

Academics' Enthusiasm for Scholarly Research Engagement: Perspectives on Selected Universities in Uganda

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Abstract

The paper focused on both the positive as well as negative factors that influenced academics' enthusiasm to engage in research and scholarly endeavors. A qualitative strategy was chosen, and review summaries were used to support it in three higher education institutions (HEIs). In-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis were done. Factors responsible for academics' research enthusiasm, included; international, national, institutional and personal factors. Majorly, national and institutional factors such as; distorted benchmarking, the "triad and multi-faceted" academics roles and workload rationalization. Personal factors that negatively influenced academic enthusiasm included; procrastination, perfectionism and self-pity, while, positive influencers included; intellectual curiosity, drive for career growth, inquiry acumen and self-fulfillment, which inevitably attracts a dual reward arrangement, leading to two sides of the coin. While those who had published were recognized and/or promoted, the ones who had not go demoralized, a feeling of humiliation, emotional resignation, and sometimes, complete refusal to even try, as they considered themselves losers. Hence, aside from the institutional factors that affected every academic, self-determination and intellectual curiosity were majorly responsible for academics' research enthusiasm. Therefore, in order to enhance every academic' research enthusiasm, institutions should establish mentorship programs in research and scholarly writing, set up rotational leadership rules in research clusters to give each member a chance to be the "first author," and launch more series of journals as viable avenues for academics to publish.

Keywords

Academics' Enthusiasm, Academic Publishing, Attribution, Scholarly Research Engagement, Higher Education Institutions

1. Introduction

Globally, academicians face an array of challenges, in teaching, research, graduate supervision, leadership and service (Civera, Lehmann, Paleari, & Stockinger, 2020). While these tasks can be measured, academics also engage in multiple academic intricacies, including; students' counseling and guidance, continuous assessment, internship and job referrals (Barifaijo, Bigabwenkya, Namara, Andama, & Bongomin, 2016). Yet, whereas the former roles may be structured and well-aligned to the academics' formal functions according to their job descriptions, the latter is more ambiguous, arbitrary and anarchic, making it difficult for these academics to fully exploit their research horizons, and yet, research is a precursor for major personnel decisions and academics' growth. Research encompasses many pursuits that broaden and expand the learning communities in which faculty function is situated. Whereas there are trivial compartments in all three arms of a university's mandate, the research function presents more complex structures due to the multiple gatekeepers that determine the "worthiness" of the research output, but, also the rarely discussed motives of the gatekeepers regarding the suitability of the research product (Altbach & Rappple, 2012; Siegel et al., 2018).

The phrase, "*research rules the world*" espoused by Siegel et al. (2018), is in fact, codified in promotion and tenure, where faculty members are required to demonstrate their productivity in research as a way of accounting for their existence in these institutions. Since "research is presumed to rule the world", therefore, the expression "*publish or perish*", justifies research uptake, with its influence and tension that should be tattooed on every academic's mind (Phothongsunan, 2016; Niles, Schimanski, McKiernan, & Alperin, 2020). Essentially, the multiple functions required of every academic pose specific performance limits for an average person. Academics are expected to excel in all the three functions. However, this pressure and tension tend to shrink their enthusiasm for the most critical and highly regarded aspect "the research function", while at the same time, evaluators expect "outstanding performance" in all the three functions. It sounds "delusionary", to expect high or even above average productivity, yet individuals are different and possess varying abilities and potential. For instance, some people are born with odd research and writing abilities, others have enchanted teaching methods that astound their students, while yet others have excellent customer service talents. Despite this, Niles et al. (2020) discovered a score with mediocre performance across the board for all three roles of a university, as well as great attributes in all three. While these differences may have some innate causes, research excitement transcends these causes because of the superior stature of those recruited for the task.

The Context and Problem

In an attempt to strike the research chord and prompt intellectual advancement among academics, Ugandan Universities strove to promote research and inno-

vation, 1) to assemble high spirited and exceptional researchers 2) heighten work motivation 3) assemble evidence-based content for teaching 4) strengthen quality in all areas including supervision 5) institutional profiling, and 6) visibility for staff and institutions. Yet, academics continue to operate amidst irrational work overloads, as evaluators constantly demand results, in form of research output but also other areas of their mandate (Barifaijo et al., 2016). Previous research on work-overload focused on job burnout, but it sometimes degenerates to more serious aspects that jeopardize research uptake, yet it is the most “cosmopolitan” function that enhances their stature among peers (Civera et al., 2020). Remarkably, despite the enormous plans institutions have developed to increase research uptake, some academics have managed to handle the pressure while others have not. These plans include favorable research policies, research funding, research teams that support diversity, periodic research workshops, and conference funds. Additionally, practically all teaching staff members have taken part in doctorate and masters student supervision, which ought to be a venue for academics to collaborate on publications (IRIC, 2020), as well as institutional journals that could serve as starting points for publishing. Other integral opportunities for academics to write publishable papers may include; materials from exciting lecture notes, module development and controversial debates in the literature. Yet, most of these avenues have remained “virgin territories” to academics.

