



Bridging the Research—Practice Gap in Nepalese Business Schools

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Abstract

Purpose: This study investigates the research-practice gap in Nepalese management education, focusing on how business schools in Kathmandu Valley create and share knowledge. It aims to identify factors contributing to this gap in their research methods and dissemination.

Research Methodology: A cross-sectional survey was conducted with 80 business educators from graduate and postgraduate programs in Kathmandu Valley. Participants involved in teaching, publishing, or managing research completed questionnaires addressing factors affecting the research-practice divide in knowledge activities.

Findings: Key contributors to the research-practice gap include self-referential practices, subjective norms, weak corporate networks, and communication issues, with self-referential tendencies highlighted as the primary factor by educators.

Implications: Nepalese business schools should move beyond internally focused academic practices and actively leverage their research knowledge in collaborative, professional, and practical contexts to bridge the gap and improve management education's impact.

Originality/Value: Offering empirical insights into the antecedents of the research-practice gap within Kathmandu Valley business schools, this study presents a context-specific framework to help align academic research with practical application in emerging markets.

Keywords: research-practice, gap, Nepalese, business schools, management education

Introduction

As an integral component of the curriculum at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, Nepalese business schools actively engage in the creation and dissemination of research-based knowledge resources. Robust mechanisms have been established within these institutions for generating and sharing research outputs. From an academic standpoint, management educators,

faculty members, and scholars rigorously analyze, explore, and examine research topics employing systematic methodologies and analytical precision. Their findings are disseminated through national and international journals, as well as presentations at academic conferences (Annansingh et al., 2018).

Nevertheless, there exists a discernible gap regarding the practical and professional relevance and implications of the research-based



knowledge produced by Nepalese business schools. A critical question arises as to whether the knowledge creation efforts and research outputs of management academics have been effectively shared with, and acknowledged by, institutions, practitioners, entrepreneurs, and professionals who apply evidence-based managerial practices and conceptual analysis in business, corporate, entrepreneurial, and market environments (Panda, 2014). The research-practice gap in business studies and management education denotes the disconnect between academic research findings and their implementation in real-world management settings (Seidl, 2005; Negt & Haunschild, 2024).

Despite the opportunities presented through academic publications and conferences, research-based knowledge creation and dissemination practices in Nepalese business schools have yielded limited practical impact (Bansal et al., 2012). Ironically, although Nepalese business schools produce a substantial volume of academic research, a significant disparity persists between this knowledge and its application within professional, managerial, and organizational contexts (Bansal et al., 2012; Negt & Haunschild, 2024).

The dynamic and continually evolving business environment presents significant opportunities for collaboration between academia and management practitioners. However, as noted by Vicari (2013), management scholars seldom consult managers or entrepreneurs for research inspiration, reinforcing the non-relevance of academic research and limiting the development of management studies in Nepal.

Nepalese business schools have made considerable investments in research-based teaching and learning practices. These institutions regularly organize academic events, including conferences, seminars, workshops, and training sessions, while supporting faculty members and scholars in publication efforts (Pittz, 2024). Furthermore, many established business schools publish their own academic journals featuring research articles and conceptual papers authored

by faculty and students. Knowledge sharing within Nepalese business schools employs various formats, such as workshops, conferences, books, and journals (Kieser & Leiner, 2009; Pittz, 2024).

However, previous research highlights the complexity of the gap between academic research and business or managerial practice, emphasizing that effective collaboration and cooperation between researchers and practitioners are essential to bridging this divide (Vanderlinde & van Braak, 2010; Harrington & Kearney, 2011). This complexity arises partly because researchers and practitioners belong to distinct discourse communities with differing perspectives and ideologies, impeding the utilization of academic research in corporate decision-making and industrial transformation (Vermeulen, 2014).

Similarly, knowledge transfer and creation within Nepalese management education have predominantly remained insular and self-referential. Co-learning and participatory knowledge creation practices, which promote collaborative interactions between practitioners and researchers, have yet to be sufficiently embraced (Harrington & Kearney, 2011). This study acknowledges that research-based knowledge creation and dissemination in Nepalese business schools remain confined within internal practices—such as establishing research cells, publishing in in-house journals, and participating in conferences exclusive to management scholars—without substantial engagement with business professionals and practitioners (Seidl, 2005).

Moreover, there is a notable lack of empirical studies examining the missing links that contribute to the research-practice gap within Nepalese business research and management education. The self-centered, self-regulated, and self-referential nature of knowledge creation and sharing persists, while collaborative research initiatives remain limited (Kieser & Leiner, 2009; Pittz, 2024).

