

AN EXAMINATION OF THE CHALLENGES IN BALANCING ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES, TEACHING LOADS, AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT THROUGH PUBLICATIONS IN UGANDAN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

Balancing administrative responsibilities, teaching loads, and career advancement through publications is a key requirement for academic staff in private universities in Uganda. This study aimed to investigate the challenges faced in balancing these aspects in Ugandan private universities. Three specific objectives guided the study: exploring the impacts of administrative duties on faculty members; understanding how heavy teaching loads affect research productivity and career progression; and examining how publication demands influence faculty members' career development prospects. The study used a qualitative research design, employing a desk review methodology that involved analysing existing secondary data and information from various sources, including reports, databases, publications, and online resources, to highlight underlying issues related to the research problem. The findings indicated that faculty members face work-life balance and well-being issues that impact publication output. It was also established that heavy teaching loads hinder research productivity and career advancement. The study recommends that publications in Ugandan private universities should be achieved by the teaching staff, and emphasizes the need to balance administrative responsibilities and teaching loads to support career development.

Keywords: Administrative work, Teaching load, Career growth, Academic publications, Private universities

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Educators often face challenges in managing administrative tasks, teaching responsibilities, and pursuing professional development through publications. A heavy teaching load combined with excessive administrative duties can lead to burnout and decreased job satisfaction (Qin et al,2022 & Owens,2023). Additionally, it may be difficult to allocate time for research and publishing, which are often essential for career advancement, due to time constraints and conflicting goals. A study by Barifaijo et al (2015) on workload policy and its complexities in academia provided interesting insights into the challenges of balancing administrative work, teaching load, and the dilemma of career growth through publications. The study found that workload policies negatively affect academic staff motivation, research output, productivity, delivery quality, and knowledge sharing. According to the findings, workload policies should be enforced through results-oriented performance management to ensure sustainability and

competitiveness amid new trends, increased competition, responsibilities, and stakeholder demands for value for money in institutions. This demonstrates that unregulated workloads for academic staff directly impact research output, which is vital for publications. Most workers, especially faculty members, aim for career advancement to achieve job satisfaction and move closer to self-actualization (Tumusime,2021). However, how the workload assigned to them influences publication output has not yet been examined.

Current studies in Uganda suggest that faculty workload is typically measured by the time allocated to lecturers for teaching, research supervision, administrative tasks, and community outreach (Bacwayo et al,2017; Vardi,2009; Garner,2018; Evans,2020). Faculty members in universities are often overburdened with teaching-related responsibilities due to an over-reliance on a few teaching staff members and due to limited financial resources. This takes up a significant portion of their time, which could have been used for research and publication outputs. Interestingly, publication output is a basic factor for academic promotions (Schimanski et al,2018). Ultimately, academic promotions encourage career advancement and improve the institution's reputation by recognising and rewarding lecturers for their leadership, research, teaching, and service efforts. Additionally, they are an essential tool for building a vibrant academic community and enticing future talent (Hezel et al,2025& Palav,2024). Against this context, this study sought to analyse the challenges of balancing administrative work, teaching load and the dilemma of career growth in publications in Ugandan private universities. It is from this background that the study sought to examine the challenges in balancing administrative responsibilities, teaching loads, and career advancement through publications in Ugandan Private Universities.

2.0 THEORETICAL REVIEW AND LITERATURE

Several theoretical frameworks aim to explain research productivity, often highlighting the role of leadership, institutional, and individual traits. This study was guided by research productivity theory, which examines the factors influencing the quantity and quality of publications produced by individuals or organizations (Wahid, 2022). The theory considers how research output is affected by institutional aspects like funding and support, as well as human traits such as competence and experience. It concludes that institutions and researchers can create more encouraging and productive research environments by better understanding the elements that influence research output (Masinde, M., & Coetzee, J., 2023). Universities can enhance faculty research productivity and overall research output by addressing issues such as funding, resources, and institutional support. The hypothesis also suggests that mentorship and collaboration can lead to increased research output when institutions foster a culture of research excellence.

Faculty members in education institutions face a significant challenge in balancing research and teaching (Shita, A., & Alaswed, R.,2024). Scholars aim to perform exceptionally well in both areas without sacrificing their equilibrium, which is often difficult to sustain. Finding the balance between the roles of research and instruction would raise educational standards. Several university institutions have been shifting from being teaching universities to implementing stricter criteria for professors to perform funded research over the past years. While professors at major research institutions are expected to teach two courses or fewer per semester, many of these universities have not significantly lowered their teaching loads, and

professors may still be forced to teach three or four courses per semester (Yates,2012). To lessen the strain of grading a large number of assignments and tests each semester, professors may be given classes of 50–100 students without designated teaching assistants, even within these limitations (Yates,2012).

