

PROMOTION OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH



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Get Started



Hello From the other side



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Multidisciplinary Vs Interdisciplinary Research



- Both are collaborative approaches
- Involve multiple disciplines
- Difference is in how the disciplines interact and integrate their knowledge and methods



- Multidisciplinary research involves researchers from different disciplines working on a common problem, but each from their own disciplinary perspective.
- The disciplines operate in parallel or sequentially, without necessarily integrating their approaches or methodologies.

- Interdisciplinary research involves the integration of knowledge, methodologies, and perspectives from different disciplines to create a unified approach to a problem.
- The goal is to synthesize and transcend traditional disciplinary boundaries to generate new insights and innovations.

Multidisciplinary Vs Interdisciplinary Research: Characteristics



- **Parallel Contributions:** Each discipline contributes its own expertise and findings, but the integration of these findings is minimal.
- **Disciplinary Boundaries Maintained:** Researchers maintain their disciplinary boundaries, methods, and perspectives.
- **Goal:** To address a common problem by compiling insights from multiple fields, often resulting in a more comprehensive understanding.
- **Example:** In a multidisciplinary study on climate change, economists might study the economic impacts, while environmental scientists focus on ecological effects, and sociologists examine social behaviors independently.

- **Integrated Contributions:** Disciplines interact and integrate their methods, concepts, and theories to create a cohesive approach.
- **Blurring of Boundaries:** Researchers work beyond their disciplinary boundaries, combining methods and perspectives to develop new frameworks and solutions.
- **Goal:** To achieve a holistic understanding and innovative solutions by merging disciplinary insights.
- **Example:** In an interdisciplinary study on climate change, economists, environmental scientists, and sociologists collaboratively develop models that incorporate economic, ecological, and social factors to propose comprehensive mitigation strategies.

KEY DIFFERENCES



INTEGRATION

- **Level of Integration:** Multidisciplinary research involves low integration, with disciplines working side-by-side, while interdisciplinary research involves high integration, with disciplines blending their methods and theories.



DEPTH

- **Collaboration Depth:** In multidisciplinary research, collaboration is typically about compiling separate insights. In interdisciplinary research, collaboration is about creating a unified approach.



OUTCOME

- **Outcome:** Multidisciplinary research may produce a set of independent findings from various disciplines, whereas interdisciplinary research aims to produce a synthesized and cohesive understanding or solution.



APPROACH

- **Approach:** Multidisciplinary research respects and maintains disciplinary boundaries, while interdisciplinary research seeks to transcend and blur these boundaries to innovate and solve complex problems.

Scenario: Addressing Cybercrime

Cybercrime is a complex issue that involves various dimensions such as legal regulations, technological infrastructure, economic impact, and social behavior. In a multidisciplinary approach:

Lawyers: Analyze existing cybercrime laws and suggest legal reforms.

Computer Scientists: Study the technical aspects of cybercrime, such as hacking techniques and cybersecurity measures.

Economists: Assess the economic impact of cybercrime on businesses and individuals.

Sociologists: Examine the social factors that contribute to cybercriminal behavior and the societal impact of cybercrime.

Each discipline works independently, contributing its own insights. The findings are compiled to provide a comprehensive understanding of cybercrime from multiple perspectives but without integrating these perspectives into a unified approach.



Scenario: Reforming Criminal Justice System

Reforming the criminal justice system to reduce recidivism rates requires a holistic approach that combines legal, social, psychological, and economic perspectives. In an interdisciplinary approach

Lawyers and Legal Scholars: Collaborate with sociologists, psychologists, and economists to develop new legal frameworks and policies.

Sociologists: Work with legal scholars to integrate social theories about crime and rehabilitation into new policies.

Psychologists: Collaborate with lawyers to incorporate psychological insights about behavior change and rehabilitation into legal reforms.

Economists: Partner with legal and social scientists to analyze the cost-effectiveness of various criminal justice reforms and propose economically sustainable solutions.

Scenario: Addressing Cybercrime

Each discipline works independently, contributing its own insights. The findings are compiled to provide a comprehensive understanding of cybercrime from multiple perspectives but without integrating these perspectives into a unified approach.

Scenario: Reforming Criminal Justice System

The disciplines work together, integrating their methods and perspectives to create a cohesive and innovative approach to criminal justice reform. For example, they might develop a new rehabilitation program that combines legal changes, psychological support, and economic incentives, creating a unified strategy to reduce recidivism.