Paradoxically, although “*research and publication*” determine all critical personnel decisions in academia, the majority of academics’ have not yearned for such opportunities through the demonstration of their research enthusiasm. Yet others have continued to engage in research and publication. Due to such imbalances, Universities have continued to apply orthodox incentive systems leading to two sides of the coin, that has exacerbated the already existing sharp divide among academic’s. Unless everyone is brought on board in terms of growth and development through research uptake, Universities will continue to face quality and productivity challenges resulting from academics’ diminished motivation, lost loyalty, non-collegial relationship and lost institutional fabric, to the detriment of institutional “good standing”. In this study, two (2) objectives were set in order to determine if academics were enthusiastic about conducting scholarly research or not: 1) to analyze the major factors influencing this passion, and 2) to determine the implications for research engagement in these institutions.

2. Literature and Theoretical Review

Literature in this paper took cognizance of the fact that both positive and negative emotions and experiences can potentially influence academics’ enthusiasm in their pursuits. Therefore, the discussion embraced both aspects regarding academics’ scholarly research engagements that have for long attracted the attention of the educators and researchers alike (Alperin et al., 2019). Academics’ enthusiasm and the lack of it to engage in research is explained by Boyer’s

(1996), Model of Scholarship and Deci and Ryan's (1980), Self-Determination theory.

According to Boyer, being a researcher demands a more inclusive view of what it means to be a scholar and be able to recognize that knowledge is acquired 1) through research 2) through synthesis 3) through practice and 4) through teaching (Boyd, 2013). Boyer, further developed four domains of scholarship, including; a) Discovery b) Application c) Teaching, and d) Integration, where, "*Scholarship of Discovery*", encompasses those scholarly activities that extend the standard of human knowledge through the research or collection of new information. On the other hand, "*Scholarship of Integration*" involves interdisciplinary or interpretive activities of writing, and research across disciplines into a larger context, while, "*Scholarship of Application*" includes scholarly activities, which attempt to apply one's content expertise and knowledge to the betterment and service of the academy and society. Therefore, the "*traditional research*", or "the *scholarship of discovery*", has always been the center of academic life and crucial to an institution's advancement (Starr-Glass, 2011; Boyd, 2013). Boyer's (1990), original concern was the competing challenges to balance teaching, research, and service, (*which is the major object of this discussion*), yet, the three are rarely assigned equal merit. Regardless of its diversity, scholarship i) is intellectually rigorous ii) extends the frontiers of knowledge/creative expression iii) can be documented, and iv) is validated by and shared with other professionals (Boyer, 1996). Therefore, the model acknowledges Niles et al. (2020) claim that "research rules the world" and that it is necessary for research to maintain its superior bearing. Nonetheless, the model explains the linkage between research, analyses of effective teaching and the need for prioritization among the many competing demands in academia. However, it did not address factors that influence academics' enthusiasm, prompting the adoption of the theory of "Self-determination" by Deci and Ryan (1980) in this study.

The Self-determination theory, explains how individuals are able to become self-determined when their needs for competence, connection, and autonomy are fulfilled (Boyd, 2013). Inherently, people's growth tendencies and innate psychological needs motivate them to make choices without external influence and interference. While extrinsic rewards only spark external values, intrinsic motivation sustains passion, creativity, and sustained efforts (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The interplay between the extrinsic forces acting on persons and the intrinsic motives and needs inherent in human nature is the territory of Self-Determination that explains how *controlling*, versus "autonomy-supportive environments" impact functioning and wellness, as well as performance and persistence of individuals (Moosa, 2018). Irrespective of pressure exerted on these academics to engage in research and scholarly activities, therefore, the uptake of research can only be at will so long as they possess sufficient support, enjoy reasonable affiliation and gain sufficient competence, a sense of belonging and autonomy to decide whether or not they wish to engage in research and

progress in their career. By implication, the only thing these academics need is an environment in which they can actively engage and shine in their research function (Cohan, 2019). The theory further explains that its only when the urge to do research is from within (intrinsic) that these individuals can move out of their comfort zones to exploit their potential.

Literature on factors that stimulate academics' enthusiasm to engage in research has remained controversial, and continues to cause tension, due to its momentous role in society. Civera's, et al. (2020) research focused on the impact of academics' motivation and institutional quality, with no specific focus on the importance of research or how individuals are stimulated to do research. Yet, Haven, et al. (2019), found a whole range of factors such as; environment, leadership, facilities, funding and supportive research teams to be responsible for academic motivation for research uptake. Contrarily, though, Heckman & Moktan (2020), found an interplay of factors, including the need for affiliation, institutional support, mentorship, clear job description and shared strategic direction. Whereas the paper's focus did not consider strategic direction as a precursor for increased research enthusiasm, Demirbatır & Engür (2018) confirmed how lack of strategic objectives and awareness of institutional vision had in fact, affected academicians' abilities to prioritize research.

Similarly, the findings by Rice, et al., 2015; Siegel et al. 2018 & Stoeber & Jansen, 2011, revealed that personal factors, such as; perfectionism, self-inflation, self-pity, excessive competition and imposed vulnerability, had blocked academics' research uptake. Although this argument makes sense, one may never be able to publish with such rigidity. This finding is consistent with Alperin et al., (2019) study which found that faculty's research output in public Universities were mostly affected by individual rigidity. Contributing to the same debate, Haven et al., (2019) assert that, whereas the majority had the enthusiasm of research uptake, the obsession to publish perfect papers affected their research output. This therefore limited their opportunity to network with illustrious colleagues in the national and international space. Yet, although, research by (e.g. Sullivan, 2012; Kyvik & Aksnes, 2015), uphold that institutional factors had the most impact on academics' research output, Moosa (2018) found little proof of how, institutions affected individual enthusiasm for research uptake.