A high level of self-driven autonomy is necessary for lecturers to generate high-quality work at work. The degree to which a particular work may provide an individual with a large level of flexibility, independence, and choice in organising their responsibilities and selecting the techniques to be used in carrying them out would be considered autonomy in this case (Roussillon, C. & Fall, A.,2022). Documented literature by Gronau (2020), Zhang, X. & Saab, N. (2022), Hein, V., & Urban, K. (2025), and Kwok (2020) regularly shows how employee autonomy affects a variety of outcomes. This implies that the ideal workload assigned to lecturers should be considered in any university workspace. Autonomy, too, has a favourable and significant impact on job performance. In this context, "workload" refers to any activities that include employees' time spent fulfilling their professional duties, responsibilities, and interests at work, whether directly or indirectly (Nuamah, J, & Mehta, R., 2020). It could also refer to the responsibilities that teachers have both within and outside of the classroom. Kim et. Al (2019) defined workload as the amount of time teachers spend on various activities during or after school hours, including meetings related to their official teaching obligations, extracurricular activities, and teaching and learning. Therefore, lecturers' organisational commitment and job satisfaction are negatively impacted by ineffective workload management, which consequently reduces the quality of their work production. This approach is supported by the empirical findings of a study by Giotopoulos et al. (2024), which found that longer workdays caused by an increased workload may hurt job satisfaction since they interfere with one's well-being at home and work.

Several studies have been made examining Challenges in balancing administrative responsibilities, teaching loads, and career advancement through publications in Ugandan private universities. A study done by Kaguhangire-Barifaijo, M. (2022) discussed academic challenges in two higher education institutions, highlighting the impact of a minimum workload policy on career growth, publication efforts, burnout, and contract renewals. The research found that the policy on minimum workload was posing a threat to academic career growth. A related study by Nabawanuka, P. (2023) provided insights into the experiences of female academics at Kyambogo University in comparison to private chartered universities by looking at support strategies for the career growth of female lecturers. The study focused on the experiences of female lecturers about academic career development. The study did not, however, particularly address the difficulties in juggling teaching loads, administrative duties, and career progression through publications in private, chartered universities in Uganda. The study by Liani, M. et.al (2021) on Sub-Saharan African universities correlates with the above studies, though it did not particularly address the difficulties in striking a balance between teaching loads, administrative duties, and career development through publications in Ugandan Private Universities. The study concentrated on the unequal advancement of women in scientific careers in sub-Saharan Africa. A related study by Shange (2022) looked at academics' psychological health and work-life balance. It found that a lack of work-life balance has a detrimental impact on turnover intentions and productivity. Although the work is related to the topic's focus, it does not address the difficulties in juggling teaching loads, administrative duties, and career progression through publications in private Universities in Uganda. It instead

focused on the psychological health and work-life balance of university students in South Africa during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the study involved a desk review approach, analysing secondary data from diverse sources such as reports, publications, databases, and online resources (Topolewski, 2023). This method aimed to offer a comprehensive understanding of the research field and highlight any gaps in existing knowledge. The review considered private chartered universities as of 2025, chosen purposefully for their presumed quality assurance services comparable to public universities, distinguishing them from private licensed universities.

4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Concerning objective one on exploring the impacts of administrative duties on faculty members in private Universities in Uganda, the study revealed that balancing administrative duties, teaching loads, and career advancement through publications poses significant challenges for faculty members in Ugandan private universities. Time spent on administrative tasks frequently takes away from research and teaching, yet the two activities are essential for professional advancement. The strict workload standards that put teaching first and leave little time for research and community service—both of which are critical for academic advancement and institutional visibility—exacerbate this predicament. These administrative responsibilities have a complex effect on faculty members, influencing their well-being, productivity, and prospects for career progression. According to a study of the literature, administrative duties cause faculty members at private institutions in Uganda to produce less research and teach less effectively. This is in line with results from other settings, including Israel, where administrative positions have been demonstrated to have a detrimental effect on the results of research and instruction (Davidovitch & Cohen, 2024). Workload regulations that prioritise teaching loads over research make it even more difficult for academics to do significant research, which is essential for both career advancement and the prestige of the institution (Kaguhangire-Barifaijo, 2022). The study notes that it is challenging for faculty members to balance teaching and research since they have trouble managing their time. The study discovered that academic obligations have a detrimental effect on faculty members' research production. It has been demonstrated that most institutions place less emphasis on the quantity of research publications produced than on teaching proficiency, which further strains academics.