Following the suggestions of Panda (2014), this study revisits the rigor-relevance debate with special emphasis on academic management research in Nepalese higher education. It posits that bridging

the gulf between rigor and relevance is imperative to enhancing the practical relevance of academic research for business organizations, entrepreneurs, and practitioners operating within Nepal's business environment. Within the framework of business studies and management education, the research-practice gap not only undermines the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes but also diminishes the applicability of academic research to professional business practice (Harrington & Kearney, 2011).

This study covers the factors underlying the research-practice gaps in knowledge creation and sharing practices within Nepalese business schools, drawing on the perspectives of business faculty, academic researchers, and management educators (Annansingh et al., 2018). Grounded in an extensive review of literature on the research-practice gap in management education, the study conceptualizes a framework to analyze this gap in the context of Nepalese business studies (Wilkerson, 1999; Seidl, 2005; Kieser & Leiner, 2009; Negt & Haunschild, 2024). Given the paucity of prior research, it remains unclear to what extent the research-practice gap is pervasive in Nepal and how it can be systematically assessed and addressed.

Gill (2019) highlights a fundamental irony in Nepalese management research: academic inquiries rarely frame questions of practical professional interest or implications. Thus, by assessing the research-practice gap with reference to research-based knowledge creation and sharing in Nepalese business schools, this study seeks to foster academic collaboration with entrepreneurs and practitioners (Chedid et al., 2019).

In line with this research problem, the study assesses contributing factors to the research-practice gap in knowledge creation and sharing among Nepalese business schools. Employing a quantitative research design, it develops a conceptual framework and engages research respondents to explore these issues. The significance of this study lies in addressing

a critical challenge that affects the relevance and effectiveness of business studies and management education in Nepal.

Research Objective

This study aims to identify and analyze the key factors contributing to the research-practice gap in knowledge creation and sharing practices within Nepalese business schools. It seeks to understand how these factors influence the disconnect between academic research outputs and their practical application by business practitioners, with the goal of informing strategies to bridge this gap and enhance the relevance of management education in Nepal.

Literature Review

This study investigates the research-practice gap in management education by critically examining varied theoretical perspectives and relevant empirical literature. Central to this inquiry is the recognition that knowledge produced and disseminated by business schools often remains insular, highly self-referential, and disconnected from managerial practice and broader business outcomes (Kieser & Leiner, 2009; Bartunek & Rynes, 2014; Vicari, 2013). To frame this phenomenon, the theoretical foundation of this study is grounded primarily in Sperber and Wilson's and Thomas (2006) Relevance Theory, which reconceptualizes communication not merely as the transmission of messages, but as a process of generating contextually significant inferences and eliciting meaningful feedback from recipients. According to this theory, the measure of relevance depends on the balance between contextual effects and processing effort. Applying this to management education in Nepal, the study posits that the observed research-practice gap arises because business practitioners and managers operate in relative isolation from academic researchers, limiting the generation of mutually relevant knowledge.

Complementing relevance theory, the Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975) is invoked to elucidate how the attitudes

and subjective norms of management educators, research directors, and scholars influence behaviors pertinent to knowledge creation and sharing. These psychosocial drivers affect stakeholders' willingness to close the divide between academic research and practical implementation in Nepalese management education.

Further theoretical insight is offered by Systems Theory as articulated by [Seidl \(2005\)](#), which conceptualizes business schools as self-referential social systems characterized by operative closure. This dynamic implies that such institutions inherently reference and reproduce their internal operations, often resisting or filtering external influences and feedback. Self-referentiality leads to processes that cyclically reinforce internal norms and practices, thereby sustaining the isolation of research outputs and hampering permeability between academia and practice.

Empirical studies substantiate these theoretical perspectives. [Wilkerson \(1999\)](#), studying human resource practitioners, documented that academic research content frequently fails to align with managerial realities and practices, with academic publication styles and formats further alienating practitioners from engaging with scholarly work. This mismatch reinforces the “relevance gap” whereby research produced is often deemed extraneous or inaccessible by professional audiences. [Vanderlinde and van Braak \(2010\)](#) characterize the research-practice gap as a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that demands enhanced cooperation and knowledge co-creation between researchers and practitioners. Their work advocates moving beyond isolated research cells to establish professional learning communities that foster collaboration.

[Vicari \(2013\)](#) offers a sobering perspective, suggesting that the gap is not easily bridged even through collaboration, as academia and practice operate within fundamentally different social systems with distinct logic, cultures, and goals, often rendering one another irrelevant despite recognition of the problem. [Bartunek and Rynes](#)

[\(2014\)](#) elaborate on these tensions, emphasizing divergences in epistemological assumptions, temporal frames, communication styles, and worldviews between academics and practitioners as core challenges for translating research into practice.