Traditionally, universities had well-structured agendas for undertaking their activities, yet, academics often plunge in a mix of roles that have perceptibly affected their progress, others have remained uncertain about how to move forward with a wide range of competing demands (Lillis & Curry, 2010). Cohan (2019), questions the viability of "publish or perish" dictum that has been a "dominant credo" in academia for decades. Although, the "*publish or perish*" originates from the belief that universities should portray as guardians of public knowledge, as engines of the up-to-date economy and as expanders of frontiers of knowledge (Epstein, 2011), it is currently being embraced as an index of University Ranking (Heckman & Moktan (2020). While, research is believed to fos-

ter development, Cohan (2019), opines how universities continue to report inadequate uptake of research, especially in Africa (Heckman & Moktan, 2020; Salager-Meyer, 2014). In Uganda for instance, Kyaligonza, Kimoga & Nabayego (2015) attributed the problem to failure by the university policy makers to allocate funds to the research function in their annual budgets. Therefore, if these academics must progress through their careers, the institutional leaders should meet their obligations and, the rule of “*publish or perish*” must be obeyed. Similarly, role conflicts that often confront academics have caused so much ambiguity, on which function should be given first priority, yet, the subject has remained harsh-harsh (Cohan, 2019). Even HR policies seem to be silent on the weight of the three functions (teaching, research and innovation, and community engagement) of the university’s mandate. Therefore, continuous selfless in research engagement is derived from great motivation and satisfaction that leads academics to work very hard and tirelessly. More recently, research by Demirbatır & Engür (2018), found that majority of academics resigned emotionally due to “tough to handle” superfluous barriers that often get in their way. Consequently, in order to avoid to plunge and perish for lack of research output, Osterloh & Frey (2020), recommend multi-tasking as the way to go in order to cope up in such unprecedented academic environment. Although work overload is common place, research and publication are a “a must do or die” if you are to survive and grow in academia.

Methodology

A qualitative approach together with integrative synthesis and review summaries, were adopted to extricate academics’ enthusiasm among a sample of 50 academic staff, 5 retired lecturers and 6 university top administrators, from the two (2) Schools of Education and one School of Management Sciences (*in which the department of education resides*), in the three higher education institutions (Kyambogo University, 2014, Makerere University, 2009 & Uganda Management Institute, 2016). This choice was based on evidence of academics that hit retirement without making any career progress, yet, the same schools had prolific writers that managed to publish and become visible. Creswell (2014) recommends a qualitative approach due to the direct observable evidence from the data generated from in-depth interview adds peculiar, details but also gives a human voice to uninterrupted observed results in ethnographic participation. On the other hand, an integrative synthesis and review summaries were useful in analyzing past empirical and theoretical literature which provided greater comprehensive understanding of a particular phenomenon of critical concern (Kothari, 2014). In-depth interviews, document analysis and observation became useful in gathering critical information for this paper. Documents consulted included; research policies, internal and external research policy and evidence of grants disbursed from Uganda Management Institute, Kyambogo University and Makerere University. These methods were supplemented by applications for

promotion and promotional procedures in the three (3) institutions, were analysed. In order to make sense of out of all the information acquired, thematic, content and narrative analyses were used. Fraenkel, et al. (2012) found this combination extremely useful in a typical qualitative study.

3. Findings and Discussion

First and foremost, although academics in the three institutions had encountered similar challenges regarding research and publication, such as; limited research funding, limited time for research, multiple mandates of teaching, supervision, and service, etc., Makerere and Kyambogo Universities faced lesser challenges because of the traditional system of operation, unlike Uganda Management Institute (UMI) that operated a modular system, with multiple study arrangements; e.g. day, evening, weekend and distance learning, as well as multiple regional study centres, e.g. Central, Northern, Eastern and Western, but also manifold intakes (e.g. *Masters in Management Studies and Masters in Business Administration*). Compared to the other institutions, UMI staff stood higher chances of undertaking graduate supervision, due to its differentiated comportment of being a purely graduate higher education institution, which inevitably increased both teaching and supervision workload, graduate students supervised far exceeds, the number required for promotional procedures for all the institutions (Barifaijo et al., 2021). On the other hand, Kyambogo University still suffered the spill-over and merger effects, that combined Technical, Special Needs and National Teachers' College (NTC) into a single University, where majority of staff remained in their "comfort zones" where research and publication never used to be mandatory. Makerere University on the other hand, being the oldest University, had excelled in research and publication, especially in the science related courses, and a lot of on-going research endeavors, and also the recent Government "Research and Innovations' Fund", where even the School of Education heavily benefited, yet, it is the same institution where majority (5) academics had retired without attaining any career headway. Still, a "spill-over" effect at Uganda Management Institute (UMI) of transitional challenges, from the conventional consultancy track, of the Institute Public Administration (IPA) whose mandate was to train public servants with little focus on "Research", to a "dual track" (Lecturer-Consultancy). Due to new mandate that allows UMI to conduct Masters and PhD programs, the Uganda's National Council for Higher Education (UNCHE) demands every academic in HEIs teaching and supervising graduate students, not only to possess a PhD but evidence of research and publication. Although UMI has complied with this requirement, except the issues of teaching load, promotion, research funding, scholarly resources and mindset still being the major factor limiting research uptake by some faculty members. Further, the newly introduced "Students" Internship in all HEIs, plus the mandatory "School Practice" for all education programs had further diminished academics' research and writing.

