities in general, and hospitality departments in particular, respond to the student's attitudes in their policies and strategic planning. Moreover, given the complex nature of the research-teaching nexus, more success factors and other stakeholders, such as academics and managers, should be investigated using multivariate analysis to build an integrated system with stronger links between research and teaching.

References


Ball and Mohamed (2010) Insights on how students perceive the research-teaching nexus: A case study of hospitality management students