Moreover, [Perea and Brady \(2017\)](#) highlight the limitations of academic journals that hinder practitioners' access to and utilization of scholarly knowledge, underscoring the need for accessible, practice-oriented dissemination formats. [Wilson and Thomas \(2012\)](#) argue that evaluating research impact should extend beyond theoretical advancement to encompass managerial and policy relevance, amplifying the “voice of practice” in knowledge creation.

Theorizations such as those by [Vermeulen \(2014\)](#) challenge the rigid separation of theory and practice, proposing an integrative perspective where each domain supports and enriches the other, ultimately contributing to the broader value of management research. Supplementing this, [De Frutos-Belizón et al. \(2019\)](#) point out that the predominance of abstract, detached academic knowledge often limits relevance for practitioners. They advocate shifting management education towards more pragmatic and interpretive research orientations to bridge the gap effectively.

Attitudinal and structural factors also play important roles. [Jolaee et al. \(2014\)](#) find that educators' attitudes strongly influence their intentions to share knowledge, while robust corporate networks and organizational support significantly enhance subjective norms conducive to knowledge dissemination. Likewise, [Panda \(2014\)](#) critiques management scholarship for scientific rigor that often prioritizes methodological exactitude over practical applicability, calling for a balanced approach to bridge the gulf between rigor and relevance.

Nepalese business schools actively felt the needs to engage in teaching and research, as evidenced by Pokhara University's academic operations ([Mishra, 2022](#)). Despite efforts to

enhance research rigor and digital academic processes (Mishra, 2023), there remains a significant gap between academic knowledge and its practical application in the business sector. This gap is compounded by limited industry collaboration, underdeveloped corporate networks, and the tendency of research to be insular and self-referential (Mishra & Nepal, 2022; Mishra; 2024)

Quality assurance initiatives have improved research standards (Mishra & Jha, 2023), but bridging the research-practice divide requires more contextualized, relevant research that addresses Nepal's unique business environment. Nepalese management education often imports global theories without adequate adaptation, reducing their practical value for local practitioners. Addressing these issues calls for systemic reforms fostering closer academia-industry partnerships and sustainable, digitally-enabled research and knowledge-sharing practices

Despite comprehensive discussions in the global literature, dialogue regarding the research-practice divide remains absent within the Nepalese management education context. This lacuna is significant, given Nepalese business schools' evidence of insularity, operating as closed systems with minimal academic-practitioner engagement and prevailing self-referential knowledge processes

(Seidl, 2005; Kieser & Leiner, 2009). Notably, no prior empirical research has systematically assessed the antecedents and barriers of the research-practice gap in Nepal.

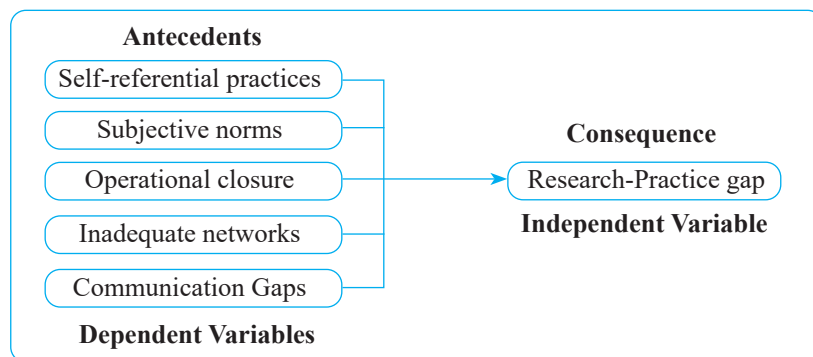
Recent scholarly debates, such as those by Fincham and Clark (2009), have reignited interest in whether business research can effectively reconcile academic rigor with pragmatic relevance. Building on this momentum, the present study aims to initiate critical discussions and explorations of the factors contributing to research-practice gaps in Nepalese business education. By examining these dimensions, it seeks to promote convergence between research outputs and managerial applications, thereby enhancing collaborative knowledge creation and dissemination in Nepalese business schools.

Conceptual Framework

This study develops a conceptual framework synthesized from five key constructs derived from established theories and prior empirical findings. The framework is informed by an extensive literature review on academic-practitioner relationships, gaps between academic research and managerial practice, issues of research relevance, and the potential for collaboration between scholars and business practitioners.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



The five constructs identified to examine the research-practice gap in management education within the Nepalese context—specifically focusing

on knowledge creation and sharing practices in business schools of the Kathmandu Valley—are as follows:

Self-Referential Practices

Research-based knowledge in business schools is predominantly self-referential, meaning that studies primarily refer back to themselves or existing academic discourse without practical implications for management practices or firm outcomes (Vicari, 2013). This insularity limits the applicability of academic knowledge in real-world contexts.