Our first and most important research question related to the factors that influenced academics' enthusiasm for scholarly research engagement. From the responses, themes were organized into four categories: international, national, institutional and personal factors. It was revealed that majority got held back due to too much politicization, commercialization and bias in the review and publication processes. Whereas benchmarking was mentioned as a stumbling block in the promotion of staff, for example, regarding denial to supervise graduate students without a PhD, one member without a PhD, said, "...I have taught for 25 yrs, I have even supervised Masters' students before, how can NCHC way, that now I am not eligible to supervise graduate students. we should not benchmark for the sake of it...?". In fact, this issue, was raised by majority of staff, including those who possess doctorates/PhD but have not published. On leadership, another one member, said, "...you see in scoring for promotion, the committee considers leadership, e.g. if one has been Dean, Directors, Head of department etc., yet, one cannot hold such positions unless you have held any of those leadership position. For example, I have more experience than all the staff members in this department, and I have been in this institution for many years, but because i am not senior, I cannot become a leader, hence it is difficult to pass that huddle." Unfortunately, in some institutions, some members had gained promotion due to old structural arrangements, and indeed were senior, but such were conditions of NCHC quality framework benchmarks. These views notwithstanding, benchmarking exhibited many other advantages since higher education institutions used it for quality standards. To the "outside world" is in a continuous evolution and consists of technological advancements (Badea, 2009). In spite of its benefits, however, benchmarking had indirectly affected academics' progression, which many termed as distortions as a result of embracing some practices in disregard of institutional variation and uniqueness.

Whereas benchmarking was commonplace and embraced to among other things, to keep up the standards, but also for competitiveness (Garlick & Pryor, 2004; McNair & Watts, 2006), institutions should benchmark only comparative elements in a particular comparable element. McNair & Watts (2006), too, recommended benchmarking units to adopt identify the most appropriate methods of acquiring the practices that are its own to boost the performance of their own institution. Similarly, while modularized systems are more difficult for academics, some institutions have benchmarked their complex practices but ignored the subtleties therein, ending up distorting the purpose. In fact, some elements of benchmarking caused distortion at implementation stage, thereby affecting academics' research enthusiasm and rigor, slowed down other critical accomplishments, such as, graduation rates, winning research grants, and partnerships (Barifaijo et al., 2020). Hence, Badea (2009) cautions that if institutions are to succeed, they should use quality guidelines to compare good practices, take into account the differences, in order to make better decisions, because benchmarking has the potential to connect institutions to a variety of internal and external

stakeholders.

Peer Review and editorial decision making processes, also similar to how the “Publish or Perish” axiom had frustrated many academics, and had also irked a lot of academics, despite being thought of as a quality-assurance technique. The “would-be” quality assurance mechanism, has declined due to issues such as, “who-reviews-who” and “from where?”. Digging deeper into academia’s “publish or perish” pressure to publish in prestigious, “high impact factor” journals, it has slowed down the dissemination and advancement of scientific knowledge (Niles, et al. 2020). Yet, the pre-publication peer review is a worthwhile endeavor, because it is the main mechanism by which quality articles are determined and accepted for publication. In fact, different journals had different standards and expectations, where, acceptance into a journal was less dependent on who is reviewing your article, and more dependent on where you are trying to get it published. In fact, whereas, some academics cross the research and writing huddle, majority stagnate at review and publication stage. For example, some academic said, “...can you imagine submitted my article for review, it was rejected and recommended that I send to English Editors, I did that at a cost, and again sent back that I needed professional editors. [whatever that meant], I knew, I was not meant to belong to this profession, so I gave up...” In fact, Rocco (2011), found that, sometimes, people referred to use as editors were sometimes the same agency, taking advantage of desperate scholars for upward mobility. He recommends co-authorship and team research to resolve such issues. He explains how among team members, there may be; “creative”, “critical”, “evaluators”, but also “analytical” readers and researchers that can resolve editorial mysteries. This is the reason, why Phothongsunan (2016), recommends research mentors for such benefits and many others.

Whereas the rejection of an article remains a nightmare to many researchers, sometimes an article submitted to two separate journals, with the same peer reviewers received opposite outcomes. Such variations in assessment was explained by Özcan & ve Balcı, (2016), on how these reviewers are never paid for the work, but rely on “*scratch my back, I scratch yours when time comes*”. In fact, they protest the unrealistic, lengthy, detailed, aggressive peer review processes for a journal article, yet it may be only make sense for book-length manuscripts. Ideally, the purpose of peer-review is to help junior researchers. However, Van Dalen & Henkens (2012) found little direct advice from older experts on how to read or write assessments of their own or other people’s work. As a result, this ambiguity continues to confound and frustrate early academic writers (Rocco, 2011; Van Dalen & Henkens, 2012). In cases where papers have been accepted, the cost of publication is abnormally high. Hence, peer review, can appear ludicrous in the cold light of day when determining whether an article is worthy of publication (Phothongsunan, 2016). “...In fact, i received feedback from reviewers and everything was rated ‘below average’ but the final verdict was ‘minor corrections’, yet there were not corrections identified. This