KEY DIFFERENCES



INTEGRATION

- **Level of Integration:** In the cybercrime example, each discipline works independently and then shares its findings. In the criminal justice reform example, disciplines collaborate closely, integrating their methods and insights to create a unified approach.



DEPTH

- **Collaboration Depth:** The cybercrime approach involves parallel contributions with minimal interaction. The criminal justice reform approach involves deep collaboration, with disciplines blending their knowledge to innovate and solve the problem comprehensively.



OUTCOME

- **Outcome:** The outcome of the cybercrime study is a collection of independent reports from each discipline. The outcome of the criminal justice reform study is a cohesive, interdisciplinary policy recommendation that synthesizes insights from all involved fields.



APPROACH

- **Approach:** The multidisciplinary cybercrime study respects disciplinary boundaries, while the interdisciplinary criminal justice reform study seeks to transcend these boundaries, creating new frameworks and solutions.

Law Research and Society: inseparable entities

Law and Society

Law and Research

Research and Society



Law and Society

Law and society are inseparable: they both influence and shape each other

- The dynamic interaction between the duo ensures that laws remain relevant and effective, addressing the complex and ever-changing needs of the community.
- The law provides the structural framework that guides societal behavior, resolves conflicts, and upholds justice and order.
- Law reflects the collective values, norms, and aspirations of a society, evolving in response to cultural, economic, and political changes.
- Society plays a crucial role in the development and interpretation of legal norms, with social movements, public opinion, and cultural shifts driving legal reform and innovation.



Law and Research

Law and research are inseparable

- Legal practice is enriched and enhanced by research
- The legal field thrives on the rigorous analysis and interpretation of statutes, regulations, and case law, requiring a robust foundation of scholarly research to inform and guide practice.
- Research in law involves not only the study of legal texts and precedents but also the exploration of broader socio-economic and political contexts that shape legal systems.
- Legal Research drives innovation in legal theory, informs policy-making, and addresses emerging challenges in society.
- By integrating empirical data, interdisciplinary perspectives, and critical analysis, legal research fosters a deeper understanding of the law's impact and its potential for reform, ensuring that the legal profession remains responsive to the evolving needs of society.



Research and Society

Research has a profound impact on the society: plays a pivotal role in improving the quality of life and fostering sustainable development.

- the continuous dialogue between research and society ensures that scientific endeavors remain relevant, ethical, and responsive to the evolving demands of the global community.
- drives societal progress by generating new knowledge, uncovering truths, and providing evidence-based solutions to complex problems.
- informs public policy, shapes educational curricula, advances technological innovation, and improves health outcomes.
- direction and priorities of research are driven by societal needs, challenges, and values.



— Legal Research and Society

- No better researchers than legal practitioners -factual research
 - Most legal matters are decided based on precedents ... in matter of Adeniyi vs Okechukwu [1954]...
- Legal research is the the systematic investigation and analysis of laws, legal principles, and judicial decisions.
 - Plays a pivotal role in promoting justice, safeguarding rights, and advancing societal progress
 - Bridges the gap between abstract legal theories and real-world applications.
 - Provides a critical foundation for the development, interpretation, and application of the law.
 - Essential for ensuring that legal systems remain fair, just, and effective in addressing societal needs.
- The society influences legal research by presenting new challenges and complexities that require innovative legal solutions.
 - demands rigorous legal scholarship to craft responsive and equitable legal frameworks.



Law, Multidisciplinary Research and Society

As academic lawyers at various stages of your careers—whether you are early or mid-career, are well-established, or hold senior positions—you play a pivotal role in shaping the future of legal scholarship.



Law, Society and Crossdisciplinary Research

- The society is becoming increasingly complex and interconnected
 - Matters that require legal interventions are rarely confined to a single field of study.
 - Legal practitioners no longer have to deal with traditional matters (land, marriage, labour, electoral disputes, human rights, etc) but with issues such as climate change, cybersecurity, public health, cybersecurity, privacy and data protection, (some have no clear cut (or have ambiguous) legal footing
 - The issues also intersect with various disciplines

They demand a holistic approach to problem-solving:
Interdisciplinary research.