Subjective Norms

Drawing on Ajzen's and Fishbein (1975) Theory of Reasoned Action, subjective norms encompass the social pressures and normative beliefs held by business educators, research directors, and scholars that influence their research and publication behaviors. These norms affect the willingness to adopt behaviors that might bridge research and practice gaps.

Operative Closure

Based on systems theory (Seidl, 2005), operative closure describes the self-referential functioning of business schools' research systems, where decisions related to knowledge creation and dissemination are internally driven by prior established norms and previous decisions, rather than external managerial or practitioner demands. This structural closure contributes to the persistence of the research-practice gap.

Network Inadequacy

The insufficiency of collaborative networks between business schools and practitioners constrains the exchange and co-creation of research-based knowledge. Limited access to industry resources, partnerships, and relational opportunities hampers effective knowledge sharing (Jolaee et al., 2014; Chedid et al., 2019).

Communication Gaps

Divergent communication styles and language used by academics and practitioners create barriers to the effective transfer and utilization of research knowledge (Bartunek & Rynes, 2014; Negt & Haunschild, 2024).

Research-Practice Gap

Also referred to as the academic-practitioner divide or rigor-relevance gap, this construct represents the observable disconnect between academic research outputs and their practical application in business and management settings. This gap is operationalized through perceptions of Nepalese business educators regarding the relevance of research-based knowledge creation and sharing, as distinguished from the insular, self-referential nature of academic research output (Seidl, 2005; Kieser & Leiner, 2009; Bansal et al., 2012; Negt & Haunschild, 2024).

Methodology

Research Design

Research Orientation and Methodology

This cross-sectional survey study investigates the antecedent factors contributing to the research-practice gap in management education in Nepal. Grounded in a realist ontology, the study assumes that an objective examination of phenomena leads to the construction of valid knowledge (Scott, 2014). Consequently, it emphasizes an objective, contextual analysis of research-based knowledge creation and sharing practices within Nepalese business schools.

A quantitative research design was employed to assess factors influencing the research-practice gap, focusing on the dispositions, perceptions, and viewpoints of business educators involved in research teaching, supervision, and scholarly publication. The cross-sectional approach facilitated efficient data collection within a limited timeframe (Zikmund et al., 2000).

This study adopted a deductive approach, developing a conceptual framework with hypothesized relationships derived from existing theories and prior literature, subsequently tested through correlational analyses. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages) characterized the sample and response distributions, while Pearson correlation was utilized to examine the strength and direction of relationships among key variables. Additionally, respondents rated

antecedents of the research-practice gap using a four-point Likert scale.

All statistical analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 24.0.

Sample, Setting, and Procedures

The study was conducted with business educators from 20 reputable business schools affiliated with Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu University, Purbanchal University, Pokhara University, and Midwestern University, all national universities in Nepal. Inclusion criteria required participants to be actively engaged in research-related teaching, supervision, and publishing activities, with at least one publication in national journals.

Participants comprised program directors, coordinators, full-time and part-time management educators, research supervisors, and research directors in business schools providing undergraduate and postgraduate management education across Kathmandu Valley. A convenience sampling strategy was employed, yielding a sample of 80 business educators ($N = 80$).

Data collection was executed via face-to-face surveys wherein the researcher was physically present to administer the questionnaire and communicate directly with respondents. Participation was voluntary, with confidentiality ensured and informed consent obtained prior to data collection. Surveys were conducted at times mutually agreed upon with participants.

Survey Instruments and Measures

The survey instrument was developed based on an extensive literature review of research-practice gaps in management education (Wilkerson, 1999; Seidl, 2005; Kieser & Leiner, 2009; Jolaee et al., 2014; Bartunek & Rynes, 2014; Negt & Haunschild, 2024). The questionnaire comprised five key sections representing the hypothesized antecedents: self-referential practices, subjective norms, operative closure, communication gaps between academics and practitioners, inadequate corporate networks, and the dependent variable—research-practice gap.

Respondents rated their perceptions on these antecedents using a four-point Likert scale: 1 = Not at all, 2 = Very little, 3 = Somewhat, and 4 = To a great extent. Scores between 1 and 2 were interpreted as ambivalent or inconsistent attitudes regarding factors influencing the research-practice gap.

Additional instrument sections included seven dichotomous (Yes/No, Agree/Disagree) items assessing respondents' positions and behavioral tendencies related to the research-practice gap.

Demographic variables collected encompassed age, educational qualifications, years of academic experience, research domains, total publications, and participation in scholarly activities.

Prior to data collection, the questionnaire underwent reliability and validity testing via SPSS version 21.0. The overall internal consistency was acceptable, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.73 to 0.87 across scale items.