left me wondering whether my manuscript was reviewed, whether the publishers just wanted money or also the kind of journal my paper was to be published.” One other challenge with some reviewers, while others might be genuine and beneficial, others might be destructive and sometimes impose their own opinions about what questions are significant and what a quality study looks like, even without fully understanding the goal of the investigation. This leaves many questions regarding the role of reviewers with such inconsistency, like what often happens with conference papers and grant bids. Unfortunately, majority of the journals, reviewers act as gatekeepers and asked to judge the novelty and importance of the work, “novelty” or “originality”, to them the importance is often clear only in retrospect (Niles et al., 2020; Sullivan, 2012). Ironically, majority researchers have experienced situations where a rejected manuscript in one journal, becomes the “selling point”, in another, which exhibits tendencies of ambiguity and bias.

Excessive teaching load or work-load had become I mayhem in all the three institutions, and had not only affected academics’ research enthusiasm but their personal health as well. In fact, there was an overwhelming consensus, even amongst those that had managed to pull through in research and publication. We observed, that predominantly, the tripartite, multiple and simultaneous demands performed by academics, had diminished not only enthusiasm for research but excessive burn-out, with the potential to shake quality, in various aspects. In fact, majority had received ‘warning letters’ for incomplete or undone institutional tasks. One respondent said, “...oh my God! *This institution is crazy. I sometimes believe I joined the wrong profession or may be an institution that was not meant for me. Can you believe I have received warning letters four (4) times, for failure to mark (assess) examinations, to submit coursework results on time, and unsatisfactory delivery in class (according to end of module students’ evaluations.*” In this specific institutions, students’ evaluations are taken seriously and in fact, do inform major personnel decisions, therefore, what is done, you must do it well. Another one said, “...I thank God that I still have a job, because when my contract expired, the renewal stalled for some months for failure to do research and publish. It is all about too much work. The paradox is, you fail to teach because you are deeply engrossed paper writing, you get penalized”, yet if you concentrate on teaching without engaging in research, you also get penalized. We found overwhelming evidence of staff who had attempted to write, but could not complete due to other competing demands. The shelved drafts indicated that majority had the will and ambition but were affected by ‘most important and urgent task, the teaching function’, which also demands a lot of quality time if one is to avoid harsh judgements from students. In fact, research enthusiasm for majority was due excessive workload (Barifaijo et al., 2016). We established that it was impossible for a faculty member to conduct the mandatory “original research inquiry”, supervised students, perform the “3rd mission” and achieve the required minimum teaching load. Similarly, Yalçın and

Altun Yalçın (2017) attest to the same finding of how is impossible to publish mandatory two articles per year, and maintain a teaching load of more than nine hours a week. Unfortunately, most academics are held back from their writing for various reasons such as; procrastination, feeling overwhelmed, or negative emotions which are likely to acutely influence their writing habits in the early stages of a career. One respondents *decried* “*work in this institution is crazy as in crazy... you cannot compare it with other institutions*”.

In fact, the issue of workload challenges had been exhaustively discussed and attended to with a “special committee” to constantly alert the management, it remained an areas of contention. In fact, in order to avert suffocation of the research function, (Civera’s et al., 2020) shared how majority of ‘Research-Intensive’ Universities continuously revised workload policies. More often than note, consulting students, administration and meetings interrupted academics’ research and writing times (Barifaijo et al., 2016).

Cluster and issues of authorship had become controversial, yet, universities resort to this strategy to step up research uptake, but also, provide mentorship as a breakthrough of all time (Sullivan, 2012). Research clusters had strong advantages for research productivity unlike individual works, save for expediency of individual work. In fact, teams were helpful in tackling complex and important problems, and often produce better work because they take on more complex research, bring complementary knowledge and applying diverse research methods (Alperin et al., 2019). In the best situations, research clusters promoted timely and high-quality work, because working in teams provided strong incentive to demonstrate excellence to their partners (Jeans & Murphy, 2009). Research clusters also provided advantage for members to learn from each other, through diverse experiences. Diverse experiences, also provided research teams with skills that productively complement each other, to balance breadth versus depth, basic versus applied research directions and quantitative versus qualitative approaches. Therefore, the common saying of “two hands are better than one”, the paper confirmed the power of collaborative research that strengthens quality, confidence and collegiality.

Nonetheless, some novice researchers did not seem to have benefitted from such collaborations, for lack of ability to negotiate authorship issues, due to their vulnerable positions. Hence, some senior colleagues’ had exhibited greed and insincerity thereby sabotaging novices’ efforts to have honest and authentic author’s lists. On the contrary, Brembs et al. (2013), counteracted this argument, and argued, that such people are masqueraders because a genuine senior scholar would wish to support the junior colleagues. In fact, majority of senior colleagues were willing to guide novice writers, save for forceful personality differences that led to disruptive conflicts and undermined team performance. Heckman & Moktan (2020) found such deception to affect the novice researchers’ enthusiasm that many ended up resigning emotionally. Yet, mild respectful disagreements were productive, if the researchers’ contributions were balanced,

because individual controversies, in moderation had little negative effects (Niles et al., 2020). “...twice, my work supervisor has swapped the authorship order after the draft had come back from the professional editors, which I also paid for. I never knew the implications of authorship line-up, until my application for promotion was thrown out for failure to meet fifty percent requirement as the first author”. Another scenario was shared by graduate students, where, because majority are ignorant about university protocols, their supervisors use their works for their gains and never get to until much later. “...i developed a desire to become a university lecturer after acquiring my PhD, and was asked evidence of academic growth through publication, because, throughout, I had worked in the corporate world”. I at first thought, yes, the job was mine, because I had two publications, one from Masters and one from my PhD. Unfortunately, I was not the first author for both, instead, my supervisors were. Although I got job, I had to confront my research supervisors on that matter, but was assured how my raw dissertation and thesis were almost trash, and that they worked so hard to get some credible and publishable work. In other words, they did more work than me, the owner of research. Therefore, it is a policy in Thai universities to confirm authorship before considering individuals for any action (Phothongsunan, 2016).