Law, Society and Collaborative Research

- Holistic approach to problem-solving: *Interdisciplinary research*.
 - Integrates knowledge and methods from different disciplines
 - Offers a comprehensive framework for addressing the multifaceted issues.
- For legal practitioners in the academia -dual roles
 - Practice and train future legal practitioners
- It is both beneficial and imperative to embrace multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research.
 - Law interacts with (nearly) every aspect of society.
 - Collaborating with experts in other fields ensures the development of robust, cross-cutting legal theories, policies, and practices that reflect the complexity of the real world.
- You can train others to do same



CHALLENGES OF PROMOTING MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

1

INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS

Traditional academic structures often prioritize discipline-specific research, creating silos that hinder collaboration. To promote multidisciplinary research, institutions must foster a culture of collaboration by encouraging joint research projects, creating multidisciplinary research centers, and providing funding for interdisciplinary initiatives

2

COMMUNICATION GAPS

Researchers from different disciplines may use distinct terminologies and methodologies, which can lead to communication barriers. Developing a common language and framework for collaboration is essential. This can be achieved through workshops, seminars, and joint training programs that bring together researchers from various fields to share knowledge and build mutual understanding

3

RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Multidisciplinary research often requires significant resources, including funding, time, and infrastructure. Institutions should prioritize resource allocation for multidisciplinary projects and seek external funding from organizations that support interdisciplinary research

4

RECOGNITION AND INCENTIVES

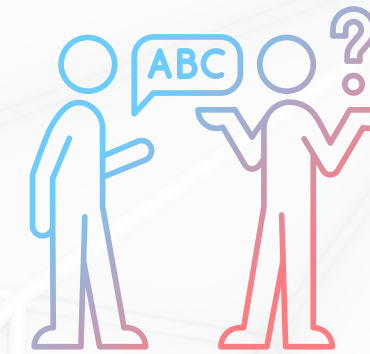
Academic reward systems typically favor discipline-specific achievements, which can discourage researchers from pursuing multidisciplinary work. To change this, institutions should recognize and reward multidisciplinary research through promotion criteria, awards, and publication opportunities in interdisciplinary journals

ADDITIONAL CHALLENGES



METHODOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

- Reconciling qualitative legal analysis with quantitative methods from other disciplines
- Challenges in integrating diverse research paradigms



COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

- Overcoming discipline-specific jargon and conceptual frameworks
- Strategies for effective communication in multidisciplinary teams



PUBLISHING CHALLENGES

- Limited venues for multidisciplinary legal research
- Peer review complexities in multidisciplinary work

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACADEMIC LAWYERS

1

BUILD NETWORKS

Establish connections with researchers from other disciplines. Attend interdisciplinary conferences, join research networks, and seek opportunities for collaboration on research projects.

2

PURSUE JOINT DEGREES AND TRAINING (MICROCREDENTIALS)

Consider pursuing joint degrees or additional training in complementary fields. This will equip you with the knowledge and skills to engage in multidisciplinary research effectively.

3

COLLABORATE ON RESEARCH PROJECTS

Actively seek out and participate in multidisciplinary research projects. Collaborate with colleagues from other disciplines to develop proposals, conduct research, and publish findings.

4

MENTORSHIP AND TEACHING

Mentor students and early-career colleagues in the value and practice of multidisciplinary research. Incorporate interdisciplinary perspectives into your teaching to inspire the next generation of legal scholars to embrace this approach

SUGGESTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATORS

1

INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

Fostering a culture of collaboration within the faculty

Encouraging cross-departmental dialogue and joint research projects

Organizing multidisciplinary reading groups or seminars

2

INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE

Developing & supporting interdisciplinary research centers or institutes

Examples of successful law school research centers with multidisciplinary focus

3

INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE

Encouraging joint appointments and cross-disciplinary supervision

Enhanced Benefits for faculty members with dual appointments

Promoting cross-disciplinary supervision for graduate students

4

ACADEMIC STRUCTURE

Organizing multidisciplinary conferences and workshops

Promoting multidisciplinary publications and journals

Supporting the creation of new multidisciplinary legal publications

CONCLUSION

- Law and society are inseparably linked
- The promotion of multidisciplinary research is not just an academic exercise; it is a necessity for addressing the complex challenges of our time.
- The Legal Practitioners in the academia, have a unique opportunity to lead the way in this transformative approach to research.
 - By embracing collaboration, breaking down silos, and integrating diverse perspectives, they can enhance the understanding of legal issues, develop innovative solutions, and contribute to the creation of a more just and equitable society.



THANK YOU