Results and Discussion

This section of study includes demographic profile of research participants their perceptions and preferences, evaluative and tendencies towards the phenomenon of research-practice gaps and also descriptive and inferential data analysis associated with variables. Besides, this section data interpretation of contributing factors and causes of research practice gap in management education in Nepal from the position and perspectives of research respondents.

Demographic Information

Among the $N=80$ research participants in this study, demographic information was collected through a face-to-face survey, as the table below indicates 25% ($n = 20$) are female and $n=60$ (75%) are male. Similarly, 31% ($n = 25$) of them are associated full-time with business schools in different capacities, 44% ($n = 35$) are engaged as part-time faculty, and the remaining 25% ($n = 20$) are engaged in terms of particular associations as they have permanent job postings

in other organizations apart from business schools. Regarding profession associations among participants, business educators with part-time engagement consists of 44% (n=35), whereas 25% (n=20) of them are business professionals/management practitioners with partial association

with business schools, and the rest (31% of them) are full-time faculty members associated with business schools. Interestingly, among faculties, the majority of them (58%, n=46) have MPhils, 10% of faculties have completed Ph.D.s, and the remaining have postgraduate degrees.

Table 1

Demographic Information (Respondents N =80)

Respondents Character	No. of Responses	Percentage (Approximately)
Gender		
Female	20	25%
Male	60	75%
Total	N=80	100%
Area of Teaching Expertise and Specialization		
Marketing Management	15	19%
Banking and Finance	10	13%
Human resource management	5	6%
Accounting	10	12%
Business Research & Statistics	25	31%
Economics and social sciences	10	13%
General Management	5	6%
Total	N=80	100%
Description of Association with Business schools		
Full-time Faculty	25	31 %
Part-time	35	44 %
Partial engagement	20	25 %
Total	N=80	100%
Education Level		
Doctorate (Ph.D.)	8	10%
MPhil	46	58%
Post-graduate studies	26	32%
Total	N=80	100%
Professional Associations		
Full Time Educators	45	56%
Freelancer Business Educators	25	31%
Management Practitioners	10	13%
Total	N=80	100%

Respondents Character	No. of Responses	Percentage (Approximately)
Research Supervisor Roles and Responsibility		
Yes	52	65%
No	28	35%
Total	80	100%
Management Practitioners as Research Supervisor Roles (n=10)		
Yes	2	20%
No	8	80%

Note. From researcher's survey, 2024

Of the total respondents, 31% (n=25) are faculty of business research and statistics, 13% (n=10) are faculty of accounting, and 13% (n=10) are faculty of economics and social sciences. 19% (n=15) of them are faculty of marketing management, human resource faculty members consist of 6% (n=5), and the remaining rest consist of faculties of general management and business and finance. More importantly, approximately 65% (n=52) of faculties in this study have also taken on the role and responsibilities of a research or project supervisor in different phases of their career as management educators. Here it is important to note that only 20% (n=2) of faculties with professional and managerial backgrounds have taken on the roles and responsibilities of research faculties or business educators.

This finding, comparable with [Wilson & Thomas \(2012\)](#), indicates that the voice of practice has remained missing when it comes to creating and sharing research-based knowledge resources by business schools. Besides, business practitioners and managerial professionals are not actively

engaged in research-based knowledge creation and sharing activities of business schools.

Response of Research Participants

Concerning response of respondents in this study, approximately 81% (n=65) of respondents believe that research findings of business schools have been fairly and suitably disseminated with practitioners. Likewise, 75% (n=60) of research participants agree that practitioners would find it challenging to comprehend results of business research conducted in an academic setting due to the rigorous norms, methodological orientations, and complexity of the field. Similarly, 63% (n=50) of them affirm that there are fundamental differences between the viewpoints and perspectives of scholars and practitioners about the production, consumption, and importance of academic business research. For acquiring responses from business educators questions have been assembled and adopted from previous studies conducted in the area of research practice gaps by [Wilkerson \(1999\)](#), [Seidl \(2005\)](#), [Kieser and Leiner \(2009\)](#), [Bartunek and Rynes \(2014\)](#), and [Negt and Haunschild \(2024\)](#).