Good research administrative practices and work environment, were found to stimulant research uptake. Therefore, academics that that enjoyed good leadership, leaders of integrity and humanity that provided good research environment published more because they were encouraged. In fact, apart from one institution, the rest of the leaders responsible for research, staff affairs and programs were accomplished publishers, which gave hope, trust and confidence to academics to engage in research (Ergün & ve Nartgün, 2017). “...In fact, the first time I engaged in research, the officer in charge of research crafted a research idea, and asked me to continue, but with my name as the first author. From that time, I got motivated and we have co-authored multiple scholarly works together”. In fact, research leadership was critical and was even supported by Miller et al. (2011), for being the number one motivator. Other than leadership, comfortable work space was also found a necessary element in ensuring research engagement (Jeans & Murphy, 2009). Whereas majority of staff had adequate staff, they decried the lack of research assistance to expedite their research endeavors. Hence, those who that felt the desire for have research assistants, were found enormous enthusiasm, but got limited by work-life-balance. Haven, et al. (2019) found collegiality to be helpful because, with a good environment, genuine co-workers, writing skills and research assistants, they would potentially move scholars very fast to get published. Similar to co-worker assistance, mentorship and collegial cooperation, had the potential to sustain research ambitions, due to their inspirational acumen for academic’s to want to belong to the larger academic society (Ergün & ve Nartgün, 2017). Unfortunately, although mentorship was critical, most potential mentors were too busy with their work and had little time for junior researchers. A member said, “...I knew we belonged to the same

discipline, and that he had experience in research publishing, but I sent about three manuscripts with no response. I sent to another senior colleague, the same was true, until I figured out how to do it by myself".

Another one had this to say, "...i kept pleading with my senior colleague to guide me and even included him on the draft, but never got any response, until I resorted to some editor who actually concerned himself with grammar and typos, with no help of the flow and content. Ironically, he asked for the paper support his application for promotion, and later pointed out areas of weakness in the article after he had used it." Therefore, unless, mentorship becomes part of institutional structures, but it may not work in its current state. Another one said, "in fact, I was just approaching colleagues without being focused on mentorship". Personal emotions both positive or negative were found to determine entry point to gain or lose enthusiasm for doing academic research. Although negative emotions were part of the story in research and writing for publication, literature has remained silent on how the negative emotions that inhibit productive writing should be overcome.

Despite some inroads, emotions within the publishing process have at times been considered forbidden (Haven, et al. 2019). Unfortunately, while research and publication is mandatory, a section of staff have failed to publish even a single journal. While some expressed frustration, demotivation, discontent and of course "fear" for their jobs, others blamed their inability to publish on structural factors. In fact, others resent the topic completely, as one of the academics stated that "whenever a discussion on publication and tenure arises in academic gatherings, I develop a feeling of anxiety, confusion, shame, and regrets, for having devoted so much time on a profession where I do not feel accomplished." While some emotions were acceptable and passive since they did not affect others, others were less acceptable emotions, such as "anger", feelings of despair and blame-games, which were likely to directly affect others. In fact, Mahler et al. (2018), explain how major negative emotions were caused by 'fear of rejection' and "self-doubt", which often manifested as negative thoughts. Some apprehensions caused emotional barriers and fears around writing and contributing to scholarly journals (Mahler et al., 2018, Sullivan, 2012; Van Dalen & Henkens, 2012; Huisman & Smits, 2017). On the other hand, positive emotions such as; excitement in developing ideas, confidence in reason, satisfaction, relief, and a sense of accomplishment, increased enthusiasm, whether the work is accepted for publication or not. Yet, negative emotions caused excessive anxiety that it affected the writers to even "hold a pen" and begin writing. Notably, "anxiety" did not only affect beginners, but also seasoned authors still feel insecure and seek help from colleagues, such as, so professors who continually attend workshops and training programs on "how to write good publications", in order to boost their confidence, yet these folks are known as "celebrated publishers" (Niles et al., 2020; Gnilka et al., 2012). Similar to emotions, procrastination, affects all scholars, regardless. Majority felt overwhelmed, and their writing habits acutely

got influenced, sometimes in the early stages of their careers. Such habits, can only be averted is to develop “positive thinking” which is a key ingredient to succeed in writing and publishing. Without being positive, it is impossible to excel Mahler et al. (2018). This is because, internal critics and negative thoughts had the potential to block the novice writers’ confidence, thereby causing premature shut down, and instead stare at a blank page with no progress.