Another finding was that Faculty teaching staff members face Work-Life Balance and Well-being issues that affect publication outputs. Faculty productivity and health were found to be negatively impacted by the poor work-life balance caused by the combined demands of personal and professional obligations. Both the individual and the organisation could suffer from increased absenteeism and occupational stress as a result of this imbalance (Punam, 2021). Faculty members' ability to function well in their teaching and research positions is further hampered by burnout, which is exacerbated by administrative obligations that prevent them from taking time for leisure and recovery (Punam, 2021). In a larger institution, administrative constraints affect not just individual faculty members but also the organisation as a whole. By cutting down on the time and resources available for teaching and research, they may have an indirect impact on universities' basic operations (Woelert, 2023; Lee, 2023). To better accommodate the variety of responsibilities faculty members play, such as program

development, student supervision, and professional representation, institutions may need to reevaluate their workload rules (Kaguhangire-Barifaijo, 2022). Administrative tasks are essential to the operation of academic institutions, even though they present many difficulties. Faculty satisfaction and organisational effectiveness can both be improved by handling these duties well. However, the detrimental effects on teaching and research are likely to continue without the proper assistance and changes to legislation, impeding both individual and institutional advancement.

Regarding the objective of understanding the effects of heavy teaching loads on research productivity and career progression, an examination of heavy teaching loads in Ugandan private universities revealed significant challenges impacting research productivity and career progression. It was recognised that the teaching obligations frequently overburden faculty members, which hinders their capacity to do research that is crucial for professional growth. Institutional strategies that put teaching above research worsen this predicament, leading to exhaustion and lower academic production. It has been shown that lecturers' research output and career advancement are impacted by their excessive teaching loads. Faculty members' ability to carry out research efficiently is often limited by the size of their classes, which frequently surpass 100 pupils (Namutebi, 2024). Academics experience severe stress and burnout as a result of the strain to balance teaching, research, and community involvement (Kaguhangire-Barifaijo, 2022). Heavy teaching responsibilities impede their ability to publish research, which is essential for contract renewals and career promotion (Kaguhangire-Barifaijo, 2022). The requirement for a balanced strategy that incorporates research and service contributions is overlooked by current workload policies, which primarily concentrate on teaching loads (Kaguhangire-Barifaijo, 2022). According to the study, external constraints frequently erode institutional autonomy, making it difficult to prioritise research alongside instruction (Etomaru et al., 2016). Some contend that teaching itself can increase research output by promoting a deeper comprehension of the subject matter, despite the obvious difficulties associated with excessive teaching loads. According to this viewpoint, creative research ideas and collaborations may result from a well-organised learning environment.

The study's objective in investigating how publication demands in academia affect faculty members' career development prospects found that there exists a complicated interaction between administrative duties, teaching loads, and the necessity of publication for career progress, as revealed by the analysis of the difficulties faced by teachers in private universities in Uganda. The demand on faculty members to publish is growing, which has a big impact on their chances of developing professionally and frequently results in burnout and lower teaching quality. According to Lucas and Murray et al. (2011), publication records are increasingly a determining factor in career advancement, with faculty members required to publish research to obtain promotions and contract renewals. High stakes are created by the "publish or perish" mentality, especially for untenured faculty members who run the risk of losing their jobs if they don't publish enough (Muramalla, 2019). The quality of education may suffer as a result of the frequent preference for research output above effective instruction (Kaguhangire-Barifaijo, 2022). Teaching frequently takes a backseat to publication demands, and faculty members struggle to combine their obligations to research, teaching, and service (Kaguhangire-Barifaijo, 2022). Ugandan institutions' workload regulations tend to prioritise teaching, which can prevent professors from conducting research that is essential for career progression (Kaguhangire-Barifaijo, 2022). Faculty burnout is exacerbated by classroom loads that provide

little time for preparation and research (Kaguhangire-Barifaijo, 2022). By establishing encouraging settings that value a range of contributions outside of publications, like community service and mentoring, private colleges can improve faculty growth (Eke, 2023). To better support research activities and promote a more balanced approach to faculty responsibilities, institutions are urged to reassess their workload regulations (Kaguhangire-Barifaijo, 2022). On the other hand, some contend that the focus on publication can result in creative teaching methods since researchers may provide new viewpoints to the classroom. However, the difficulties and stress of juggling these conflicting demands frequently outweigh this potential advantage.

5.0 CONCLUSION

In Ugandan Private Universities, balancing administrative responsibilities, teaching commitments, and career advancement through publications is a complex and multifaceted process. To tackle this issue effectively, universities are advised to implement strategies that support academic staff growth to address these problems. These strategies include creating opportunities for research and publishing, providing mentorship and coaching programs, and providing training and development opportunities. Universities also need to reevaluate their workload policies to take into account the various roles and responsibilities of academics, which include teaching, research, and administrative tasks. Universities can help academics achieve a more equitable balance between their professional and personal responsibilities by addressing these issues, which will improve career advancement and overall well-being.

6.0 FUNDING

There was no outside funding for this research.

6.1 Conflict of interest/competing interests

There were no financial and non-financial competing interests for the analysed data.

6.2 Availability of data and material for data transparency

The Google Scholar repository, [<https://scholar.google.com/>], contains the datasets created and/or analysed during the current study. This published article [and its additional information files] contain all data produced or analysed during this investigation.

Declaration

I certify that the data in this paper has not been offered for publication anywhere.

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