Table 2

Response on Perspective Questions

SN	Survey Question	Response	No. of Response	Percentage
1	Do you believe that business school's research findings have been fairly and suitably disseminated with practitioners?	Yes	15	19%
		No	65	81%
		Total	N=80	100%

SN	Survey Question	Response	No. of Response	Percentage
2	Do you agree that practitioners find it challenging to comprehend results of business research conducted in an academic setting due to the rigorous norms and methodological complexity?	Agree	60	75%
		Disagree	20	25%
		Total	N=80	100%
3	Do you think there are fundamental differences between the viewpoints and perspectives of scholars and practitioners about the production, consumption, and importance of academic business research?	Yes	50	63%
		No	30	37%
		Total	N=80	100%
4.	Do you also think that the current condition of study on new problems and difficulties in business realities and management practices worries business schools?	Yes	15	19 %
		No	65	81%
		Total	N=80	100%
5.	Do you agree that there is a lack of sufficient collaboration between business scholars and practitioners?	Agree	75	94%
		Disagree	5	6%
		Total	N=80	100%
6.	Do you think collaboration and partnerships between business scholars and practitioners may help close the gap between study and practice?	Yes	70	88%
		No	10	12%
		Total	N=80	100%
7.	Do you perceive a research practice gap in the creation and sharing of research-based knowledge and outcomes in business schools?	Agree	76	95%
		Disagree	4	5%
		Total	N=80	100%
8.	Do you perceive that business schools have inadequate networks for collaboration with financial institutions and the corporate world?	Yes	56	70%
		No	24	30%
		Total	N=80	

Note. From researcher's survey, 2024

Here again, 81% (n=65) of research participants think that business schools are not concerned about the current condition of study on new problems and difficulties in business realities and management practices. Moreover, 94% (n=75) of faculty members agree that there is a lack of sufficient collaboration between business scholars and practitioners. Likewise, 88% of them affirm that collaboration and partnerships between business scholars and practitioners may help close the gap between study and practice. More importantly, 95% (n=76) of business faculty members perceive a research practice gap in the creation and sharing of research-based knowledge and outcomes in business schools. Likewise, 70%

(56) of research participants perceive that business schools have inadequate networks for collaboration with business institutions and the corporate world.

Based on the findings, this research indicates that faculty members agree that business schools are operating as an insular system within their own parameters and comfortable proximities of business research practices without acknowledging external events of emerging management practices and business realities. More importantly, faculty members indeed perceive that research-based activities of business schools are limited to publication, reference to other publications, volume of publication, and journal index rather than providing indications on solving business

problems and practical managerial outcomes (Kieser & Leiner, 2009).

Here is the communication gap because the communication regarding research-based knowledge is not connectable to an external environment that includes practitioners and professionals. (Kieser & Leiner, 2009) More importantly, based on Tucker and Parker (2017), after observing realities of management education in the context of Nepal, this study also questions the thought process behind creating a body of

knowledge in relation to management research and even doubts the utility of an existing body of knowledge in relation to its application. Besides, the knowledge resources of business schools need to become eclectic and vibrant enough to remain useful to practicing managers. Hence, this study argues that for Nepalese business schools to remain relevant and competitive within the changing dynamics of knowledge-based economies in Nepal and competently manage and share their research-based knowledge resources effectively.

Table 3

Ranking of Antecedents

Antecedents	Weighted MEAN(X) Rank	
Self-referential practices	3.78	1
Subjective norms	3.48	2
Communication Gaps	3.18	3
Inadequate Networks	2.96	4
Operational closure	2.54	5

Note. Here, Itemized Scal= a great extent (4), somewhat (3), very little (2) and not at all (1)

The findings of responses indicate the majority of business academics perceive a definite gap between research and practice. Based on the positions, perceptions and response on the ranking scale of of research participants, it can be argued that research-based knowledge resources of business schools are highly self-referential, where every research content only refers in some way or other back to itself without any applicable implications for managerial practice and business outcomes (Vicari, 2013).

However, the limitations of these findings, from a pragmatic perspective, would be as indicated by Vicari (2013), that even when academic researchers are willing or intelligent to realize this problem of research-practice, since academic realities and management practices belong to two distinct social systems, both end up finding each other irrelevant. Hence, in line with Kieser and Leiner (2009), this study also confirms that the current research landscape in business schools in Nepal reflects the research-practice gap regarding

research-based knowledge creation and sharing practices.

Correlation Analysis

Similarly, Pearson Correlation results also indicate that there is a research-practice gap from the perception responses of faculty members. As the table below specify, there is positive relationship between propositions that research practice gap persists in knowledge creation and sharing practices of business schools in Kathmandu Valley and research based knowledge creation practices of business schools as highly self-referential where each and every research endeavors only resembles one another in methodological orientations without applicable dimension for managerial practice and business outcomes. Hence, research participants consider self-referential orientation in research based knowledge creating practices of business schools as limiting factors that only expands the gap between research and practice gaps (Seidl, 2005).