Perfectionism among academics’ is one of the inherent attribute and most difficult trait to curtail (Noble et al., 2014). There are many reasons why it might be difficult to curb this trait. Clearly, majority of the scholars that had no research output were so apprehensive about making a mistake. Whereas, some feared to be criticized, others had nothing to contribute to the literature. On perfectionism, a member said, “...for me, I want to make sure that when I publish a paper, it is error free. I have read some published articles that still had visible mistakes. I don’t want to put shoddy work out there which I may never be able to retrieve or defend.” Previously, perfectionism was viewed rather negatively as a character flaw or burdensome personality trait, and has been variably described as striving for flawlessness, high standards for performance, and the tendency to be excessively critical regarding self-evaluations of behavior (Noble et al., 2014). Whereas most perfectionists feared to fail, some constantly lived in self-doubt, yet, others claimed how writing was lonely activity and sometimes individuals felt isolated. On the other hand, others, feared competition, criticism, disapproval, yet others feared to stand out, which all ended up into negative emotional landscape (Szasz, 2018; Hill, 2017). With the perfectionists, the phobia manifested at idea conception, soars up through the writing phase, up to the publishing time. Although even experienced writers experience such anxiety, it gets worse with perfectionists due to high expectations of what they knew they could achieve (Burnam et al., 2014). “...when I get ready I will share my idea. I do not want to be rushed to publish rubbish like what I often see in some journals. Why should one share unsubstantiated work to the public just for sake of it?” Yet, no matter how brilliant one may be, it might be difficult to write and churn out solid papers without any mistakes.

Unfortunately, perfectionism had both positive and negative influences, but their advantages heavily depend on the levels and magnitude of application. While there were visible obstacles for the majority perfectionists, research also showed that perfectionism as a multidimensional notion, was likely to stifle individual abilities and progression (Chang et al., 2004). Unfortunately, still, involved a variety of actions and attitudes of perfectionists that affected both the perfectionists and those around them. Whereas, majority were unproductive, they never admitted so, or even acknowledge anyone else to be better than them. “...you want me to publish lecture notes in form of papers like so and so?”. Worse still, while some individuals are steadfast in their quest of perfection, others are more laid back, and yet they continuously compare themselves to others, while others rely on a more internal gauge (Castro & Rice, 2003).

The positive side is that some perfectionists were able to bounce back from major failures and setbacks with apparent ease, although a few others are still plagued with anxiety over the smallest mistakes, they or others make. Evidence of how perfectionism sometimes destroys the essence of team research and co-publication, they tend to get absorbed into editorial niceties in others' contributions, but unable to supplement even a paragraph. Mobley, et al. (2005) found three broad groups of individuals, with regard to perfectionism; 1) those who set consistently high standards for their own performance but do not dwell on past failures (*adaptive* perfectionists), 2) those who set high standards for themselves and are preoccupied with failure to measure up (*maladaptive* perfectionists), and 3) those who tend not to set high personal standards (*non-perfectionists*).

Often times, individuals commonly conflate perfectionism with having high standards, attention to detail, and a commitment to excellence, yet, it is entirely possible to have high standards without being termed a "perfectionist." In fact, Hill (2017), found that perfectionism was a crippling rigidity' in true sense. This paper argues that in fact, this rigidity had crippled some "highly regarded" personalities, perfectionist never get to know what they actually are. You hear they often say, "...for me, I am so particular, and no one can rush me until I feel I am ready. In fact, those I have worked with will attest to this, I d rather the meeting is postponed than presenting something I am not sure about". While true perfectionism tends to be rooted in a fear of failure, it can also be about a need to be accepted, as if people won't care for the person if they are less than perfect. Authors such as; Mehr & Adams, 2016; Noble et al., 2014 and Özcan & ve Balci, 2016 suggest that categorical personality types can be derived from 1) non-perfectionists (*those with low levels of both dimensions*) and 2) adaptive perfectionists (those with high levels of "Perfectionistic Strivings" and low levels of "Perfectionistic Concerns"; and 3) maladaptive perfectionists (those with high levels of both perfectionism dimensions), with the later most often found in people suffering from work-related anxiety and may lead to emotional loneliness. Yet, although perfectionists may not have control over their feelings, these feelings often lead them into constant denial and an unwillingness to seek out help (Mehr & Adams, 2016). Even with potential opportunities that might be beneficial to them, when issues emerge, they will deny they ever participated, yet they will have utilized the denied text or publication.

Perfectionism manifested itself in various forms and in different areas of life, and with some areas of unrealistic standards that often created problems, such; work performance, cleanliness, organizing and planning activities, writing, speaking, physical appearance, health and personal hygiene. Perfectionism with a subordinate was much easier to handle than perfectionism attitudes from a boss, because it may not come the easy way to live or work with such people, as relationship will constantly be affected by high and rigid standards paired with frequent outbursts of anger and criticisms (Noble et al., 2014). The unfortunate

bit is that most perfectionists are not even aware of their condition, and they hang on to the fact that this continuous search for perfection is merely the definition of a properly executed activity, hence, often an obstacle to their success, since according to them perfectionism is seeing people become sicker and sadder (Rice et al., 2013; Nutt, 2015). In fact, these folks demonstrated the need to “measure up” to peers, while at the same time, they were harsh critics of others but also to themselves (Rice et al., 2013). Unfortunately, perfectionism rarely helps people to reach those high standards they aspire to, since majority are almost retiring, while other have retired and continue to feel lonely, worthless and unable to perform. Majority, especially the retired academics in their 60s, taught as part time staff in various institution because they were unable to publish. *“...the mandatory age for retirement is 60 years, but full professors are eligible to push through contract renewal up to 75 yrs so long as they are still relevant to the department. Associate Professors may go up to 65 yrs, also, depending on their relevance to their unit. However, although Senior Lecturers are required to retire at 60 yrs, but may be given a short term extension, with justifiable reasons, at 60 yrs, a is supposed to go. That is the policy that guides academicians”*. Majority in this category were perfectionists and hardly approved any idea, especially generated by those they considered to be inferior to them.