Table 4*Correlation Statistics between Antecedents and Consequences of Research Practice Gaps*

Antecedents		Research-Practice gaps
Self-referential practices	Pearson Correlation	0.87*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.0150
	N	80
Subjective norms	Pearson Correlation	0.82*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.0120
	N	80
Operational closure	Pearson Correlation	0.30
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.0849
	N	80
Communication Gaps	Pearson Correlation	0.78*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.0189
	N	80
Inadequate Networks	Pearson Correlation	0.64*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.0235
	N	80

Note. *Correlation is significant at the .05 level

As indicated in the table above all the antecedents of research-practice gap operationalized in this study have a positive association with the occurrence of gap between research based knowledge and practices. Here apart from operational closure, all other factors self-referential practices, subjective norms, operational closure, inadequate networks and communication gaps have significant relationship with research practice gaps. Accordingly, for operational closure higher p-value less than 0.05. coefficient is also less than 0.3 which indicates very little, if any, linear correlation. For remaining variables correlation values are 0.8-0.6 which is deemed as strong positive linear relationship between the variables. Based on the above data, the Pearson correlation between self-referential practices and research practice gaps is 0.87, indicating a strong correlation between these variables. Next, the Pearson correlation between

subject norm ($r = 0.82$) and communication barrier is 0.78 suggesting a high correlation between these variables.

Here the finding of correlation analysis confirms with the study by [Negt & Haunschild \(2024\)](#) that communication gaps between management scholars and practitioners result in lack of research-practice interface. Likewise, subject norms, which refer specifically to how others whom we care about would feel about us engaging in a particular behavior ([Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975](#)) has resulted in research practice gaps because business scholars based on established academic protocols produce research that does not reflect and match up the things managers do, read, and more importantly, writing format of academic publication is rather foreign to many practitioners more accustomed to reading popular business press books and magazines ([Wilkerson, 1999](#)).

By limiting subjective norm for publishing research within the reference of academic orientations, as [Wilson and Thomas \(2012\)](#) points out, research outcomes and its impacts in academic setting evaluated only in terms of theoretical development without any reference to managerial impact or specific focus practical dimensions of knowledge. Besides, acknowledgement of self-referential practices indicates linear model of knowledge production and dissemination, which in the most references are analytically sophisticated and statistically complex without being practically useful ([Reed, 2009](#)). Besides,, as indicated by inadequate networks for collaboration between business scholar and professionals, a project-related collaboration between universities, business schools, corporates, enterprises and companies can be initiated anyway there is an urgent need to expand these networks ([Cohen et al., 2002](#)).

Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the antecedent factors contributing to the persistence of research-practice gaps in undergraduate and postgraduate management education, with specific reference to the knowledge creation and sharing protocols of business schools in Kathmandu Valley. The study reveals that antecedents such as self-referential practices, subjective norms, inadequate corporate networks, and communication gaps are positively and significantly associated with the prevalence of these gaps in research-based knowledge activities.

Consistent with [Seidl \(2005\)](#), the findings highlight that knowledge creation and dissemination within Kathmandu Valley's business schools are predominantly self-referential. Scholars and educators primarily engage in research practices constrained by internal academic conventions—such as citation patterns, preferential publication in high-impact journals, and favored theoretical frameworks—without sufficient consideration of managerial relevance or practical business applications. This aligns with observations by [Annansingh et al. \(2018\)](#), who identify self-referential practices and subjective norms as

critical contributors to the research-practice gap within Nepalese management education.

The predominance of self-referential practices indicates a systemic preference for internal standards and metrics over engagement with external stakeholder needs. Nepalese business schools increasingly emphasize faculty publications in journals as key performance indicators, inadvertently encouraging research topics oriented towards academic rather than practitioner interests. Such publication pressures lead to work that often lacks practical applicability, contributing further to research insularity and reduced resonance with the real-world concerns of managers and entrepreneurs.

Inadequate networks between academe and industry exacerbate these gaps. Echoing [Vicari \(2013\)](#), this study suggests that addressing the research-practice divide requires cultivating a collaborative ecosystem fostering mutually beneficial exchanges between academics and business practitioners. The scarcity of robust corporate partnerships limits opportunities for co-creation of relevant research and hampers effective knowledge transfer ([Jolaee et al., 2014](#)).

This disconnect is compounded by communication gaps characterized by divergent languages, terminologies, and dissemination channels used by academics versus practitioners, as identified by [Bartunek and Rynes \(2014\)](#) and [Negt and Haunschild \(2024\)](#). Limited interaction reduces practitioner awareness of academic insights potentially valuable for evidence-based decision-making, further entrenching the divide. Consistent with [Perea and Brady \(2017\)](#), this research underscores the need for collaborative platforms and networks to bridge these communities effectively.

Subjective norms also exert a significant influence on the research-practice gap. Management scholars' research agendas are seldom informed by practitioner insights, resulting in a misalignment between academic inquiry and practical business challenges ([Negt & Haunschild,](#)

2024). Moreover, such norms contribute to practitioners' limited engagement with academic research, with [Bartunek and Rynes \(2014\)](#) noting that professionals are often unaware of—or indifferent to—relevant scholarly findings. This is intensified by the increasing complexity and technical nature of contemporary management research, which diminishes accessibility for non-academic audiences ([Negt & Haunschild, 2024](#)).

The findings corroborate [Lawler's III \(2007\)](#) observations that institutionalized research programs in Kathmandu's business schools frequently fail to address issues of immediate practical relevance. They further align with [Vosburgh's \(2022\)](#) assertion that exchanges between academic research and practice require enhancement in the Nepalese context.

[Mishra and Nepal \(2022\)](#) advocate for sustainable, forward-looking academic operations emphasizing pragmatic, relevant research directed at evolving managerial challenges. Similarly, quality assurance mechanisms aim to raise research standards, but bridging the gap demands more targeted engagement with local business realities ([Mishra & Jha, 2023](#)).

Broader scholarship reinforces concerns of a persistent disconnect between Nepal's academic institutions and the business sector. Research and curricula frequently replicate global models without sufficient adaptation to local socio-economic contexts, reducing their applicability for Nepali managers and entrepreneurs. Such insularity, coupled with underdeveloped industrial networks and limited resources, aggravates the research-practice gap, mirroring global trends but intensified by Nepal's contextual factors.

Conclusion

The findings of this study clearly demonstrate that self-referential practices, subjective norms, operative closure, inadequate corporate networks, and communication gaps between academics and practitioners significantly contribute to the persistence of research-practice gaps in Nepalese

business schools. The insufficient connectivity between management scholars and business practitioners hinders the practical relevance and applicability of research-based knowledge generated within these institutions. Consequently, the current research landscape reflects a pronounced divide wherein academic outputs often fail to address pressing managerial challenges and contextual realities faced by Nepalese businesses.

This study highlights that business educators recognize the limitations imposed by self-referential practices and prevailing subjective norms, which prioritize internal academic metrics over external relevance. Such a focus leads to research agendas centered on academic publication criteria rather than practical problem-solving, resulting in knowledge that lacks actionable insights for practitioners and entrepreneurs. The overemphasis on publication volume and theoretical contributions consequently limits the practical utility of research outputs.

Furthermore, inadequate networks and communication barriers between academia and the business community exacerbate this divide. Echoing prior studies, the findings affirm that mutually reinforcing collaborative ecosystems and enriched communication channels are essential to bridge this gap. Without effective networks that facilitate dialogue and joint knowledge creation, academic research risks becoming "knowledge lost before translation," failing to inform or influence business practice meaningfully ([Podgorodnichenko et al., 2022](#)).

Aligned with these observations, this study endorses the imperative for business schools to actively explore diverse, pragmatic, and contextually grounded approaches to research-based knowledge creation and dissemination rather than passively conforming to traditional academic norms. As primary sources of management education, business schools hold the potential to serve as vital conduits linking rigorous knowledge generation with transformative impacts on business and society ([Kolb et al., 2017](#)). To fulfill this role, they must innovate modalities of collaboration,

engage practitioners more deeply, and prioritize research agendas that directly address Nepal's unique business environment and challenges.

Moreover, this study points to the importance of developing inclusive networks, as knowledge-sharing intentions strongly correlate with collaborative behavior (Chedid et al., 2019). Enhancing these collaborative platforms will support closing the research-practice gap and advance responsible management education in Nepal. This is critical because persistent disconnects between research and practice can impair the capacity of graduates to apply theoretical knowledge effectively in real-world contexts, hampering their readiness to tackle emerging market challenges (Makin, 2021).

The study recognizes certain limitations, including its focus on select antecedents without addressing broader factors such as research literacy, knowledge translation mechanisms, and research culture. Future research should integrate qualitative approaches to capture subjective experiences and deeper insights into the dynamics of this gap. Expanding the sample to include business practitioners alongside academics would also enrich understandings of collaborative challenges and opportunities.

Importantly, this research establishes an agenda for future inquiry that investigates institutional protocols, policy environments, and contextual variables influencing the research-practice divide in Nepalese management education. Additionally, it aligns such scholarly efforts with the broader Sustainable Development Goal 4, emphasizing inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities.

In brief, addressing the research-practice gap requires systemic reforms at institutional and policy levels to foster interactive academic-industry partnerships, promote contextually relevant research, and develop sustainable, digitally enabled knowledge-sharing models. Through such integrated efforts, Nepalese business schools can enhance both the rigor and relevance of their

research, ensuring meaningful contributions to managerial practice and national development.

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