Unfortunately, still, perfectionists rarely acknowledge their obsession yet it is likely to compromise their mental and physical health, because, the higher one’s levels of perfectionism, the more psychological disorders they are likely to suffer, since it isn’t some “strength disguised as a weakness,” but a problematic perspective that can have serious implications (Rice et al., 2015). Consequently, in the academia context, perfectionists found it extremely difficult to get started, to finish, or to meet deadlines, be it research or any other task assigned to them. In fact, majority have unfortunately tied themselves in knots second-guessing every decision they make, they beat themselves up for days over any perceived “mistake,” and ultimately, find it difficult to reach their performance potential (Rice et al., 2015). The irony with perfectionists is the impact that they have on people around them, and never feel good enough because of their fulfilled high standards (Stoeber & Janssen, 2011). While counselors in these institutions are always handy for various challenges, perfectionists may be beyond them since they continue to suffer from habit that inhibits work and life satisfaction, but also wreak havoc on interpersonal relationships, erode feelings of self-worth, degenerate into depression and attempts of suicide (Rice et al., 2015). Hence, perfectionists combat the toxic patterns of perfectionism by being more tolerant to mistakes, more confident in the face of failure and more patient when it comes to getting things done, so as to pave the road to success.

4. Conclusion

The complexity of universities worldwide stems from societal expectations for knowledge creation, distillation, management and dissemination, so as to pro-

vide answers to the multitude of unanswered questions, because universities are the main drivers of research, and if research fades away, knowledge production will be seriously affected. Because of this, academics' research vigor and enthusiasm must be heightened, so as to ignite the motivation for research rendezvous. Notably, research ambitions are dependent on a lot of support to move forward such as; a conducive work environment and research administration. Baseline niceties such as mentorship programs, especially from senior researchers had been affected by heavy work schedules of the senior colleagues. Sabbatical holidays are some of the avenues for academics to concentrate on writing and publishing, yet, with increase job demands, Sabbatical leave, in Ugandan Universities has diminished. Institutions should reinvent and harness sabbatical programs in order to preclude academics from perishing, but also create awareness among academics to view research as a need and not a duty. There is often a misconception that all academicians are capable of conducting research, writing, and publishing, yet the process has continued to frustrate many. Therefore, these workshops should take into consideration the different categories of staff and the levels of their research acumen, so as differentiated interaction approaches to research are done. This is because writing for publication is an intricate process that requires several ingredients, but also the numerous complex factors that affect academics' ability, including, social, structural, institutional, and personal factors. Yet, although critical, research by its nature, is a challenging task that requires in depth knowledge of the subject matter, planning, creativity, criticality, perseverance, and motivation.

Whether "senior scholar" or "novice", research and publication demand "intellectual resolve" given that it is an integral part of being a scholar-practitioner, with the skills and credibility to effect social change, institutional distinguishability and career growth. Yet, research is not a bustle for the faint-hearted people, because every individual encounter different challenges, beginning with "topic identification, conviction and comprehension", "sufficient idea to inform the writing 'coherence and logical flow', 'maintaining composure throughout the process', 'recognizing the difference between content and structure', 'methodological dilemma', 'subject knowledge', how to find modern, specialized, and related references". Other challenges include, "the right time", "research support", "backward design of manuscripts", literally ever. Instead of penalizing individuals, institutions should continuously seek to understand individual challenges, so as to provide the relevant support, because everyone needs sources of inspiration. Unarguably, difficult as it may appear, research and publication are necessary for the advancement of one's career, strengthen individual curriculum vitae and the development of the field, but also the visibility aspect, where the successful publication of research raises awareness of academics and their institutions, which may lead to increased funding for the latter. Therefore, research and publications are important career stepping stones, but they shouldn't be pursued at the expense of the scientific community, which values uniqueness,

and should not be done at the expense of the scientific field that promotes originality.

While academics' efforts are frequently recognized for their research output, the dual recognition potentially causes a mixed bag of effects. The positive for a small number of people and unfavorable for the vast majority, which generates unfavorable results, where the vast majority of faculty members feel inferior to their highly productive colleagues, a feelings of humiliation, and unfit. With the select few academics attracting rewards for their outstanding research achievements, a feeling of guilt and other negative emotions will hinder the majority's ability to work effectively. Yet, failure to reward the productive researchers will have a significant impact on their research enthusiasm. Therefore, rather than benchmarking and distorting some practices that negatively affect staff, institutions should create their own ways to recognize staff members' contributions which undermines academics' honesty and enthusiasm. Finally, despite multiple challenges encountered by individuals at various levels, society expects universities to be the reservoirs of knowledge in order to produce solutions for recurrent and emergent problems.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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